

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS: AN EMPRICAL ANALYSIS IN BPO

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the importance and factors causing Organizational Role Stress, especially in the IT and BPO sectors and also aim that what people do to reduce stress for improving the performance levels at the same time. Considering role stress as a weakening pattern, this study has been undertaken with an aim to systematically investigate the factors causing role stress among BPO professionals. BPO's are the top and high stress workplaces in India. **Method:** The responses of all the 100 respondents were found to be suitable for inclusion in the study. Majority of the employees (55 per cent) belonged to the age bracket of 21-25 years and maximum (54 per cent) were found to be in the Band 1 level. Both men and women employees had an equal representation in the sample and the mean. The development of the research instrument was based on the existing measurement scale. Organizational Role Stress (ORS) scale developed by (Pareek, 2005) has been used. **Results:** The study have highlighted that there is a significant difference between the role stress of men and women employees of BPO sector. It was found that men experienced more role stress than women in certain cases like Inter role distance, Role Erosion, Role Isolation, Role Ambiguity and Role Inadequacy. Also by looking at the various aspects of components of role stress, it was found that women have experienced more role stress than men like Role expectation conflict, Role Overload, Personal Inadequacy and Self Role distance stress.

Key Words: Organizational Role Stress,

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Introduction:

Stress- the word itself brings a shiver. The new century has really given meaning to this word. Stress is possible everywhere, at home, school, work place etc... Everyone is under stress. It's nothing bad; neither does it always obstruct your performance. Let's look at the people who drive the heavy locomotives, dive deep in the sea, the coal miners, the mountaineers, who live with stress all the time. The notable difference is that they can handle the stress on different way. They have a capacity to take control over the factors that cause stress. Isn't it applicable to everyone? This paper looks into the modern age stress prevalent in the life at the work place based on their OR (Organizational Role). In this modern age many; they changed themselves to the IT/BPO culture. It is vital that the issue of stress in their role is addressed. So, this paper brings out the factors causing stress in employee's role, especially in the IT and BPO sectors and analyze what people do to reduce the stress and what are all the suggestions that they have given to improve the performance levels at the same time. The paper includes outcome of a sample survey done on people from different designation and their views on the topic.

Lazarus (1966) has defined "Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well-being."

"Stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioral response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over a period of time, leads to ill-health." S. Palmer (1989).

"Stress is 'perception.' It is the demands that are imposed upon us because there are too many alternatives. Stress is caused by being conscientious and hardworking" Selye (1979).

One of the pioneers of research on organizational role stress, Pareek (2002) has restates that the performance of a role in an organization has built in potential for conflict due to which stress may start rearing its head. Such stress can contribute to various dysfunctional outcomes for the organization like job related tensions, job dissatisfaction, lower performance, etc. In such circumstances, efforts to sustain a high level of work performance over time can be a tedious task for organizations as well as employees.

Considering role stress as a weakening pattern, this study has been undertaken with an aim to systematically investigate the factors causing role stress among BPO professionals. BPO's are the top and high stress workplaces in India. To explain the causes of role stress is important not only for its potential implications for stress management at BPO's but also for enhancing an understanding of strategic human resource management. With this aim, the study makes an effort to identify the sources of role stress experienced by the employees of BPO sector.

Objective of the study:

The present research had the following specific objectives:

- To study the effect of role stress in BPO.
- To know the men's and women's employees role stress in BPO.
- To find out the important factors that plays a key role in IT and BPOs.

Review of Literature:

Sharma and Devi. (2011) have examined the role stress in commercial banks. Considering role stress as a debilitating syndrome, this study has been undertaken with an aim to systematically investigate the factors causing role stress amongst bank professionals. Banks are among the top ten high stress workplaces in India. Elucidating the causes of role stress is important not only for its potential implications for stress management at banks but also for enhancing an understanding of strategic human resource management. With this aim, the study makes an effort to identify the sources of role stress experienced by the employees of commercial banking sector.

