

Impact Of Covid-19 On Employees' Stress

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Abstract

Background : The word stress is derived from the Latin word “stringi”, which means , “to be drawn tight”. In medical terms stress is described as ,” a physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness.” Covid 19 outbreak adversely affected each and every individual around the globe. There are dramatic change happened in case of employment .Employee and employer are forced to accept the new changes. The changes in work space and work mode are the examples for these changes. The study mainly focused on employees stress in the second wave.

Materials and Methods : In this study the researcher collected data on stress relating to respondents financial insecurities, mental health, physical health, and view about covid 19 protocol. In order to collect the data a web based survey is conducted. For analyzing the data statistical tools like ANOVA Test is used.

Result: The major findings of this study are most of the employee's lies between low and medium stress level. Male employees are more stressed than female employees. There is a significant difference in the stress score of employees according to the different age group, number of children and number of dependents. The social media and social distancing has influence in employees stress.

Conclusion: The employees are familiar with new work environment in the second wave. But still they are stressed to manage the work. The organization has to develop coping strategies for handling work related stress. Physical and mental health is important for higher productivity.

Key Words: Covid 19, Stress, ,Employees, mental health, physical health

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I. Introduction

The covid -19 pandemic is classified as natural hazard by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies(Hamed Seddighi,2020).Covid-19 influenced almost all the sectors. In order to prevent the spreading the covid protocol has been introduced. Due to this protocol there are number of changes happened in case of job .They are, in case of Government /semi government sector and Manufacturing sector employees regular time work schedule changed to shift with half of employees, in case academician ,IT sector employees, Business people are changed to work from home/remote working. This new normal have influence on employees stress . The term “new normal” in this study includes work culture, work mode, new work challenges, social situation and current situations. That is different from what has been experienced or done before but is expected to become usual or typical(Dictionary.com).The anxiety and depression are the mental health issues reported during the first wave of the covid 19. Suicide cases are also reported in the first wave(Panigrahi M, Pattnaik JI, Padhy SK, et al,2021).The Sudden changes affected the human normal life. So the consequences are high and tackling the consequences becomes difficult. The second wave in India started middle of March 2021.Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal are the most effected states in the second wave of covid -19(worldometers.info,2021).Eventhough the number of cases are high in Kerala ,Karnataka and Tamilnadu ,Wayanad ,Coorg and Nilgiris are the district with lowest number of covid -19 cases. The three important covid 19 protocol are hand sanitizing, wearing mask and social distancing .With the help of these three protocol the covid -19 spreading can be reduced. The second wave of covid 19 also have consequences not lesser than first wave in case employees. But in the second wave employees are familiars with changes in the sector. This paper aims at explaining the employees stress in the second wave.

II. Review Of Literature

According to Jodi Okman .etl (2020) the relationship between health and work from home is complex .The organization has to develop new policies which consider the factors relating to new situation.

The author Viswanath Venkatesh (2020) reported that Covid -19 has an impact on jobs and life of the peoples; impact on jobs includes job loss, job outcomes, job changes. Coping and support strategies by organizations. The changes in home life, challenges in handling children, life-related outcomes, changes in

social life and difficulty in receiving support from friends and family members these are the covid-19 impact on life.

The WSU Psychology Professor Tahira Probst(2021) reported that The workplace covid 19 climate had direct effect on shaping employees attitudes towards recommendations given by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDS). This news report reveal that employees shows positive attitudes towards preventive measures like mask wearing and social distancing recommended by the CDS.(ANI,2021).

Objectives

- To understand the intensity of stress level among the employees working in private sector.
- To know the Effect of covid-19 protocol on employees stress.
- To know the social medias has any influence on stress of employees in the second wave of covid 19.

III. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted during the covid -19 second wave lockdown and post-lockdown period for a complete duration of 3 months. For this purpose, a structured questionnaire was distributed as Google form to 250 people of which 100 responded. From this 100 respondent perfectly filled and completed questionnaires were selected for this study. The sample size of the study is 88. The study mainly focused on employees of three districts of south India(Coorg,Wayanad,Nilgiri). Employees from private sector are participated in this study. Statistical tools used for analysis is Anova and Post hoc test.

