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## EMPLOYEES' WELL-BEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION WORKPLACE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN THE STATE OF KARNATAKA.

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**Abstract:** The teaching faculty plays an important role in the development of a country. They are the backbone of society. The work place constitutes employees from different demographics. And in the recent time, there is dramatic change in this work-site demographics as well as work nature. The Higher Education sector is not an exception to this. The well-being of the employees in this sector also needs an attention.

This paper has dual objective. Firstly, it studies the stress and its reasons in higher education sector. Secondly, in order to promote employees well-being what strategies are adopted by the concerned authorities. It also attempts to bring out the expectations of the employees.

When employees' well-being is thought by taking the teaching faculty of higher education sector in to consideration, various questions arises in the mind like:

What stress do these teachers endure?

What are the steps/ strategies taken for teachers' well-being at the workplace?

What are the teachers' expectations? Etc. these are the many questions that fly across the mind.

This paper is a humble exploration at the grass root level to find answers to such questions and discover many more. Here, primary data is collected through a structured interview schedule.

**Keywords:** well-being, stress, higher education, and employees.

### 1.INTRODUCTION:

Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyles. The nature of the work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. It has touched almost all professions, starting from an artist to a surgeon, or a commercial pilot to sales executives. With change comes stress, inevitably.

Professional stress or job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers consequently affects the health of the organizations. Work stress may be caused by a complex set of reasons, viz, job, high demand for performance, technology etc. Stress management is the need of the hour. However, hard we try to go beyond a stress situation; life seems to find new ways of stressing us out and affect the well-being.

Well-being is a subjective concept. There is no single definition of Well-being as it emerges from one's thoughts, actions and experiences. But it includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning and ability to manage stress. It tells what people perceive about their life (personal and professional).

There are five Major components of Well-Being:

- **Emotional Well-Being:** The ability to practice stress-management techniques, be resilient, and generate the emotions that lead to good feelings.
- **Physical Well-Being:** The ability to improve the functioning of your body through healthy eating and good exercise habits.
- **Social Well-Being:** The ability to communicate, develop meaningful relationships with others, and maintain a support network that helps you overcome loneliness.
- **Workplace Well-Being:** The ability to pursue your interests, values, and purpose in order to gain meaning, happiness, and enrichment professionally.
- **Societal Well-Being:** The ability to actively participate in a thriving community, culture, and environment.

To build the overall well-being, one has to make sure *all* of these types are functioning to an extent.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. **Joseph Regy, Dr.D.H.Malini (2017), Employee Engagement of Faculties in select higher educational institutes in South India:** The objective of the study is to measure engagement level, investigate the factors which contribute to the retention of staff and to understand the major challenges in retaining the faculties in higher education. The results showed positive connection between conducive work environment and engaged workforce.

2. **Daniela Muntele Hendreş , Versavia Curelaru, Laura Arhiri, Mihaela-Alexandra Gherman, Georgeta Diac (2014), Teachers' Occupational Stress Questionnaire: Psychometric Properties:** The findings of the exploratory factor analysis revealed a factorial structure in three factors: stress elicited by current professional activities, stress elicited by working conditions, and stress related to discipline and classroom management, which explained 53.62% of the variance. Gender and teachers' perceptions about the quality of relationships they have with pupils and parents both significantly influenced the way our participants answered to the items of the TOSQ.

3. **Woods Charlotte. (2010). Employee wellbeing in the higher education workplace: A role for emotion scholarship:** This article has dual aims. First, it proposes an explicit focus on emotion as a means of enriching thinking about employee health and wellbeing in the higher education (HE) sector. Second, in order to bring conceptual clarity to a highly complex area, it presents and illustrates (using a fictional scenario) a framework for understanding emotion. The article concludes by considering implications arising from this perspective on emotion for researchers and other practitioners in HE with an interest in how the university workplace impacts on the wellbeing of an increasingly diverse workforce.