Sankpal, Negi and Vashishtha,(2010) conducted study in Gwalior city and a sample of 100 bank employees is used for data Collection – 50 each from public and sector. The instrument for data collection was the standardized questionnaire developed by Pareek. The data was collected using Likert scale. The data collected was subjected to analysis through z-test for comparing between the employees of public and private sector banks. Overall 11 hypotheses were tested. Not only was the data compared in the entirety, it was also compared on the basis of inter role distance, role stagnation, role expectation conflict, role erosion, role overload, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy.

Khetarpal A. & Kochar G.,(2006), Role stress is experienced by the persons because of their role (job) in the organization. They assume a role based on the expectation of the self and others at work place. The family members try to adjust their roles within the family and a change is being felt in their attitudes. The present study was an attempt to provide a preventive and positive approach to women experiencing stress at work and at home to find out the level of role stress and to identify key role stressors, the OSI inventory by A.K Srivastava was used. It was found that majority of women (40%) were under moderately low level of stress followed by 36% women who reported moderately high level of stress. Women experiencing very high or low stress are 12 % in each case. The key stressors which affect maximum number of women are Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment and Under-participation.

Khalique and Khalid (2009) studied the effect of occupational stress and general well-being. The study is conducted on sales & marketing professionals working in various top most companies. The Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh along with the PGI-General well-being measure developed by Verma and Verma were administered to sales professionals. It was found that role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group pressures, impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions, unreliability and responsibility of persons are the factor which contributes more occupational stress which is turn affects the General well-being of the individual. The researchers concluded that higher the occupational stress lower is the General well-being.

Khalid & khalique (2012) examined the effect of nature of job (High risk / low risk) on occupational stress of 200 workers. The Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh in 1981 was administered on these 200 workers. Results clearly indicated that nature of job (high and low risk) played a significant role in creating stress in workers. Workers doing high risk jobs showed greater stress compared to workers doing low risk jobs in both high paid and low paid categories. Role overload, role ambiguity, responsibility of persons, unreasonable group pressures, under participation, poor peer relations, low status, strenuous working conditions, unprofitability were the factors which contributed more occupational

stress. He found that high risk job workers had significantly greater stress compared to low risk job workers.

Research Methodology:

Sample: A sample of 100 employees was selected from the TATA Consultancy Services BPO in Chennai. The employees were divided into two categories male and female in the Band-1 level. Therefore, there were two sample groups and each group was represented by 50 employees, making a total of 100.

TOOLS:

The following tools have been used in the present study for the collection of data:

1. Personal Data Sheet

Personal Data Sheet was specially designed for the present study which include data related to personal identification of the workers, specially their names, addresses, factories in which they are working, designation, nature of the job and salary etc.

2. The Organizational Role Stress (ORS)

The development of the research instrument was based on the existing measurement scale. Organizational Role Stress (ORS) scale developed by (Pareek, 2005) has been used as the reference for development of the research instrument. Pestonjee (1992) observed that ORS is certainly one of the best instruments available presently for measuring role stress which is also supported by Srivastava (2007). However, to take into consideration the local requirements of employees, ORS scale of Pareek was taken as base. The base was then used to generate a 30 items scale which was designed to tap the role stress of the individuals in the organization. The scale has 10 dimensions of job life viz. Self-role distance, Role Stagnation, Inter-role Distance, Role Ambiguity, Role Expectation Conflict, Role overload, Role Erosion, Role Inadequacy, Personal Inadequacy, and Role Isolation.

Statistical Analyses:

The following statistical techniques have been used in the analysis of obtained data:

- Mean and S.D scores in ORS and its sub-scales have been calculated.

- The sub-groups based on the genders have been compared by Z-test.
- The compiled data have also been graphically shown.

