



# Differentials in Stressors and Stress Responses among Males and Female's employees in BPO,s in India – a Rational Review

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## Abstract

*Though stress is an inherent part of human life and no-one can escape from it, but its impact can be different for different individuals. Many studies have been done on stress; the aim of this paper is to review the literature available on stress on human being. Now a days, a number of organizations in India using outsourcing processes which has changed the working culture of the firms. Various new requisites for working in new working environment affected the employees. Thus to maintain the balance between this traditional and new working styles, stress level among the employees has been increased. With the huge amount of information available online, the stress management is a fertile area for management research. However, there is a lot of confusion when comparing research efforts from different author's point of view. In this paper, discussion is about various stressors and stress responses. Also comparison between stressors and stress responses by each gender is done. This paper is a compilation of the research study on the stress field which also covers the study of stress in the BPO Industry. Paper includes various reviews categorized into three divisions (i) evolution of stress (ii) Various stressors in the BPO Industry (iii)*

*women stress and the stress responses by different genders. The information available in this paper can be fruitful for policy makers, practitioners to create possible harmonious environment in the firms and implementation of management programs.*

## Keywords:

BPO; Outsourcing; Women stress; Gender difference; Stressors

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Concept of Stress:

The origin of notion of stress predates antiquity. The word 'Stress' has been derived from the latin word 'Stringere'. Stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain. It was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person. In engineering and physics, the term 'stress' implies an external force or pressure which is exerted to a metal. In psycho-physiology, stress refers to some stimulus resulting in a detectable strain that cannot be accommodated, distort and being



resisted by the object or by an organism and which ultimately results in impaired health or behavior of an individual. Stress is complex and often misunderstood. The results of stress are harmful to individuals, families, society and organizations. Stress is a state wherein expected functioning gets disrupted.

## 1.2 Definitions

Stress has been called 'the invisible' but it can be easily felt due to special effects on human's physical and emotional health. Stress is a wide phenomenon as it seems to have universal

- (i) As the stimulus acting on the organism
- (ii) As the response or changes in physiological functions
- (iii) As an interaction between an external

## 2. Literature Review:

There is a huge literature available on the term 'stresses'. Different researchers has studied and experimented "Stress" on human beings in

### 2.1 Review of the Early-Staged Researches on the Stress Field:

A large number of studies have been conducted

spread. Stress has been defined in many ways, but most definition says that stress is caused by a stimulus that can be either physical or psychological and how an individual responds to the stimulus OR Stress is a person's adaptive responses to a stimulus that places excessive demands on that person. Stress is one of the mental condition or state of mind which acts like a disease. Stress is a disease that may affect an individual, organization, and its employees, therefore no one cannot afford to ignore it.

The term stress has been approached in at least four different ways.

- force and the resistance opposed to it
- (iv) As a comprehensive phenomenon encompassing all above three.

various environments and given their results as a verified study. Following are the tabular representation of these results to provide a clear description about the word 'Stress'.

in the field of stress till date but still lot has to come in the future .Following review table is discussing some of the brief results :

| Study                                     | Year       | Focus /Research methods                                                                                                                | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Selye, Hans, Canadian physician [14],[15] | 1930, 1956 | Experimented on rats to show that if the organism is severely damaged by acute nonspecific nocuous agents, a typical syndrome appears. | Discover the 'General Adaptation Syndrome' which consists of three phases: Alarm Reaction, Resistance and Exhaustion.                                                                                                                      |
| Walter B. Cannon,[5]                      | 1939       | Focused on the role of the sympathetic nervous system in adaptation of stress.                                                         | Coined the terms 'fight-or-flight responses' and 'Homeostasis'.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Kahn, R.L.[19]                            | 1964       | Work on role conflict and role ambiguity was the pioneer effort in organizational studies in India.                                    | proposed the concept of 'Organizational Role Stress', and the Author also found that some personality dimension included emotional sensitivity, introversion – extroversion , flexibility- rigidity and the need for career achievement is |