## III. RESEARCH DESIGN

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- a. To study the stress and its reasons in teaching faculty of higher education Department.
- b. To find out what strategies are adopted by the concerned Institutions/Authorities for Teaching faculty well-being.
- c. To explore the expectations of the teaching faculty of higher education Department.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY:

While the higher education department is constantly working on maximum reach-out to students and improvisation in the quality of education, work-site demographics and the nature of work are constantly driving change in most sectors and Higher Education is one such important area. At the grass root level, it is important to find out what the teaching faculty of higher education department perceives about stress, well-being and their expectations from their Institutions/ Department in promising their well-being.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- a. The findings and suggestions are limited by the opinions and knowledge of the respondents.
- b. The present study covers only those respondents who consented to our request to be a part of this research.
- c. An interpretation of this study is based on the assumption that the respondents have provided true and correct information.
- d. The respondents are limited to the state of Karnataka.
- e. The study has limitations with respect to time, place and resources.

**METHODOLOGY:****(a) Type of research:**

Both, field research and library research were undertaken. The objectives were first analyzed through field research and then elaborated through library research. *The content of the paper is primarily focused on empirical data.*

**(b) Data Collection Tool:**

Questionnaire – a *structured interview schedule* was drafted, keeping in mind the objectives of the study for the segment listed above.

**(c) Sample Design:**

- Convenience sampling method is adopted for the study. Here, the sample units are chosen primarily on the basis of the convenience of the investigator.
- The study is relevant to all teaching faculties of Higher Education. Such faculties are spread across the length and breadth of the country. As the population size is huge and has heterogeneous features, convenience sampling method had to be resorted to.
- The sample size of fifty-five respondents who consented for the study.
- This is one of the non-probability methods of sampling.

**(d) Profiles of the respondents:**

- A sample size of **fifty five** was chosen to conduct the survey.
- As the subject is all pervasive, it was found that teaching faculties from all subjects and level (Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors and Guest Faculties) are eligible to answer the questionnaire. Hence, all teaching faculties of higher education were included in the sample randomly.

**(e) Collecting data:**

- Each respondent was asked to answer the questions in the same order as in the questionnaire.
- Initially, rapport was established with the respondent and he/she was made aware that they were part of research work and his/her co-operation to the fullest extent would make the research meaningful.
- The respondent was asked to give his/her opinion freely.
- Any doubts raised by the respondents were clarified so as to gain honest answers.
- Apart from the interview method, survey method and observation methods have been employed to collect and analyze data.

**(f) Method of analysis:**

- Statistical methods were used and the data is presented in the form of charts, graphs and tables.
- MS word, Excel and Power point applications have been used to tabulate and present the data.
- Descriptive analysis is the method employed, for presenting the analysis.

Many participants thanked for researching into staff wellbeing in Higher Education. They emphasized that it was an area that needed attention.

**IV. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION:****Data Analysis: Profile of the Respondents.****Table 1.1: Showing the frequency of Gender.**

Gender of Respondents	Numbers	Percentage (%)
Male	33	60
Female	22	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1.2: Showing the frequency of Age.**

Age	Numbers	Percentage (%)
Below 30	09	16.4
30 – 40 Years	30	54.5
40 – 50 Years	13	23.6
Above 50 Years	03	05.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1.3: Showing the frequency of Designation.**

Designation	Numbers	Percentage (%)
Assistant Professor	50	90.9
Associate Professor	02	3.6
Professor	01	1.8
Guest Faculty	02	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1.4: Showing the frequency of Organization.

Organization	Numbers	Percentage (%)
Government	52	94.5
Aided	01	1.8
Private	02	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>