Results:

Mean and Standard Deviation scores of each dimension have been obtained.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation scores of Organizational Role Stress and its sub-scales on men and women employees:

	Mean		SD	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>10 dimensions of ORS</i>				
Inter Role Distance	46.6	42.33	2.309401	0.57735
Role Stagnation	42.66	42.33	2.081665	2.516611
Role Expectation				
Conflict	37.33	40	2.516611	2.645751
Role Erosion	51.33	42.67	1.52752	2.516611
Role Overload	37.33	40	2.516611	2.645751
Role Isolation	43	42	3	2.645751
Personal Inadequacy	32.67	36.33	2.516611	3.21455
Self Role Distance	40.33	41.33	3.51188	6.1101
Role Ambiguity	37.33	35.67	2.081665	3.05505
Role Inadequacy	37.67	36.33	2.081666	2.309401
Overall	40.63	39.9	1.137248	0.655743

Figure 1

Mean scores of employees on ORS and its dimensions:

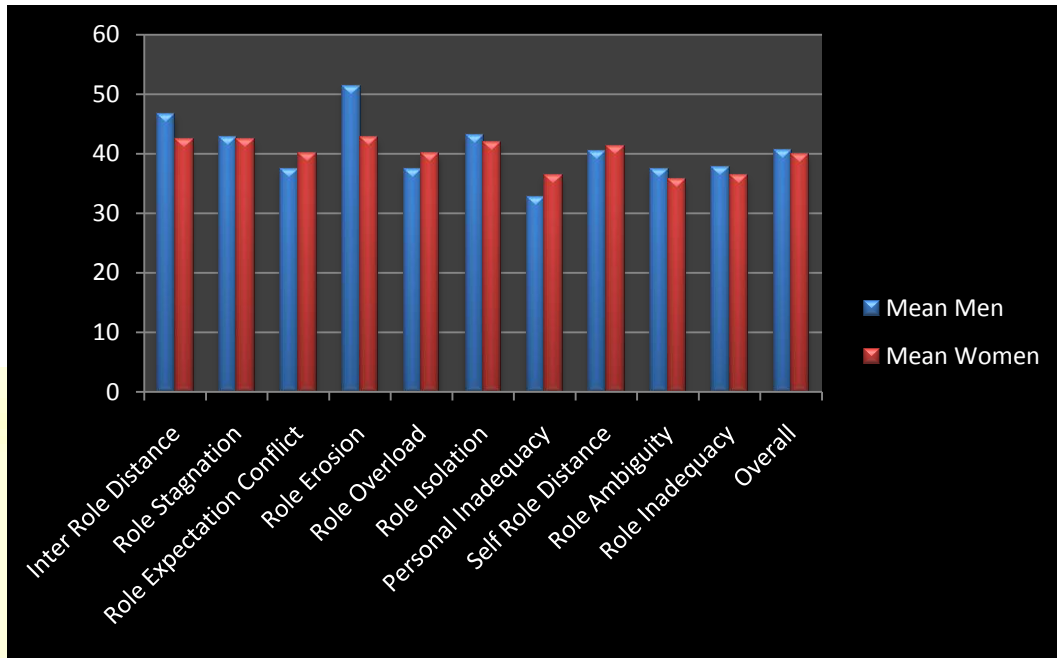
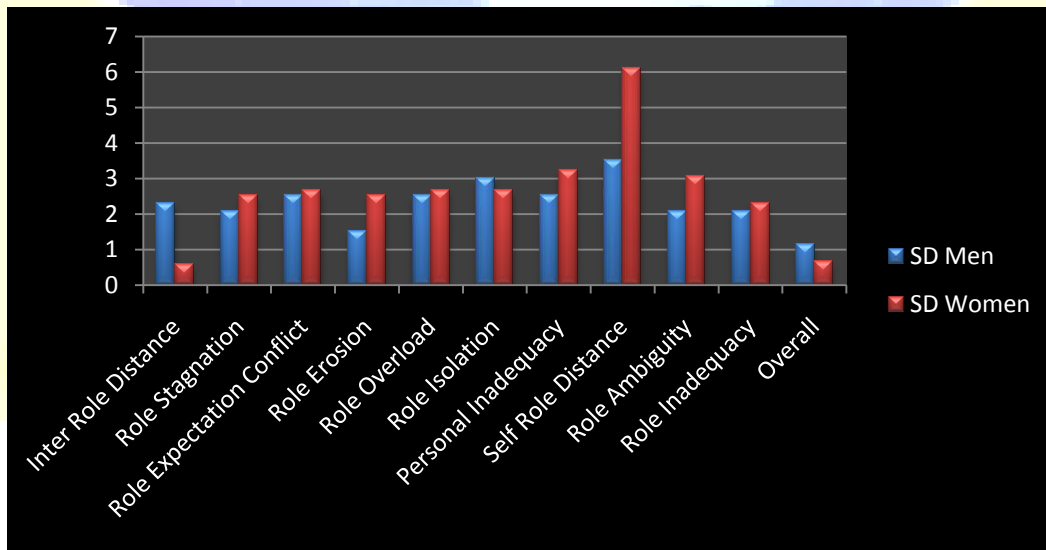