IV. Result and Discussions

The impact of stress clearly explained in the Conservation Resource Theory of Hobfoll (1989).this COR theory explain that people will be in stress when they realize the existing valuable resource like objects, personal characteristics ,conditions are under threat and additional resources are unreachable. Thus inaccessibility of resources leads the people falling in stress under the pandemic situation of Covid 19. Which is terribly affected their work and family conditions. But people can overcome the stress through the effective implementation of work strategy and family well-being.. The impact of covid -19 outbreak on employees stress is captured through a self-assessment instrument. Similarly, a five-point rated scale is used for capturing their stress level.. The stress score of respondent in this study is (77.545±22.1250) and Cronbach's Alpha is .902.(see table no .2) In this study the researchers finds that there are (2.3%) less number of employees are highly stressed because they are facing the same situation second time and familiar with the changes. In that most of the employees are worried about financial security and future of their work life because there is pay cut in salary and employees cannot perform their 100% in the new working environment. (45.5%) Moderately stressed employees percentages are high. Because even though they are familiar with the changes the inaccessibility of resources and cope up with situation influences their stress score. Major employees are fall in to the low stress level(52%) this show that coping strategies /intervening strategies like yoga ,meditation, excise, health diet and leisure with family are helping them to reduce the stress. But it should not be ignorable .The organizations has to prepare proper policy and programs for stress coping This study is conducted in the district where the lowest covid -19 cases are reported. Even though the employees fall under mild stress and moderate stress category. (see table no 1,&3figure no 1)Social media is one of the unavoidable part of our life .this study reveals that some extent the social media sites eliminating the stress of employees during pandemic. "The employees can utilize the social media 24/7 without any rest. It eliminates the boundaries between work domain and private."(Ammons & Markham 2004; Greenhaus et al. 2006; Hogan 2010; Ayyagari et al. 2011). Social distancing is one of the protocol .in this study researchers find that social distancing have influence on employees stress.

The below tables show the numerical and graphical representation of result.

Table No.1 Reliability Statistics for stress scale			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
I feel stressed due to financial insecurity during second wave.	3.114	1.4734	88
I am worried about future of my work	3.023	1.4140	88
I feel stressed because of the possibility of losing my job due to the market impact.	2.307	1.3592	88
I feel stressed as I am working in health care sector	2.955	1.5750	88
I feel stressed because one of my family member working in healthcare.	1.909	1.3273	88
I feel stressed as am working in essential service and this may put family in danger.	3.182	1.5869	88
I feel stressed in protecting my young children from covid -19 out break	2.023	1.3644	88
I feel stressed in protecting my aged parents from covid-19	2.727	1.6098	88

outbreak.			
I am under anxiety due to lockdown	2.489	1.5462	88
I am anxious about salary/promotion/pay cut/others	2.693	1.4008	88
I feel that I have health issues due to lockdown	3.545	1.6464	88
I am mentally upset due to lockdown	2.523	1.6044	88
I feel stressed due to unavailability of alcohol/drug	3.034	1.5496	88
I feel stressed due to disturbed relationship in family am and society	1.477	.9940	88
Due to lock down my frequency of smoking habit increased.	1.750	1.1371	88
I feel sleeplessness	2.205	1.3909	88
I suffer from ulceration during covid -19 outbreak.	2.205	1.3659	88
I suffer from headache during covid -19 second wave.	2.295	1.4555	88
I experience high blood pressure frequently during lock down	1.648	1.1350	88
I feel constipated during lock down	1.886	1.2543	88
I feel often experience back pain	1.807	1.2211	88
I feel often experience neck pain	1.773	1.1114	88
I feel loss of appetite during lockdown	2.148	1.3437	88
I feel less self-confident due to new mode of work	2.011	1.2270	88
I am suffering from skin diseases in pandemic	1.989	1.1793	88
I experience erratic moods due to new normal work life	2.080	1.3062	88
I am suffer from indigestion	1.932	1.3113	88
I suffer from acidity problems due to absence of proper break time schedule in work life.	1.955	1.2215	88
I am suffer from heavy hair fall during lockdown	1.864	1.1263	88
In many ways feels disappointed during covid -19 second wave	2.034	1.2994	88
I feel lonely during lock down	2.568	1.3713	88
In general I am in charge of situation	3.102	1.4145	88
In general I feel highly stressed	3.295	1.3490	88

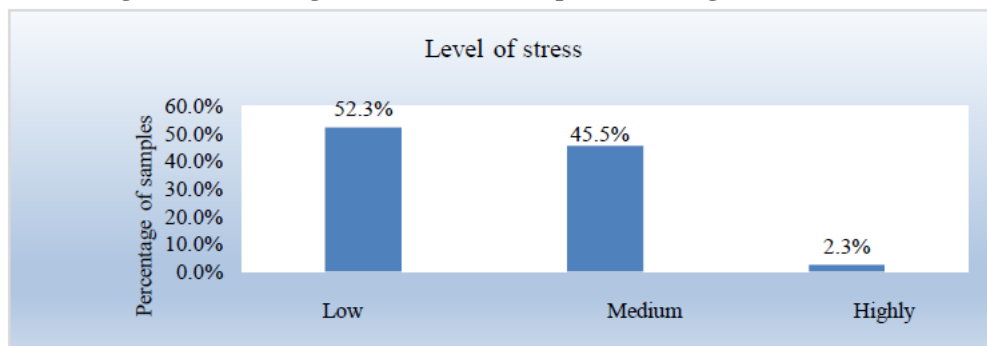
Table No . 2 . Mean and standard deviation for responses of stress scale

Variable	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Stress	77.545	489.515	22.1250	.902	33

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of samples according to level of stress
N=88

Stress level	Scoring	Frequency	Percentage
low	33-77	46	52.3
Medium	78-121	40	45.5
Highly	122-165	2	2.3

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of samples according to level of stress



Comparison of stress score of samples according to gender

H₀ : There is no significance difference between male and female in case of stress level.
 H₁ : There is a significance difference between male and female in case of stress level.