**Data Analysis: Core Aspects.**

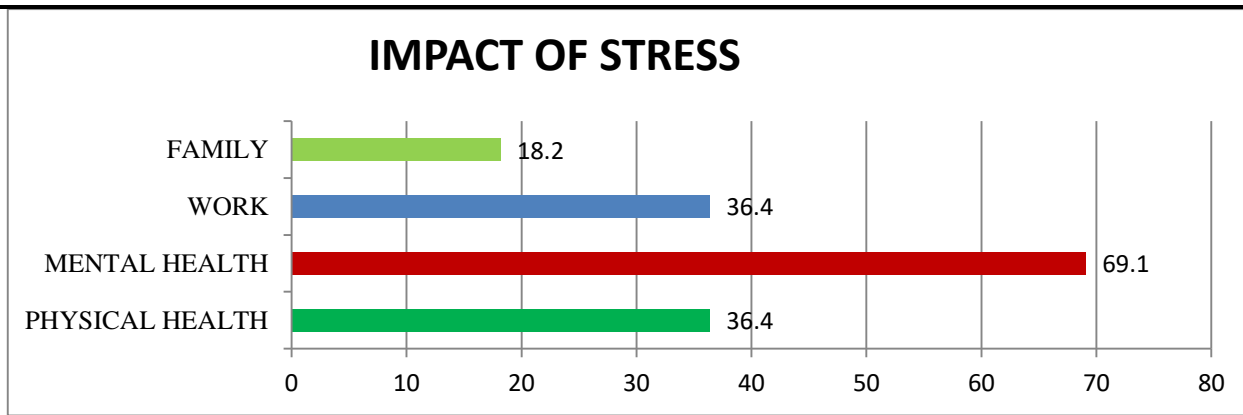
Upon asking how often the respondent feel stressed, 58.2% of the respondents said they sometimes get stressed, while 23.6% said they rarely get stressed and 14.5% often get stressed. Only 1.8% of the respondents are always stressed.

Response	Numbers	Mean	Percentage (%)
Always	01	0.0182	1.8
Often	08	0.1455	14.5
Sometimes	32	0.5818	58.2
Rarely	13	0.2364	23.6
Never	01	0.0182	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>

Following are the list of reasons for the respondents stress at the workplace:

REASONS FOR STRESS	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Number of classes	4	7.3
Overcrowded classes	13	23.6
Disciplining students'	12	21.8
Physical conditions of workplace	24	43.6
Administrative work	29	52.7
Attitudes and behavior of other teachers	18	32.7
Pressure from principal and education officials	15	27.3
No scope for research and development	26	47.3
Being evaluated for performance	1	108
Being criticized by others	10	18.2
Financial problems	3	5.5
Lack of confidence	0	0
No job clarity	3	5.5
Inadequate salary	2	3.6
Gender discrimination	0	0
Favoritism	7	12.7
No cooperation from colleagues	1	1.8
Personal problems	1	1.8
Less time for teaching due to assignments etc	1	1.8
Baseless rules during Placement	1	1.8
Family problem	1	1.8

Being stressed at workplace due to various above reasons, 69% of the respondents said that it has impacted on their mental health, while an equal 36.4% of the respondents said that it has impact on their physical health and work. Whereas 18.2% of the respondents stated that the work stress has an impact on their family life.



On encountering the above difficulties, 76.4% of the respondents accepted that the stress at the workplace has an impact on their job satisfaction, while the rest 23.6% said that the stress is having no impact on their job satisfaction. Out of 55 respondents, 72.7% were able to manage the work stress and 25.5% were not sure. While only 1.8% were clear that they are not able to manage the stress.

Upon asking the respondents, who said they were able to manage the stress, the following techniques were revealed by them:

TECHNIQUE/METHOD ADOPTED TO MANAGE WORK STRESS	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Being Busy	18	32.7
Avoiding Situation	18	32.7
Analyzing Situation	33	60
Crying	0	0
Dancing	1	1.8
Deep Breathing	9	16.4
Exercising	11	20
Listening to Music	21	38.2
Meditation	20	36.4
Reading	17	30.9
Screaming	01	1.8
Sleeping	08	14.5
Yoga	14	25.5
Chatting	01	1.8
Sharing with Family	02	3.6
Singing	01	1.8
No comments	01	1.8

#### WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE TERM 'WELL-BEING'?

This question was asked to ascertain how individual respondents conceive wellbeing, as there is no single definition of the term. Upon close study it was found that it is a tangled, tricky, and shifty concept. When describing how they define wellbeing the 55 participants covered a wide range of dimensions associated with wellbeing.

