



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS RESEARCH
Volume 12 Issue 3 Version 1.0 March 2012
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-4588 & Print ISSN: 0975-5853

Stress Management in the two most well-known intensive labor oriented shrimp processing factories of Khulna city, Bangladesh

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Abstract - Workplace stress is a frequent setback facing most of the cases by the managers at all levels in all types of organization. Although stress is inherent in life and human workplace stress is not confined to the workplace, but it is frequently brought home as well increasingly, employers, trade unions, and health and safety representatives at work are finding guidance on the nature and causes of the problem and on the organizational requirements relating to its prevention and control. A number of factors are considered here, for example, the multidimensionality of the nature of workplace stress, the definition of stress, the direct relationship between stress and behavior, coping with stress and the diversified stress management strategies taken by the management of different organization. In labor oriented shrimp processing factories the promptness of stress very common and in the light of those incidents the stress handling strategies are taken accordingly.

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GJMBR - A Classification : FOR Code: 150305, 150311, JEL Code: M12, O15



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I. INTRODUCTION

The multidimensionality of stress, according to Hogan and Joyce (1982), is evidenced by the fact that it takes different forms and is the concern of different fields, for example, Clinical and Applied Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychosomatic Medicine, Industrial Relations and Epidemiology. Stress can influence individual behavior either negatively or positively. It is first necessary to understand the person and environmental circumstances before the cause of stress is understood researcher find that the environment must be dealt with first, which means that multiple variables have first to be tackled and stress which can be detrimental to health. Pressure is part and parcel of all work and helps to keep us motivated; but if demands and pressures ('stresses' and 'stressors') become too great, they can induce, in anyone, the harmful or potentially harmful mental and physical Manuscript received "Date 15th January 2012" feelings and reactions commonly known as 'stress'. If key stuff or a large number of workers are affected, work stress may challenge the healthiness and performance of the organization. Unhealthy organizations do not get best from their workers and this may affect not only their

performance in the increasing competitive market but eventually even their survival. Shrimp industry is one of the biggest industries in Bangladesh. Secondary studies extensively indicate that the Shrimp industry of Bangladesh is one of the most important contributors for economic sustenance at present and is the second largest export commodity of the country. In addition Bangladesh produces 2.5 percent of the global production of shrimp generating more than US\$300 million annually. But recently the industry suffers from significant production inefficiencies and is exposed to important social and environmental risks. The sector suffers from a lack of vision and strategic direction. However, the contribution of the industry both in terms of helping the poor as well as earning foreign exchange is immense and thus is considered by many as the future prospect of the country. Therefore, to research on Stress Management in Shrimp Industry is a consequential issue.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The title of the report reveals the objectives.

1. To explore the sources of stress in shrimp industry of Khulna city
2. To detect how individuals are coping with stress
3. To find out what the organization is doing to reduce the stress level of the employee

III. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The scope is limited within the analysis of the sources of stress in shrimp industry and how the individual employees are coping with it and also enclose what the organizations are doing to reduce the level of stress of its employees. Information is collected through questionnaire survey to the employees and managers of the shrimp industry situated in Khulna region.

For secondary data, various web sites, books and journals are used to get the needed information. The samples have been taken on judgment sampling method .5 point Likert scale is used for measuring the satisfaction level of the steps taken into account to manage the stress of the employees. Study instrument is questionnaire and a 5 point Likert scale is used as the questionnaire type. 5 point Likert scale is stating the

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agreeableness and disagreeableness to each of the statement regarding their experience. *Scores assigned to the categories are "5 for highly satisfied", "4 for satisfied", "3 for Indifferent", "2 for dissatisfied", and "1 for highly dissatisfied"*

IV. STRESSORS AT SHRIMP INDUSTRY OF KHULNA CITY

To get the true picture of stress level and stress management in the shrimp industry in Khulna city, two firms have been surveyed. These are Gemini Sea Food Ltd. and Oriental Fish Processing and Culture Ltd.

Gemini Sea Food Ltd. (GSFL) is a renowned frozen shrimp exporter in Bangladesh. GSFL acquires shrimp from the cultivators, processes it in their own plant and exports to the USA, UK and other Eastern countries. The Head Office of GSFL is in Dhaka, Branch office is in Khulna and factory is in Rupsha. In Khulna their main office is in Ahsan Ahmed road. It is a production-oriented firm and has 300 workers in the factory. They work in two shifts consists of 12 hours each

Oriental Fish Processing and Culture Ltd. (OFPCCL) is a shrimp processing company, started its operation on the year 1991. It also exports the shrimp product to UK, USA and in some other European countries. It has 69 regular workers in the factory. And all of them are female. But at the peak season it hires some workers on a contractual basis. Both the head office and factory are situated in Khan-A-Sabur Road, Khulna, Bangladesh.