|                                                |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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|                                                |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | experience as work stress.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Lazarus R.S.[22]                               | 1966 | Physiological, psychological and social aspects of stress.                                                                                                                                                                     | He defined 'stress' as a generic term for the whole area of problems that includes stimuli producing stress reactions; the reactions themselves and the various intervening process.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Pareek's[26]                                   | 1976 | Author opened new vistas in the area of stress research, when he proposed his model of role space & role set to define various types of role stressors.                                                                        | His Organizational Role Stress Scale (ORSS) is now being used by many researchers as a stress research tool which comprised of the dimensions: Inter-Role Distance (IRD), Role Stagnation (RS), Role-Expectation Conflict (REC), Role Erosion (RE), Role Overload (RO), Role Isolation (RIs), Personal Inadequacy (PI), Self/Role conflict (S/RC), Role Ambiguity (RA), and Resource Inadequacy (RIn) .     |
| Terry A. Beehr ,<br>JohnE.Newman               | 1978 | The empirical research that has been done was reviewed by the authors within the context of six facets. The seventh facet was adaptive responses, A general and a sequential model was proposed for tying the facets together. | Author concluded that some of the major problems of the research in the employee's stress related area were: confusion in the use of terminology regarding the elements of job stress, relatively weak methodology within specific studies, the lack of systematic approaches in the research, the lack of interdisciplinary approaches, and the lack of attention to many elements of the specific facets. |
| Srivastava & Singh [30]                        | 1981 | Constructed instrument to measure stress is the 'Occupational Stress Index'                                                                                                                                                    | This instrument consists of twelve occupational stresses ,as measured by this scale are - Role Overload, Role Conflict, Responsibility for Persons, Powerlessness, Intrinsic, improvement, Strenuous Working Conditions, Role Ambiguity, Group & Political Pressures, Under Participation, Poor Peer Relations, Low Status, Un profitability.                                                               |
| Stephan J. Motowidlo ,<br>John S. Packard.[28] | 1986 | The author has used a stress model which follows the thinking of Lazarus, Osier (1952) and Leventhal (1968). This model presumes (a) that subjective stress leads to affective states such as                                  | Paper Presenter emphasized the negative implications of stress to elaborate the dysfunctional and socially costly effects on job performance instead of its physiological or arousal components. This study describes that after                                                                                                                                                                            |



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|--------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    |      | anxiety, hostility, and depression and to decrements in aspects of job performance, and (b) that it is caused by specific events that occur at work.                                                                   | experiencing stressors such as noise, electric shock, bureaucratic frustration, and task load, people perform less effectively on tasks - which call for tolerance for frustration, clerical accuracy, and the ability to avoid perceptual distractions. They also become less sensitive to others in helping and an increase in aggression.                                                                                                              |
| Menno R. Kruk[22]  | 1995 | Presented the concept of the 'Hypothalamic-Pituitary-adrenal Axis (HPA axis) which is a complex set of direct influences and feedback interactions among the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, and the adrenal glands | Author discussed the interactions among these organs constitute the HPA axis, a major part of the neuroendocrine system that controls reactions to stress and regulates many body processes. Any disturbance in the HPA axis will cause post-traumatic stress disorder, burnout and irritable syndrome. It is the common mechanism for interactions among glands, hormones, and parts of the midbrain that mediate the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). |
| D.M. Pestonjee [7] | 1999 | Studied the psychodynamics of computers professionals. The sample comprised of 102 personnel.                                                                                                                          | The result revealed that inter-role distance between management and the employees, self -role distance and total role stress had a detrimental effect on all aspects of job satisfaction especially on job management, personal adjustment, social relations. Pestonjee has also developed a model to explain how we cope with stress reactions. It is called the BOUNCE model.                                                                           |

**Table 1: Review of the early-staged researches**

### 3. BPO Industry:

Outsourcing began in the early eighties when organizations started delegating their non-core functions to an external organization that was specialized in providing a particular service, function or product. In outsourcing, the external organizations take on the management of the outsourced function. Business Process Outsourcing is the fastest-growing segment of

outsourcing market. Outsourcing is required and advantageous in globalize corporate world. Jobs in BPO, s is generally divided into two categories, back office outsourcing and front office outsourcing. In the recent times, there is an endless job opportunities for those who are willing to render BPO activities starting from Call Center and Data Processing to Knowledge Services and Transcription Services. More and



more people have started to count on these jobs which are lucrative and at the same time interesting. In general, BPO jobs are fairly well-paid in relative terms.