There were multiple definitions offered. Some responses were in line with wellbeing as a state of *good physical and mental health*. Some definitions stated that well-being *content, happy, satisfied and calm*. Some respondents defined it as *understanding the situation and reacting smoothly*. Few also defined it as *not expecting everything to be right*. Some mentioned wellbeing as *being happy in every situation*. Few respondents considered well-being as *inner peace through good deeds*. Lastly, some adopted a more holistic definition, and described it as, *encompassing physically, mentally, socially, economically and emotional balance in family and work place*.

#### WHAT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON WELL-BEING IN WORKPLACE?

The Analysis revealed four key elements in response to this question: the role of the Institution/Department, Self-standing/behavior, Professional acknowledgement and Relationships.

1. **ROLE OF THE INSTITUTION/DEPARTMENT:** Institution/Department featured highly in response to many of the questions about wellbeing in this study. The points mentioned under this element were:
  - Providing benefits other than financial rewards.
  - Recognition for the work done.
  - Understanding and co-operation.
  - Clearly defined roles & responsibilities of each employee.
  - Assigning Job that suits our skills.
  - Access to basic facilities.
  - Supporting Principal.
  - Assigning teaching work than administrative work.
  - Scope for research.
  - Providing Good working atmosphere/environment.
2. **SELF-STANDING:** Various respondents highlighted how self-standing/behavior can bring in positive impact on well-being. It included:
  - Being calm and quiet without responding unnecessarily.
  - Adaptability and Adjustment.
  - Not to take anything seriously.
  - Involving in work.
  - Not bothering about others.
  - Devoting ourselves towards work sincerely & involving in creative works.
  - Being Cheerful and enthusiastic.
  - Reading.
3. **PROFESSIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Many respondents mentioned that receiving recognition and praise for the work done or for the achievements has a high value in relation to positive impact on well-being.
4. **RELATIONSHIPS:** During analysis it was clear that good relationships and well-being were positively related. The relationships mentioned by the respondents included:
  - **Respondent – Colleagues:** Cordial relationship, interaction and coordination among colleagues bear a positive impact on well-being.
  - **Respondent – Students:** More interaction, participation and being with students was found to have a positive impact on well-being.

#### WHAT HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON WELL-BEING IN WORKPLACE?

On the basis of the analysis done, the elements having negative impact on well-being in workplace can be classified into five heads:

**Work load:** Many of the respondents highlighted that extreme workload has led to have negative impact on well-being. This head included:

- Work load pressure/stress
- More clerical work
- Assigning more responsibilities

**Administrators/Management:** Some respondents mentioned the negative aspects of the administrators/management. Few even blamed the system and the way it works. This head included:

- Mental harassment.
- Improper infrastructure.
- Demotivating head of the institution.
- Stressful deadlines.
- Lack of minimum basic facilities.
- Unsupportive atmosphere.



**Inter-personal relationships:** Many respondents opined the inter-personal relationship in the work place has a negative impact on the well-being. This head included:

- Gossiping.
- Lack of understanding and cooperation from colleagues.
- Misunderstandings, ego clashes.
- Ego, Laziness, Worthless gossiping.
- Cold wars among colleagues.

Due to the aforesaid negative elements in the workplace, many respondents revealed the thought of quitting their job ("Feel like quitting the job"). Many respondents expressed the way they feel at the work place. It included:

- Lower productivity
- Feeling sad
- Losing health
- Disturbed and not performing duty up to the mark
- Low performance
- More stressed
- No concentration in work place
- Disturbed Peace of Mind due to which results may come down
- Lowering quality and discipline in education system
- Disturbed mentally as well as physically.
- Doing work without evaluation just for the sake of doing.
- Negative thoughts

#### WHAT MEASURES YOUR INSTITUTION/DEPARTMENT IS TAKING TO ENSURE TEACHERS' WELL-BEING?

Upon asking whether the Institution/Department should take any measures to ensure Teachers' well-being, 85.5% of the respondents answered positively. Only 34.5% of the respondents accepted that their Institution/Department is taking some measures for ensuring Teachers' well-being and of that 61.8% of the respondents opined that the measures taken are really helpful in ensuring well-being at the workplace. The respondents listed the measures taken by their Institution/Department for ensuring Teachers' well-being. It included:

- Took initiative to build infrastructures.
- Discussion and lunch with colleagues.
- Trainings are organized.
- Giving Co-operation.
- Marathon meeting are going on to discuss each and every aspects.
- Recreation and providing better working conditions.
- Conducting Special Meeting frequently.
- Bus facility, Building facility.

