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Professional Life Stress among Software Professionals in Hyderabad – An Evaluation

B.Prathyusha¹, Dr.C.H.S.DurgaPrasad², Dr.P.Sudhir Reddy³

Assistant Professor, Department of H&S, VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Bachupally, Hyderabad, India ¹

Professor, HR & OB, Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management, Bachupally, Hyderabad, India²

Project In Charge, NITMS, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kukatpally, Hyderabad, India³

ABSTRACT: Professional Life Stress takes a toll on productivity, physical, mental and emotional health in contemporary life. The present study was planned to evaluate the professional life stress among software professionals in Hyderabad. The data was collected using Professional Life Stress Score (PLSS) developed by David Fontana in 1989 by convenience sampling method from 150 software professionals belonging to different software companies in Hyderabad city. The results show that there is a prevalence of moderate to high level of Professional Life Stress among the software professionals.

KEYWORDS: Professional Life Stress, Software Professionals, Moderate Stress, High Stress, Hyderabad.

I. INTRODUCTION

The employees of the 21st century are facing more challenges due to continuous organisational restructuring, policies, strategies, deadlines and technological changes which is leading to high levels of professional stress. Rs. 9.3 lakh crore (\$146 billion) software industry is one among the various industries which has been a new area of employment in India from the past two decades employing nearly three million of professionals' majority in the age group of 22-40 years. Software professionals are more accessible to professional stress than professionals in many other industries. Professional Life Stress takes a toll on productivity, physical, mental, behavioural, emotional and health among the software professionals. Professional stress occurs when there is discrepancy between the demands of work place and an individual's ability to carry out the work and complete the demands. There is a crucial need to understand the dynamics of the professional stress in software professionals. Therefore, the present study was designed to assess the severity of stress among the software professionals based on demographic factors using professional life stress scale questionnaire (David Fontana, 1989) and to find out the amount of stress caused by professional work alone.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. A. Chandra Mohan, K. D. Balaji and T. Kishore Kumar stated that "Stress is not only a phenomenon of western world but also in Asia. India ranks only after Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand, China, Singapore and Japan at the rate of 6.1 on a ten -point rating scale. Stress in India can take many forms, for example, executive stress, marital stress, unemployment stress, job stress, etc. People working in the field of IT, termed as Gold-collar employees, go through a lot of anxiety, depression and loneliness because of work environment and often exhibit feeling of inadequacy, lowered self-esteem and dissatisfaction. This results in various health hazards like simple headache to severe heart problems. An

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attempt has been made in this paper to study the relationship between stress and self-esteem and impact of job stress on personal health of the employees working in IT industry. Study results show employees with high and medium self-esteem experience high level of stress. Long working hours, work pressure, erratic food intervals, Anxiety were found to be the reasons affecting personal health.”

GeetaKumari and et al., in their study found that the software employees feel stressed about daily physically, mentally or emotionally.

Pestonjee and Singh (1983) study the psychodynamics of people working in the field of computers as software or hardware personnel. In this study job satisfaction and morale were taken, as dependent variables and alienation, participation, involvement and role stress were independent variables. It was hypothesized that personas scoring high on the role stress measure would be less satisfied and obtain lower scores on the morale measure in comparison to those who scored low on the role stress measure.

In various other studies conducted by Lynch et al., Siegrist et al., and Bosma et al., found that there is budding interest of research on professional stress as there is an increasing rate of adverse effects of profession on psychological, physiological and health of personnel.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the Professional Life Stress among the software professionals in Hyderabad.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. **Sampling Strategy:** A convenient sampling strategy was used.
2. **Sample:** The sample for this study consisted of 150 employees out of which 80 were male and 70 were female; 90 were married and 60 were unmarried. The age range of the subjects was from 22 to 42 years.
3. **Sources of data:** In order to achieve the above mentioned objective, primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire (PLSS) and interview method from software professionals in Hyderabad. Secondary data was collected from magazines, newspapers, journals and the internet.
4. **Instrument:** Professional Life Stress Scale (PLSS) (British Psychological Society, 1989) is used to assess the level of stress that is experienced by the software professionals at work. It has a cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.636. It was adapted from Managing Stress, the British Psychological Society and Routledge Ltd., by David Fontana. It has four ranges of scores: <= 15 (mild stress), 16-30 (moderate stress), 31-45 (high-stress is a clear problem) and 45-60 (very high-stress is a major problem). It consists of a total of 24 questions, out of which 11 are yes/no questions, 2 are self-evaluative questions, 10 questions are multiple choice and one question consists of 22 sub questions which are based on common features of life events and the individual has to agree or disagree with each statement.
5. **Tools:** Percentage method and mean method were the tools used for analysing the data.

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V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Percentage analysis of Demographic factors of the selected software professionals

Inferences:

S.no	Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	22-27 years	40	27
	28-32 years	58	38
	33-37 years	27	18
	38-42 years	25	17
2	Gender		
	Male	80	53
	Female	70	47
3	Marital status		
	Married	90	60
	Unmarried	60	40
4	Education		
	UG	88	59
	PG	62	41
5	Service		
	<=5 years	48	32
	6-10 years	56	37
	11-15 years	32	22
	16-20 years	14	9
6	Annual Income		
	<= 5,00,000	56	37
	5,00,001-10,00,000	42	28
	10,00,001-15,00,000	33	22
	15,00,001-20,00,000	15	10
	>20,00,000	4	3
7	Working hours per day		
	6- 8 hours	59	39
	9-11 hours	62	42
	12-14 hours	29	19
8	Position / level		
	Low level	40	27
	Middle level	90	60
	Top level	20	13

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From the above table1 it is inferred that a majority of the respondents (38%) fell in the age group of 28-32 years, 53% are males, 60% are married, 59% are under graduates, 37% work for around 6-10 hours a per day, 37% get the annual salary less than or equal to Rs. 5, 00,000, 42% of the respondents work for 9-11 hours per day and 60% of the professionals belong to middle level.