### 3.1 International Scenario:

Over the last two decades Business Process Outsourcing has been catering to various industries such as Retail, Insurance, Mortgage, Banking and Finance, Telecommunications, Technology, and more. In the present scenario many UK and US based companies are looking at countries like India, China, Russia and Philippines to outsource their business processes. The global BPO industry will be worth \$330 billion by 2014 and India stands to gain \$50 billion of that global pie. However, the country's existing infrastructure needs a complete re-haul; workforce needs to be upgraded and there is a need for a paradigm shift in focus to tap this huge opportunity, a study of 2,500 call centers in 17 countries found that on average, 69% of frontline call center workers are women (Holman, Batt and Holtgrewe 2009), though the rate was closer to 45% in India, this is still high in comparison to the sex ratio of employment in most other industries.

### 3.2 Indian BPO Industry:

At the turn of the millennium, India can be rightly called the foster-child of globalization. The liberalization of the Indian Telecom sector in 1994 gave an unexpected boost to the ITES/BPO industry. In 1994, Raman Roy; considered to be the pioneer of the BPO industry in India, set up one of the first financial backrooms in India for American Express, Japan, where real estate costs are very high. Through joint efforts of Government and the Industry, software development and IT enabled services have emerged as niche opportunities for India in the global context.

### 3.3 Key Spoilsports of the BPO industry:

Employees of BPO work 24 hours in a day, seven days a week, taking holidays on the Fourth of July, not during prominent festivals or national holidays of India. More often than not, Zealous BPO take on more work than they can handle, forcing employees to work round the clock,

*Following are the Issues that affect the fastest growing industry:*

- Stress
- 24 X 7 work environment
- Travel time
- Repetitive nature of work.
- Pep up the energy levels
- Overtime
- Health issues
- Prolonged working in shifts
- Work Environment
- Work- Life balance

Thus we can say that all these factors generate stress among employees that need to be taken care. Most of the BPO organizations work according to the international (US and UK) timings, therefore most of the BPO employees work in night shifts starting anywhere from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. and ending at 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. There is also a graveyard shift starting at 4 a.m. give rise to organizational stress. This industry even has a name for it: BOSS - **Burn Out Stress Syndrome [10]** which is seen very commonly among young people working here. The symptoms of this syndrome include chronic fatigue, insomnia and complete alteration of 24-hour biological rhythm of the body. BPO industry has grown very fast in India in the last years, but such issues promote job insecurity which leads to increment in 'organizational Stress' among BPO, s employees.



## 4. Status of Women in the IT/ BPO Sector in India:

Women who earlier stayed at home to attend their domestic duties now maintain both work and home simultaneously, participating in the process on an equal footing with men in social and economic development. Women have moved away from their traditional roles of home worker and child rearing to social and business solutions. They play a vital role in every walk of life. It is reported that the proportion of women into the various IT based industries in India is in the order of 19 % in the software industry; 40 % in the telecom industry; and **50 % in the BPO**. The study reported several reasons employers preferred women, including a more pleasant voice and demeanor when interacting with customers, and the belief that women were more trustworthy than men. Thus, technological and regulatory changes in the BPO sector in India created a sharp and fairly sudden increase in the demand for female workers. But the Dataquest survey reveals that though women make up about 20 % of the IT workforce in India, only a few women reach the position of CEOs. As the seniority rises, the number of women shrinks. In the career pyramid, women are clustered in the bottom hierarchy. Even the few women who have struggled to reach the status of managers, have not been placed in the vital areas of work dealing with hardware and software oriented jobs, but are found in administration. Women are seen as a passive users rather than designers of Technology. Most women use ICT as a tool of production for tasks such as data entry, word processing and programming and as a tool of communication. This might be the reason for women's lower representation in higher, decision making positions; women predominate in the lower positions. However, even today women expected to do multi tasking. They have to take care of family and household even if they are working. In general we can say that there is equal emerging

opportunity for women employee to show there excellence in this field excluding some of the issues which are -