The shrimp processing industry operates only in a specific season of the year. The peak season for shrimp collection and processing is from March to November. So there are so many reasons to create stress to the workers at the peak season. Some of these affect the physical health of the workers and some indirectly affects their performance. Which may lead to lesser productivity, lesser quality performance or it may increase absenteeism or turnover. The main reasons of generating stress in the work place are segregated in two main sections-

- ✓ Organizational stressors
- ✓ Life stressors.

While working in the office or factories the employees may face external and internal pressure for a number of reasons. For individual, whether he/she is a worker or manager, individual stress can have an effect on him/her work. The stressors are

Poor lighting system/ Ventilation: In case of Gemini Sea food Ltd. both the ventilation and the lighting system inside the factory is at a standard level. On the other hand Oriental Fish Processing and Culture Ltd. the lighting and ventilation is quite standard for the comfort level of the workers. Both the firms have got company fitness certificate from EU and USFDA. It has

been found from the survey that the ventilation and lighting system of both the factories have a very little role in creating stress among the workers.

Congested work space: In GSFL the factory layout is properly organized and the workers has appropriate space to do their assigned work in the right way. Despite being smaller, OFPCL is also maintaining a properly-planned working condition for the workers

Uncomfortable temperature: Working under extreme temperature for longer time causes stress for the workers. The same result is occurred when the workers need to work long time in improperly heated or cool factories. In GSFL some of the employees feel a little stress while working under the low temperature. OFPCL workers are also prone to get stressed under the low temperature.

Overcrowding: Both the factories hire contractual laborers when they have to finish any order within a shorter stipulated time. In GSFL some of the employees feel stress while they have to work in an overcrowded environment. Their concentration gets hampered in such a condition. In the firm OFPCL, the workers are also tending to get stressed under the overcrowding surroundings. It hampers their free movement and also create conflict among the workers.

Occupational danger: In case of processing the workers need to work with unsafe devices like knife, scissors. Without using proper safeguard like gloves or musk increase the accident probabilities and health hazards.

Ambiguous role -no clear instruction about roles: The quality and productivity also decrease as a result of ambiguous role of the workers. In GSFL it has detected that the workers sometimes get confused with their role inside the organization. They are not provided with clear cut instruction from their supervisors to do their job. This problem is prominent mostly in the management level. Role ambiguity is also one of the sources for raising the stress level of the employees of OFPCL.

Life Stressors: Outside the organization some critical incidents may take place in the life of the workers. Most of the time this change bring burden for the workers such as Constant family pleasure Increase demand because of family expansion. For example for the new born baby the family demand also increased as well as cost. Increased emphasis on education, price level fluctuation, diversified demand pattern create huge pressure and that brings stress

V. CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Stress can have a number of consequences. If the stress is positive the result may be more energy, enthusiasm, and motivation. But from the survey it is found that the stress the employees are encountering are negative stresses most of the time. It can produce

individual consequences, organizational consequences and burnout as well. The individual consequences of stress are the outcomes that mainly affect the individual performance. The organization also suffers by the individual consequences of stress. Some times directly and some times indirectly stress hampers the organizational output but the stressed people pay the real price. The individual consequences directly affect the organizational performance. Most of the time stressed workers decline the overall organizational performance or bring negative changes in their attitude. The organizational image also hampered by the direct effect of stress.

VI. COPING STRATEGIES: AS WAY TO BATTLE WITH STRESS

In today's competitive business world, huge work pressure to increase productivity, improve quality and cost control, constant deadlines from the organizations as well as from family, tough and vulnerable economic condition, desire to get faster and better result impose people to engage most of their time at work. It can indeed increase performance, higher profit and faster growth, but it may create stress and other side effects. If any organization wants to achieve the expected profit level they cannot avoid themselves from stress. Because the current demanding environment bound them to act such way. So the organization as well as the individual wants to adjust with the stress in positive way to keep it minimum and also overcome from the unexpected situation. To survive up with stress, different endurance strategies are taken individually and by the authority of the organizations.