Table 4: Comparison of mean stress score of samples according to gender

Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	p value
Male (n=43)	82.84	21.38	2.175	0.032**
Female (n=45)	73.18	20.29		

N=88

Data presented in table 4 revealed that mean stress score for male (82.84 ± 21.38) was higher than the mean stress score for female (73.18 ± 20.29). The t value (2.175, $p < 0.05$) obtained was higher than the table value (1.988) when $df = 86$ at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore there was a significant difference in stress score among males and females. That means male employees are more stressed in pandemic.

Comparison of mean stress score of samples according to number of depended children

H_0 : There is no significance difference between stress and number of children.

H_1 : There is a significance difference between stress and number of children.

Table 5: Comparison of mean stress score of samples according to number of depended children

Number of children	Mean	SD	One way ANOVA (F value)	p value
0 (n=8)	61.88	12.61	3.214	0.011**
1 (n=20)	70.10	19.96		
2 (n=29)	79.31	22.64		
3 (n=27)	84.52	18.39		
4 (n=3)	102.67	23.29		
5 (n=1)	68.0	0		

N=88

Data presented in table 5 revealed that the highest mean stress score obtained was among samples with four children (102.67 ± 23.29) followed by samples with three children (84.52 ± 18.39), two children (79.31 ± 22.64), one child (70.10 ± 19.96) five children (68.0) and no children (61.88 ± 12.31). The F value (3.214, $p < 0.05$) obtained was higher than the table value (2.326) when $df = 5, 82$ at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significance difference between stress score and number of children. The covid -19 outbreak is more challenging for the working parents. Because the children's education system has changed to e-learning and the working pattern of job also changed.(Claudia Calvano.etl ,2021 & [Elizabeth L. Adadms,etl](#) 2020) It's difficult for the work parents to manage both. Their stress vary according to the number of Children.

Comparison of stress score of samples according to number of dependent

H_0 : There is no significance difference between stress and number of number of dependent.

H_1 : There is a significance difference between stress and number of number of dependent

Table 6: Comparison of stress score of samples according to number of dependent
N=88

Number of dependent	Mean	SD	One way ANOVA (F value)	p value
0 (n=4)	61.75	7.41	5.540	0.001**
1 (n=15)	60.80	13.37		
2 (n=25)	82.92	21.68		
3 (n=35)	79.51	22.24		
4 (n=9)	93.33	6.08		

The above table(Table no: 6) reveals that increase in number of dependents lead to changes in the mean stress score of employees.so there is a significance difference between stress score and number of dependents.

Table no 7 STRESS			
Scheffe ^{a,b,c}			
DEPENDENT	N	Subset	
		1	2
1.0	15	60.800	
.0	4	61.750	
3.0	35	79.514	79.514
2.0	25	82.920	82.920
4.0	9		93.333
Sig.		.170	.634
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed. Based on observed means. The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 374.286. a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 10.074. b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed. c. Alpha = .05.			

The above table (Table no : 7) is result of Scheffe test .It is one of the Post Hoch test which is used for simple and complex mean comparison. It reveals that employee with one dependent are less stressed as compared to employee with four dependent. That one dependent may possess supportive characteristics. In case of employees with one dependent and 3 dependent they have stress on common factors. The employees with four dependent are highly stressed. Because the four dependent include ill dependent /chronically ill dependent. The person with Zero and one dependent have nearest stress score. The Age, number of family members, education level, occupational status, depression, self-rated health status, and chronic diseases were found to have a significant association with stress.(Jin-Won Noh.etl,2017)

Social media is one of the unavoidable part of our life .This survey conducted in second wave of covid 19.It reveal that some extent the employees enjoying the social media. Use of social media influences the stress among employees in this pandemic. The employees can utilizes the social media 24/7 without any rest. It eliminating the boundaries between work domain and private.(Ammons & Markham 2004; Greenhaus et al. 2006; Hogan 2010; Ayyagari et al. 2011).

Compared to first wave of covid 19 in these second wave employees are familiar with changes. The covid 19 have impact on stress . Absence of proper communication, proper delegation of authority, meet ups, feel overburden of work responsibility, travelling, work space and work mode etc are also effect the psychological wellbeing of employees. The psychological imbalances will lead to decrease in productivity. The organization should consider the not only the productivity but also the psychological wellbeing of employees.

V. Conclusion

In this covid 19 epidemic all the human being facing psychological distress. Hence the positive thoughts, communication, healthy diet, practicing yoga and meditation, spending time with loveable one all these help to fight with psychological distress. In this study the researchers finds that gender, number of children and number of dependent have influences on employees stress . Other than these factors social distancing and social medias have effect on employees stress. In the new normal employees are much worried about financial security and security about job. The organizations should consider these factors and take corrective measures like meet up through online platform, employee friendly policies, weekly leisure time activity, financial motivation, appreciations, and awards, organize webinars related to psychological wellbeing in pandemic, Create awareness about the pandemic and safety measures. The organization can create a platform for employees creativity, it will helps the employees improve their mental wellbeing.

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