*Attrition Rate, Multiple Role, Glass Ceiling, Security Problems, Work – life balance (due to late working hours and wild partying image).*

We can say that '**Nature has given women too much power, the law gives them too little**' as there is no separate rules ( except in case of maternity phase , to some extent only ) in support of women to fill the gap during innate responsibilities on women. **Earlier The Factories Act, 1948** , under Section 66, banned working of women in night shifts by stating that no women shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours of 6 AM and 7 PM, provided some conditions mend for the employer. But later on The High Court of Mumbai in its judgment dated 10th June 1999 passed an interim order allowing deployment of women in Santa Cruz Electronic Export Processing Zones in the nightshift. The Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2005 was introduced by Union Government in Lok Sabha on 10th August 2005, which envisage that the employer ensures occupational safety and adequate protections to the women employed. Brett Graff, *Nightly Business Report* correspondent states that (because a woman may have trouble re-entering the market or, if she does find a position, it will likely be a lower position with less pay). Survey conducted by by *Dr Gauravi Mishra Consultant, Department of Preventive Oncology, Tata Memorial Hospital* revealed that smoking among women employees in the BPO and media sector is slowly on the rise.

The study conducted during a period of one year and involving more than 800 employees between four BPO units, found that 8% of BPO's women employees were smokers. Male employees in the four BPO centers surveyed



constituted 80% of the workforce, while call center women employees formed the remaining 20%. It shows that not only men but women are also suffering from a high stress. Additionally,

The work stress could also result in the breakdown of marital and other relationships. Difficulties are particularly acute for women with child-care.

Thus women are also under pressure to maintain the work - life balance According to Sylvia Hewlett, president of the *Center for Work-Life Policy*, if a woman takes time off to care for children or an older parent, employers tend to see these people as less than fully committed. Work done on the job stress on women employees is summarized as follows:

| <u>Study</u>                                              | <u>Year</u> | <u>Focus /Research methods</u>                                    | <u>Result</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Seattle based Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center [32] | 2001        | Survey on the women working in the night shift.                   | Has shown that women who work the night shift may face an increased risk of breast cancer of up to 60 percent. A recent survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation of America shows that women who do night shifts do not just miss out on family time but can expose themselves to medical problems related to lack of sleep. The physiological, emotional and biological needs of a woman are based on a rhythmic pattern of sleeping and awakening.                                                                      |
| Sudhashree, V. P., Rohith, K., Shrinivas K.[29]           | 2004        | This study reveals that , all is not well on the BPO front.       | The symptoms of BOSS syndrome include chronic fatigue, insomnia and complete alteration of biological rhythm of the body for those working 24 X 7 as the body is put under chronic stress. Author has revealed that ,as of now, no understanding of the problem exists in India due to a minimum standards code. Employee stress - and its impact on the bottom-line through high attrition rates—is not even on the horizon of concerns which is promoting dangers that are lurking in the corners of well furnished BPO offices. |
| NASSCOM Strategic Review and McKinsey and Co [25]         | 2005        | Brought to light certain amazing facts on the Indian BPO segment. | According to a NASSCOM study, the country's flourishing ITES - BPO sector is estimated to have achieved a 54 per cent growth in revenue in near future and which will also lead to increment in number of employees and more stressful life in corporate sector.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Singh, P.                                                 | 2005        | This paper reveals                                                | Author says that BPO is the only industry, which                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



