Mental Health at Workplace- Indian Scenario

Mazumdar M[1]* and Prasham K[2]

[1]Department of Psychiatry, Pacific Medical College and Hospital, India

[2]Lecturer and Rehabilitation Psychologist, MLSU, India

Corresponding author: Mohua Mazumdar, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Pacific Medical College and Hospital, Bedla Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, Tel: 91+7424920632; Email: mohua.mazumdar92@gmail.com

Introduction

Mental health at the workplace is becoming a significant concern in India, with increasing mental health issues such as burn-outs, stress, anxiety, and depression among employees. The Indian workplace mental health scenario is complex, with social, cultural, and economic factors contributing to this pertinent issue. More often than not, as mental health professionals, on a regular basis, we have been encountering a fairly decent number of employees working at different sectors (IT, Finance, Marketing, Sales, Hospitality, Travel) finding it difficult to tackle the pressure of their said jobs, odd and long working hours, traveling to sites, meeting deadlines etc.

We already are aware of the fact that the country's growth and development lies in the hands of the working sector and the financial status and GDP are maintained because of the population that contributes significantly through each of these sectors. The major chunk of working class belongs to the age group of 25- 40 years on an average in our country and therefore, sound mental and physical health of each of these individuals therefore is a matter of concern.

If we were to discuss the statistics as per our reports from various sources:

- 50% of India's workforce experiences stress (CII, 2020).
- 45% of employees report depression or anxiety (WHO, 2019)
- 30% of employees face burnout (Gallup, 2020)
- Mental health issues cost Indian businesses ₹1.5 trillion annually (WHO, 2019)

The Roadblocks are as Discussed Below which Include

Stigma and shame surrounding mental illness: The lack of freedom to be able to openly talk about one's own mental health and the existing number of myths deeply ingrained in the minds of people since ages that creates a barrier is painstaking.

Limited access to mental health resources: The lack of awareness and accessibility to reach out to skilled professionals during the time of crisis makes people vulnerable to falling deep into pits of darkness and turning hopeless with nowhere to go or inability to find a direction to seek help for their health.

Long working hours and burnout: In this fast paced competitive world one has to put in double and triple the efforts to survive and sustain his or her position firmly in the company. Any sort of complacency could lead to being served a memo or in worse situations call for termination of services. In this maddening rat race, a person is bound to lose out on adequate hours of sleep, exercise, and give in to fatigue along with possibilities of developing health issues such as hypertension, migraine, cervical issues, gastrointestinal problems , and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, insomnia, burnouts, stress related disorders so on and so forth.

Poor work-life balance: "To cut the cake and have it too" is an age old saying which doesn't quite feel anymore applicable to the working class group. Working long hours is tedious and tiresome for an individual. It not just deteriorates the quality of work being produced in the long run, but it simultaneously disrupts the personal life of the employee. He or she is unable to strike a fine balance between work and home responsibilities, eventually losing out on one of the

fronts. Being able to look after self, job and family is of prime importance.

Inadequate managerial training and support: A healthy competitive environment which promotes growth of both the individual and the company together is something that needs to be addressed and brought in to for better functioning and development of the company.

Every company therefore needs to hire a group of people who are able to identify those individuals who are facing issues at work and guide them and motivate them to seek professional assistance maintaining anonymity to reduce the added pressure on them.

Cultural and Societal Pressures: Indian Workplace Mental Health Initiatives include:

- **Mental Health First Aid Training:** Organizations like Wipro, Tata Steel, and Infosys offer training programs.

- **Wellness Initiatives:** Organizations like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon offer wellness programs.

- **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** Companies like IBM, HCL, and Accenture provide EAPs.

- **Mental Health Days:** Some companies, like Netflix, LinkedIn, celebrate mental health days to commemorate the occasion and also raise awareness amongst their employees.

There are Government Initiatives such as:

- **Mental Healthcare Act (2017):** Decriminalizes attempted suicide and ensures access to mental health services.

- **National Mental Health Programme (NMHP):** Aims to promote mental health and prevent mental illness.

Our Aim for the Future Lies in:
- Integration of mental health into organizational culture

- Providing access to mental health resources and support

- Fostering work-life balance and flexibility

- Training managers to recognize and address mental health issues

- Encouraging open conversations and reduce stigma.

Newer concepts such as paternity leave, menstrual period leave, leave to cope up with a mishap (death of a loved one, natural calamity/ disaster) etc. are also in the pipeline which are being discussed in companies especially in the IT sector which would be another strong initiative that could reduce the burden on the mental health of the employee, ensure smoother functioning and increased productivity by the employees and overall positive growth of the company and the sector on the larger scale.

To conclude, in my opinion mental health at our workplace settings require attention and action. Strengthening the workforce by providing safe, secure and happy environment for an employee would be beneficial for the company and allowing every employee to voice out their concerns and addressing them and providing the necessary support for the same would mitigate stigma, reduce the cost of expenses for healthcare and aid in delivering best services by their own people. Organizations, governments, and individuals must collaborate to create a supportive environment, reduce stigma, and promote a holistic balance and thereby improve the overall mental wellbeing.