To keep the stress level minimum the organizational coping strategies are ;

- ✓ Ensure pleasure work design
- ✓ Convenient work schedule
- ✓ Increase employees' autonomy & control
- ✓ Keep employees up-to-date with technology
- ✓ Increase employee's involvement in decision making
- ✓ Employee fitness program
- ✓ Reward
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary competition

VII. STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL EDGE

Most of the cases stress is extensive and disrupt the normal organizational activities. So it is essential to control stress most effectively and manage it effectively. In different organizations stress management strategies have been developed in different ways. According to the requirement of the employees and workers, stress management policies are designed there. The authority always try to design their job in such a way that it can maintain a smooth

working environment by keeping the minimum stress level so that it may not hamper the usual working atmosphere.

For controlling, managing and minimizing the level of stress in the organization, the authorities of Oriental Fish Processing and Culture Ltd. and Gemini Sea Food Ltd., have taken some strategies. The satisfaction level of the workers and the employees are measured on the basis of the acceptance of the measures taken for them.

Job Security & Career Development

Opportunity: Job security increases the deliberation and contribution to job. On the other hand career opportunity keeps the workers in their existing job. Oriental Fish Processing and Culture Ltd. and Gemini Sea Food Ltd., provide job security and career development opportunity within a package which contains adequate Job Security and Certain Salary structure and regular Increment.

Table 1: Career and development opportunities of the organization

Career & Development opportunity	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	17	85%
Satisfied	2	10
Indifferent	1	5
Dissatisfies	0	0
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

From the above table and chart it is obvious that the large portion that is, 85% of the employees are highly satisfied with the measure taken to reduce the degree of stress of the employees. And rests of them are satisfied. Both organizations are successful to manage stress in their workstation.

Emphasize to improve the Physical condition of the organization: The physical condition of the factory must have to be well-organized to maintain the predetermined requirement of the exporters. It includes proper lighting, ventilation, adequate work space, wash room facility, fire exit and extinguisher, spacious stairs etc.

Without being properly accepted by the global importers, the firm could not get the fitness certificate, which is an essential prerequisite to get the order. So the firms maintain the physical condition for its own sake, and this eventually help the workers to trim down their stress level.

Table 2 : Physical condition of the organization

Improve the Physical condition of the organization	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	18	90%
Satisfied	1	5
Indifferent	1	5
Dissatisfies	0	0
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

With out the fitness certificate no organization can get the permission to start their business. For this reason both organizations is trying to maintain a standard working environment for the workers. From the above table I can easily find that 90% of the workers expressed their higher satisfaction about the working environment. Rest of 10% said they are satisfied and indifferent about the issue divided into two parts equally

Reward and Incentive Structure of the Organization: To encourage performance improvement and provide a stress free working surface both organizations arrange different programs like;

- ✓ **Picnic:** Seasonal picnic arrangement is common in both of the organizations.
- ✓ **Occasional gift:** In different occasion like Eid or Puza the management facilitates the by providing special leave, dress, special feast etc.
- ✓ **Sports and cultural program:** For the entertainment of the workers in different occasion the management arrange sports and cultural program

Table 3 : Reward and incentive structure of the organization

Reward and incentive structure of the organization	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	13	65%
Satisfied	3	15
Indifferent	2	10
Dissatisfies	2	10
Very Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

From the total workers above table I can see the more than average workers are highly satisfied with the reward and incentive structure of the organization.

work place Counseling: Proper counseling is a important aspect to provide mental support to the workers. When they get the opportunity to disclose and discuss their problems with the counselor. In both of the factories there is no option to get professional

counseling facility. But the workers may have a discussion with their superiors in case of problems and if needed they can go to higher authority for solving the trouble.

Table 4 : Counseling at work place

Counseling at work place	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	0	0%
Satisfied	6	30%
Indifferent	12	60%
Dissatisfies	2	10%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

Because the absence of professional counsellor, most of the workers expressed that they are indifferent about the organizational counselling. The workers are not that much aware about the significance of counselling at work place.

Insurance facilities: For shrimp processing industries, workers need to work under such a situation where there are several reasons to cerate hazardous situation. Problems like-skin diseases, breathing problem, high blood pressure, dizziness are very common. Both the organizations provide health insurance facilities for all workers.

Table 5 : Insurance facilities

Insurance facilities	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	4	25%
Satisfied	12	60%
Indifferent	1	10%
Dissatisfies	2	5%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

From the very beginning both of the organizations provide necessary insurance facilities for its permanent workers. 25% workers are highly satisfied with the available insurance facilities. But 60% of the workers expressed their satisfaction and also expressed their expectation to increase the available facilities.