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|-----------------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and Pandey, A[30]                             |      | that BPO is the best place for women empowerment.                      | has witnessed high growth for women and helped them move to the higher positions in large numbers. Gender equality, is clearly visible in the BPO industry. But even today they are expected to do multi tasking. They have to take care of family and household even if they are working. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex which contribute to their life-stress.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| ASSOCH AM[2]                                  | 2006 | A recent survey conducted by the National Sleep Foundation of America. | Study shows that women who do night shifts do not just miss out on family time but can expose themselves to medical problems related to lack of sleep. hormones and chemicals are produced when a person is awake, body organs 'rest' and are at their lowest during night time. A change in the working schedule affects all this balance and leads to sleep deprivation disturbing the rhythm of the body and negatively affecting concentration, job performance.                                                                                                                                                         |
| Kenth. [20]                                   | 2007 | Justification for protecting only women.                               | The paper studied the justification for protecting only women due to their reproductive function. Studies suggest that in consideration of their reproductive function, the excessive stress (physical or emotional), night shifts should be continuously disallowed specially for pregnant and nursing mothers and those engaged in strenuous activities. Research, has shown that women who work the night shift may face an increased risk of breast cancer of up to 60 percent and women who do night shifts do not just miss out on family time but can expose themselves to medical problems related to lack of sleep. |
| <i>BPO Employee – Satisfaction Survey</i> [3] | 2007 | Survey about Sleepless nights and salary hikes.                        | Reveals that, all is not well on the BPO front. Indian BPO employees are suffering from a variety of health related issues, right from sleep related disorders to anxiety attacks. Survey maps a disturbing trend, the ailing BPO employee. While the attrition has gone up to 20% and the average wage hike has come down to 14.8%, it is the health issues that seem to be the biggest concern. Author says that if attention is not paid soon enough they would be in the red of it, The biggest bane of BPO                                                                                                              |



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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                 |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | employees is ever increasing stress.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Tapas K Ray and Steven L. Sauter, in NORA Symposium [33]</i> | 2008 | Highlighted work-related stress.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Highlighted that work-related stress is recognized as an important risk factor for injuries and illnesses in and out of the BPO industry. However, there is an absence of reliable data on the economic costs associated with stressful working conditions borne by workers and their families, organizations, and the society in general.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Alice W. Clark and T. V. Sekher[1]                              | 2008 | Discussed that, the work stress could result in increased substance abuse and the breakdown of marital and other relationships.                                                                                                                  | Difficulties are particularly acute for women with child-care .women are more stressed to maintain the work - life balance .He discusses that if a woman takes time off to care for children or an older parent, employers tend to see these people as less than fully committed. It's as though their identity is transformed. Authors states that (because a woman may have trouble <u>re-entering</u> the market or, if she does find a position, it will likely be a lower position with less pay). A women has to struggle with the idea of leaving her career to be a full-time mom or take care of an older parent .This circumstance only increases the work-life balance stress. |
| BPO Employee Satisfaction Survey[16],[17]                       | 2009 | The survey was designed and carried out in two phases on 100 Indian BPO companies. The seven major regions covered were: Mumbai, Pune, Kolkotta, NCR, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. Survey included only call-floor executives and managers. | Survey discloses the results about the Stress Monsters and Gender Inclusivity, Results reveals that the BPO industry has never been in the good books of health consultants and doctors. From sleep disorders to digestive problems, from back aches to depression. The biggest bane of BPO employees is ever increasing stress, which is the root for numerous other physiological and psychological ailments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**Table 2: Review of the work done on job stress among women employees in the BPO's**