#### WHAT MEASURES/STEPS DO YOU EXPECT YOUR INSTITUTION/DEPARTMENT SHOULD TAKE FOR TEACHERS' WELL-BEING?

The respondents were asked for suggesting the measures to be taken by their institution/department for ensuring well-being at the workplace. In relation to improving wellbeing the participants' answers here tended to focus on their own organization/systems or their own individual responses to the pressures they experienced.

#### Administrator/Management Related:

The respondents' suggestion revolved majorly around the Management/Principal/Department. This head included the following suggestion statements by the respondents:

- *Giving autonomy to completely involve in teaching-learning, research and development work.*
- *Motivation and praise for the work done.*
- *Principal should not make any differentiation among staff.*
- *Decentralization system, teachers' support system should be provided.*
- *Department should look into unscientific rules in recruitment.*
- *Roles & responsibilities of each employee should be clearly defined.*
- *Provide full freedom and create positive atmosphere.*
- *Motivation, Cooperation and Support should be provided.*
- *Ensure that each employee fulfills their responsibilities and duties.*
- *Provide scope for upgrading skills, mutual respect and accountability.*
- *Keep things stress free.*
- *Helping faculty members to stay positive*

- *Healthy discussions, meetings, problem solving*
- *Humanity, Discipline rewards a lot.*

#### **Workload Related:**

Majority of the respondents suggested that the teachers should be allotted only teaching work. The administrative work should not be allotted to teaching faculty. This head included the following suggestion statements by the respondents:

- *Work other than academic should not be given.*
- *Teachers should be given opportunities to get involved in teaching related activities. Burden of administrative work is resulting in lesser attention towards teaching.*
- *It would be helpful if they let teachers' focus on teaching, learning and research rather than clerical works.*
- *Heavy workload should be distributed to others.*
- *Scope for research work should be given.*

#### **Training Related:**

Many respondents felt the need for training program especially on maintaining emotional balance and conducting regular yoga and meditation classes in the workplace. This head included the following suggestion statements by the respondents:

- *Pro educational activities must be promoted.*
- *Mutual gatherings, trainings on emotional balance should be conducted.*
- *Employee engagement activities should be held.*
- *Refresher Activity should be carried on.*
- *Vacation and training program is suggested.*
- *Regular yoga and meditation classes should be conducted.*

#### **Infrastructure Related:**

It was noticed that good infrastructure at the workplace adds to the well-being at workplace. This head included the following suggestion statements by the respondents:

- *Improve Physical infrastructure.*
- *Improve health care, infrastructure facilities and social security to ladies staff.*
- *Provide proper infrastructure.*

#### **Classroom Related:**

This head included the following suggestion statements by the respondents:

- *Intake of students should be limited.*
- *Don't over fill the sections.*

#### **SUMMARY:**

All the 55 respondents were from the higher education institutions across the state of Karnataka. As mentioned in the methodology section, a detailed questionnaire was prepared to gather the information from the respondents. The main aim of this paper was to understand the wellbeing conditions and throw the light on the ways to improve it. The key findings of the study can be summarized as below:

1. The higher education professionals do feel stressed due to various reasons mentioned and try to manage it through many ways.
2. The respondents are aware about the concept of well-being and are concerned about it.
3. Recognition, appreciation, co-operation, cordial relationships and better facilities at work place do have positive impact on well-being.
4. Lack of co-operation and support by the institution, misunderstanding and gossiping among colleagues, poor basic facilities and infrastructure have a negative impact on well-being in the workplace.
5. Due to these negative impacts, respondents expressed their feeling to quit the job, low productivity, disturbed mind, stress, low performance, lack of concentration, and so on.
6. Though few respondents accepted that their institution is taking measures for ensuring staff well-being but they were not satisfactory.



7. The respondents expected their institutions/department to take effective steps related to administration, workload, infrastructure, training and classroom strength for ensuring their well-being at the work place.

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