Communication and information flow: As a result workers get necessary information they needed and convey their requirements to the higher authority. For stress management this communication flow works as a tonic for the workers as ill as management. Because here workers can be relaxed, that they will get proper instruction from management about their duties.It

will not create any uncertain work demands from the organization and keep the workers free from stress.

Table 6 : Communication and information flow

Communication and information flow	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	16	80%
Satisfied	2	10%
Indifferent	2	10%
Dissatisfies	0	0%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

The workers expressed their higher satisfaction, it is 80% that they get necessary instruction and information from higher authority.

First-aid and medical facilities: At the time of full demand, worker need to stay at the organization longer time than they do other seasons. So stress becomes is a common incident here. The probability of small accidents also increases. It includes cutting hand, dizziness, headaches etc. At these events they are provided with first-aid facilities.

Table 7 : First-aid and medical facilities

First-aid and medical facilities	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	11	55%
Satisfied	3	15%
Indifferent	4	20%
Dissatisfies	2	10%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

Because of delayed treatment, about 20% workers are dissatisfied with the prevailing medical facilities.

Work flexibility: Hard and fast rules does not work always to improve the Productivity, rather it can create unnecessary pressure and stress and reduce the productivity ultimately. It is true that there is no option of time management, but work freedom inspires the workers to work more with eagerness. Though the workers of both of the organizations enjoy monthly fixed salary facility, but the organization always try to maintain a standard level productivity. The organizations does not fixed the working hour very strictly, rather they provide the flexibility to interchange the shift among the workers if they need to.

Table 8 : Flexibility and Freedom at work

Flexibility and Freedom at work	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	16	80%
Satisfied	1	5
Indifferent	3	15%
Dissatisfies	0	0.00
Very Dissatisfied	0	0.00
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

Because of the presence of exchanging shift facilities, 80% workers are highly satisfied by the flexible work environment of the organizations.

Conflict handling at workplace: The management of these processing factories always ready to assists through their straightforward activities regarding to manage conflict at the organization. To minimize the stress level and avoid any unexpected situation the authority always keep the conflict minimum between employees/workers with higher authority. Normally conflict is created with the temporary workers who are haired in the peak season of shrimp. But the problem is handled very tactfully with the conductors. The management is very much cautious to wipe out any kind of disruption and keep away their permanent workers such type of situation.

Table 9 : Conflict handling at work place.

Conflict handling at work place	No. of employees	% of employees
Highly Satisfied	15	75%
Satisfied	5	25%
Indifferent	0	0.00
Dissatisfies	0	0.00
Very Dissatisfied	0	0.00
Total	20	100%

Source: Field Survey

All the workers are highly satisfied about the actions taking by the authority in different problem situation. The effectiveness of the management helps the workers to keep stress free most of the time. 100% workers agreed that the management as well as the higher authority is very much conscious in solving any conflict immediately.

Other Stress Management Arrangement: For stress management at the organizations higher authority have taken some other strategies as:

- ✓ Walk-around inspection
- ✓ Monitoring
- ✓ Regular supervision of quality control department
- ✓ Consult with association

The level of stress in both the organization is at its minimum. As a result the organizations need lesser managerial responsiveness towards stress management at work place. Till now none of the companies have encountered any law suite regarding its HR activities and have achieved USFDA certificate and environment friendly certificate from the authority.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The term "job stress" is a buzz word today and peoples of all the level of the organization are facing it continually throughout the world. The Shrimp industry of Bangladesh is one of the most important contributors for economic sustenance at present and is the second largest export commodity of the country. The survey result depicts that the workers of the industry or more or less optimistic to their personal and professional life. Most of them poses external locus of control and they are fine with what they get from the life. Some of the workers get stressed mostly from monotonous work nature, temperature of the workplace. They are also stressed with job insecurity, excessive work load at peak-season, lack of advancement opportunity. Even they are inclined to get stressed by the personal life that is of changing life style, violence at home, price hike etc. The effect of occupational stress could be individual or/and organizational. It has been found that people are encountering some physical and psychological problems while they are under stress. The organization also face some crisis comes from individual problems such as poor performance level, drop the productivity & quality, increased absenteeism, being irritable dealing with other and so forth. But after all most of the employees are concerned about their organization and they care for their workplace as their second home. The firms have taken several steps to manage the stress pattern and these includes providing adequate job security, forming a certain salary structure, improving the physical condition of the organization, arranging annual picnic, providing occasional gift etc. But there is the absence of professional counseling and the workers are not provide any formal training to cope up with job stress.

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