## 5. Gender Differences:

Different studies say different about stress responses and selection of coping skills to heal their stress by different genders. Some results suggest that men and women report different reaction to stress, both physically and mentally because of different traits of their personalities. But at the same time studies are also available to support the view of no difference in stress responses by each gender. In fact there is also difference in stressors for different genders because evidences also disclose that males often develop stress due to their career, whereas females often encounter stress due to issues and interpersonal relationship. Male's self-esteem is often built around adequacy of performance, and female self-esteem is often built around adequacy of relationships. At the same time some findings suggest that while women are more likely to report physical symptoms associated with stress, they are doing a better job connecting with others in their lives and, at times, these connections are important to their stress management strategies. To cope with various demands, women often engage in prioritizing and compromising. While we can explain that the overriding factor for men when making decisions and assessing circumstances is, "How likely am I to win or lose if I take this action?" The process is always the same - stress is asserted when he receives an assignment, he starts assessing his ability to produce a winning outcome, and depending on his answer he either goes for it or holds back. According to Esther M. Orioli, president of Essi Systems,[17] a stress management consulting firm, "Traditional stress-management programs placed the responsibility of reducing stress on the individual rather than on the organization-where it belongs. No matter how healthy individual employees are when they start out, if they work in a dysfunctional system, they'll burn out". Literature review on difference in stress responses by different genders is summarized in the following table:



| <u>Study</u>                                                   | <u>Year</u> | <u>Focus /Research methods</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <u>Results</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hobfoll, Stevan E., Dunahoo, Carla, L., Ben-Porath Yossef [13] | 1994        | The author has examined a dual-axis model of coping that included both action ( active Vs Passive ) and social dimension ( pro-social Vs antisocial ) of coping strategies among a combined sample of Men and Women. Author developed an assessment device to represent the model and allow investigation.                      | Women were more pro-social than men .Men were more likely to use antisocial and aggressive but less assertive coping strategies than women. More pro-social, action coping strategies were also more likely to be related to greater sense of mastery and more liberal gender-role orientation. Thus this study, depict women as avoidant and more prone to depression than men because they would rather manage the negative emotions first before resolving the problem.                                                                                          |
| Kenexa Research Institute [21]                                 | 2003        | Research conducted by the Kenexa Research Institute (KRI), evaluated how male and female workers perceive work-life balance. The report is based on the analysis of data drawn from a representative sample of 10,000 U.S. workers who were surveyed through Work Trends, KRI's annual survey of worker opinions                | Found that women are more positive than men in how they perceive their company's efforts to help them balance work and life responsibilities. The results indicated a shift in women's perceptions about work-life balance. In the past, women often found it more difficult to maintain balance due to the competing pressures at work and demands at home. But increase in work hours over the past two decades means that less time will be spent with family, friends, and community to grow personally and spiritually which enhances a stressful environment. |
| Gyllensten, K. and Stephen, P [11]                             | 2005        | The aim of this review was to evaluate research relating to the role of gender in the level of workplace stress. A further aim was to review literature relating to stressors of particular relevance to working women. Major databases were searched in order to identify studies on many of the studies suggested that gender | The role of gender in workplace stress and stressors was inconsistent. Conclusively, author discussed that the level of work stress, with women is higher levels of stress than men. However, several of the studies and reviews suggested that gender was not an important factor in the level of workplace stress. Consequently, considering the evidence presented in                                                                                                                                                                                            |



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|                                                                      |      | played an important role                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | the current review, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions regarding the role of gender in the level of workplace stress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine [35]                   | 2007 | Thirty-two healthy subjects -- 16 females and 16 males -- received (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scans before, during and after they underwent under pressure. The researchers measured heart rate, cortisol levels (a stress hormone), subjects perceived stress levels throughout the experiments, and regional cerebral blood flow (CBF), which provides a marker of regional brain function. | In men, it was found that stress was associated with increased CBF in the right prefrontal cortex and CBF reduction in the left orbit frontal cortex. In women, the limbic system - a part of the brain primarily involved in emotion -- was activated when they were under stress.                                                                                                                                                               |
| Galanakis,M., Stalikas, A., Kallia, H., Karagianni,C., Karela,C.[12] | 2008 | Author describes that studies investigating gender difference over the past two decades have produced contradicting results. Author has examined gender differences in occupational stress, taking into consideration the role of marital status , age , gender and education.                                                                                                                             | Results from a sample of 2775 professionals suggest that women experience higher levels of occupational stress than men. Nevertheless when marital status, age and education were introduced in the equation, no significant gender differences were identified. Researchers have identified two clusters of stress-generating factors, those related to individuals characteristics and those related to work environment.                       |
| Eaton, Rebecca J. , Bradley, Graham [8]                              | 2008 | This study investigated the role of gender and negative affectivity (NA) in stressor appraisal and coping selection. Differential exposure to stressors was controlled by requiring participants to rate the stressfulness of identical hypothetical scenarios                                                                                                                                             | As predicted, women rated the scenarios as more stressful than men, and perceptions of stressfulness increased with participant NA. Women endorsed the use of emotion-focused coping strategies more than men, even when perceived stressfulness was controlled. NA predicted use of both emotion- and avoidance-focused coping, although only the latter association remained significant after controlling for stressor appraisals. Gender × NA |