Figure 2

Standard Deviation scores of ORS and its sub-scales on men and women employees:



Results and Discussions: Z-test and Hypothesis Testing:

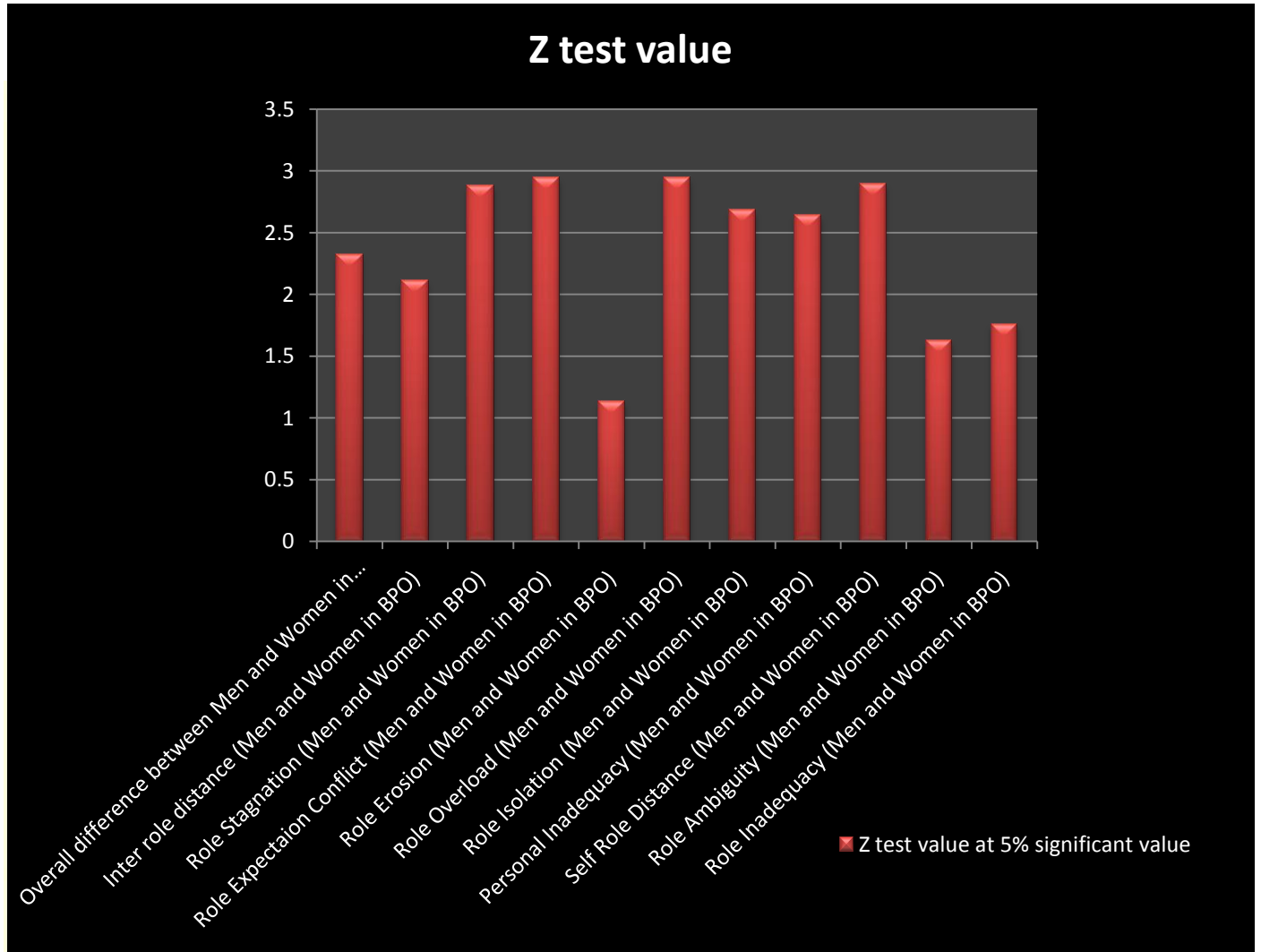
The Z-test explains that the relationship between the two variables is significant also. It further indicates that to study the relationship between the variables is significant from statistical point of view. To test the difference in organizational Role stress between Men and Women employees in BPO sector Z-test was used and the result obtained are indicated below in Table 2.