VI. FINDINGS

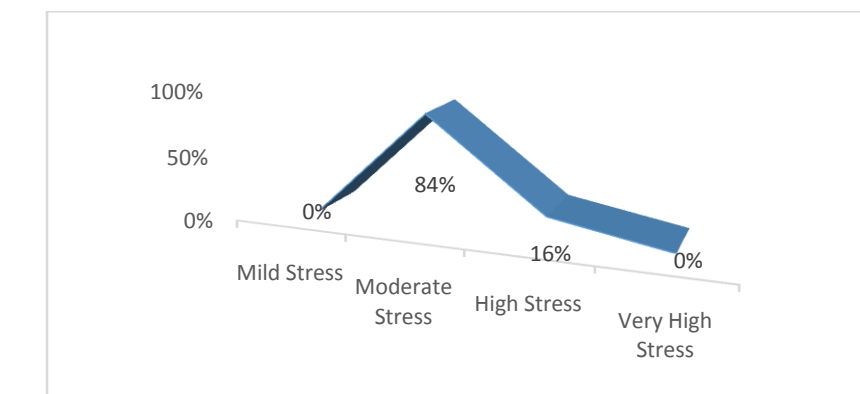


Fig1: Percentage distribution of PLSS score in the software professionals

Fig.1 shows the analysis of Professional Life Stress Scale (PLSS) score among the study group revealed, that 126 (84%) of them showed moderate stress and 24 (16%) exhibited high level of stress. There were none in the group who showed mild or very high level of stress.

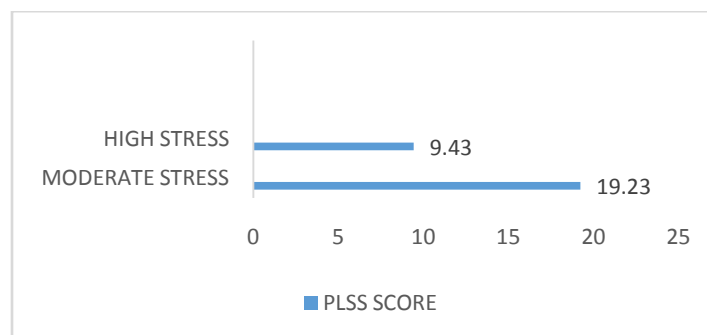


Fig 2: PLSS Score in software professionals

Fig.2 reveals that the mean Professional Life Stress Score in the moderate stress group was 19.23 and in the high stress group it was 9.43.

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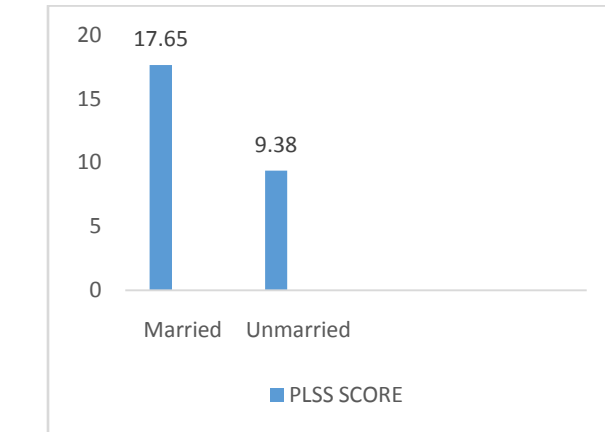


Fig 3: PLSS Score in married and unmarried software professionals

Fig.3 indicates that the married professionals experienced more stress (mean PLSS Score=17.65) than unmarried professionals (mean PLSS score= 9.38). There was no significant differences of the mean PLSS score for male and female software professionals.

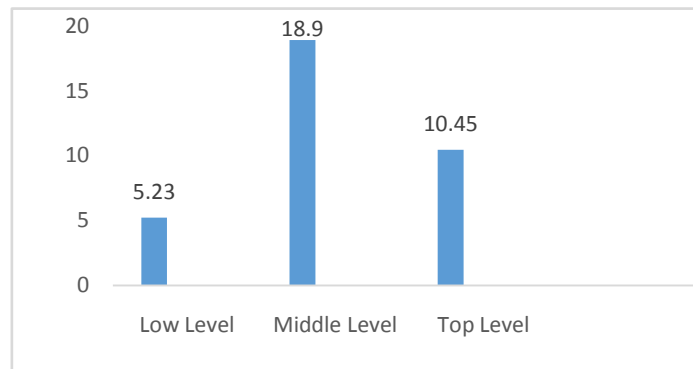


Fig 4: Mean PLSS Score in different levels in software professionals

Fig.4 states that when analysed based on the level / position in the organisation the middle level software professionals exhibited higher levels PLSS score when compared to other levels.

VII. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the findings of the study, it can be understood that the moderate and high stress in long term will lead to severe psychological and physiological changes in software professionals. To overcome such problems preventive strategies like Yoga, Meditation, doing Regular exercises and proper Diet can be done at individual level and training sessions in Stress Management can be done at organisational level.

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VIII. LIMITATIONS

1. The study is limited to the software professionals working in Hyderabad.
2. The sampling method adopted is convenience sampling and the sample size was restricted to 150 hence the results attained cannot be universal.
3. The study is confined to NASSCOM registered organisations only.
4. Analysis of the data was done using percentage and mean method.

IX. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The survey can be piloted among a larger sample of software professionals which would facilitate in generalization; and for more accurate data analysis advanced techniques can be used with the help of SPSS 21.0 version.

X. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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