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|---------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | interaction effects were not significant. Implications for the prediction and management of stress are discussed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Sharon ,Toker. Arie, Shirom. Samuel, Melamed [31] | 2009 | The Author in this paper has demonstrated association of employee burnout or vital exhaustion with several risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and CVD risk, . Their sample included 630 women and 933 men, all apparently healthy, who underwent periodic health examinations.                                   | The authors controlled for possible confounders including two other negative affective states: depression and anxiety. In women, burnout was positively associated with CRP and fibrinogen concentrations, and anxiety was negatively associated with them. In men, depression was positively associated with CRP and fibrinogen concentrations, but not with burnout or anxiety. In addition, the women had higher levels of burnout and depression and were less physically active compared with the males. Thus, burnout, depression, and anxiety are differentially associated with micro inflammation biomarkers, dependent on gender. |
| BPO Employee Satisfaction Survey [4]              | 2010 | The survey was designed and carried out in two phases on 100 Indian BPO companies .The seven major regions covered were: Mumbai, Pune, Kolkotta, NCR, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore.The employee survey included only call-floor executives and operational managers at all levels but excluded back-end support staff.. | Another area which this study explored is Gender inclusivity – women percentage is 34.5%, close to the idealistic scenario of 40%.In 2008 there were only 28% women in the companies that were surveyed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Engman, Jessica [9]                               | 2010 | Studies found that different parts of the brain activate with different spatial and temporal profiles for men and women when they are faced with performance-related stress                                                                                                                                                 | These findings suggest that stress responses may be fundamentally different in each gender, sometimes characterized as ‘FIGHT or FLIGHT’ in men and ‘TEND and BEFRIEND’ in women.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Christy, Bennie. Tim, Huang [6]                   | 2011 | Author has investigated the relationship between trait emotional intelligence and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Results from a sample of 1025 professionals (475 male, 550 female) demonstrated that there are significant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



|                                     |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     |      | gender, considering three job-related variables (stress management, emotional management, and emotional expression). The sample consisted of 1025 participants, of whom 550 were female and 475 were male. Their ages ranged from 18 to 70. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare emotional expression, emotional management and stress management. | differences between males and females with regard to how their stress and emotions are managed and expressed. Men show greater emotional and stress management skills, while women express more emotion in their responses. The results indicate that when gender differences are examined in isolation, women appear to display lower levels of stress management and emotional management. Reason for such behavior shown by women is - as women are predominantly exposed, simultaneously to family and job related stressors.                                                                                                                      |
| Pathak, Mitali [27]                 | 2011 | research study is an attempt to explore and analysis the findings of the research studies which have been concluded in resolving and managing conflict arising through variances in stress level at the organizational hierarchy.                                                                                                                                    | According to the study, Stress can precipitate physiological changes in metabolism, increased heart rate, headaches and heart attacks although the precise nature of the relationship remains unclear. Also job-related stress can cause job-related dissatisfaction, which is itself, the single most obvious psychological effect of stress such as tension, anxiety, depression, aggression, irritability, confusion, boredom and procrastination. Author says that women rated the scenarios as more stressful than men and endorsed the use of emotion-focused coping strategies more than men, even when perceived stressfulness was controlled. |
| Monis, Herald, Sreedhara, T. N [23] | 2012 | This paper is based on an empirical study of five Indian and five foreign MNC BPO firms operating in India, ranked among the top 100 by the International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP) for the year 2009. The data was collected using both qualitative and                                                                                       | Study finds that, on an average, the level of satisfaction towards the career development practices is at 69.71 per cent and 69.82 per cent among the respondents of Indian and foreign MNC BPO firms respectively, both of which constitute 'satisfied' on the scale. ITESBPO firms under study appear to be treading the right path in                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |



|                                                 |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                 |      | quantitative methods from 243 employees of Indian MNCs and 163 employees of foreign MNC.                                                                                                                                                                                                           | terms of the practices to be adopted for the career development of their employees. But still, the problem with regard to viewing BPO jobs as a long-term career option persists.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Malhotra<br>Shefali,<br>Chadha<br>Omish<br>[24] | 2012 | The study has conducted a research on the 300 employees working in the call centers of the Mohali, Panchkula and Chandigarh. To conduct a survey non-probability cum convenience sampling techniques is used. The results are analysed with the help of descriptive, Pearson – correlation method. | This study indicates that job satisfaction is the reason to raise the stress among the employees. The result reveals that salary, job task, colleagues, sense of purpose, career path opportunity, work environment, autonomy and workload are the major variables to introduce the stress among the employees. When stress problems increase, then it gives a pressure, strain, anxiety, tension, trauma to the employees and ultimately the productivity of the employee's decreases. If stress management programs will not be introduced in the organization, then organization will have to face very critical results, which will be very difficult to handle. |

**Table 3: Literature Review on Gender Difference in Stress Management**

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion:

On a hypothetical level, the present paper aimed to add a better understanding of symptoms of stress and gender in the work place. On a practical level, the contribution of this study lies in the usage of given literature, research studies and results of the studies to adjust working conditions of the firms by taking gender into account. This is true that stressful environment is an integral element of any corporate sector, especially the BPO industry, but permissibility of stress into any organization must be up to a manageable limit because beyond a limit, person's individuality starts getting affected. Available literature reveals that work stress

among the BPO's employees is mainly due to excessive pressure of target based projects, shift culture which are the basic requirement of the business outsourcing process and due to business in different countries with different geographical timings. In spite of the fact that in the past, gender in the stress (caplan, 1980), has been studied heavily but still this is a variable for the investigations which shows the importance of gender in corporate sector.

Management must build up their employees and organizations simultaneously along with their machinery and methods to improve the performance, loyalty, ability to work and job satisfaction of their employees.



Though level of stress among males and females is not comparable but the kind of stressors and impact of stress on each gender and the stress responses by each gender is comparable.

The present review states that there is difference in stressors for each gender. Women have stressors like multi-tasking in their lives, Glass-ceiling, Gender inclusivity, Stereotyped culture, security etc which acts as barricade for women career in the BPO, whereas men also have stressor like excel in performances, job satisfaction, promotions, role ambiguity, working shifts, traveling etc which increased stress in their lives. Taking in to consideration that the given summarized literature covers the study from ancient time, it appears reasonable that changed working environment of today's organization should also be considered and requirement to repeat the research in the near future arises.

Therefore, the given literature can be used for better understanding and prevention of stress at workplace. Management should develop a new vision to design the different rejuvenating activities for their employees which should be gender based. Thus, we can say, this industry is overflowing with work stress and despite the fact that organizations are practicing various stress management techniques, gender based organizational variables should also be considered while framing the welfare policies and other plan for the organization.

## 7. Recommendations/Limitation

However, our measures to collect the literature may be limited. This paper is based on content which is available up to a specific period of time but research are going on and many new studies are on the way to completion which may present a new vista in the domain of study. Therefore there

is scope for the future researchers to add on latest data on stress to make conclusion.

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