Table-2

No	H0: Null Hypothesis	Z test value at 5% significant value	Significant/Insignificant	Accepted/not accepted
1	Overall difference between Men and Women in BPO Sector	2.322569	Significant	Not Accepted
2	Inter role distance (Men and Women in BPO)	2.109809	Significant	Not Accepted
3	Role Stagnation (Men and Women in BPO)	2.881669	Significant	Not Accepted
4	Role Expectation Conflict (Men and Women in BPO)	2.943571	Significant	Not Accepted
5	Role Erosion (Men and Women in BPO)	1.137111	Insignificant	Accepted
6	Role Overload (Men and Women in BPO)	2.943571	Significant	Not Accepted
7	Role Isolation (Men and Women in BPO)	2.680355	Significant	Not Accepted
8	Personal Inadequacy (Men and Women in BPO)	2.637524	Significant	Not Accepted
9	Self Role Distance (Men and Women in BPO)	2.894831	Significant	Not Accepted
10	Role Ambiguity (Men and Women in BPO)	1.626151	Insignificant	Accepted
11	Role Inadequacy (Men and Women in BPO)	1.753619	Insignificant	Accepted

*Table 2: Z-test and Hypothesis Testing

Figure 3
Z-test scoring



*Chart 3: Z-test scoring

Z-test Overall:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in the overall organizational role stress between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in the overall organizational role stress between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.322569) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. The results indicate that the Men employees have high mean score (40.63) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (39.9) in this research. This shows men employees' high-level stress compared to Women employees. Interestingly, in a study of 244 occupations in Sweden, men consistently reported higher levels of control than women, even within female stereotyped jobs (Hall, 1991).

Z-test Inter Role Distance:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Inter role distance experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Inter role distance experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.109809) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. The results indicate that the Men employees have high mean score (46.66) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (42.33) in this research. This shows men employees' high-level stress compared to Women employees. There are several dimensions to measure the inter role distance which mainly covers the work-life balance, eg. Work in BPO that gets interfere by the work in home.

Z-test Role Stagnation:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Stagnation experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Stagnation experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is accepted here, because z-value (2.881669) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. The results indicate that the Men employees have high mean score (42.66) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (42.33) in this research. This shows men employees' high-level stress compared to Women employees. Here Role stagnation refers to the lack of promotion or career development or incentives (Mor Barak, et.al, 2001).

Z-test Role Expectation Conflict:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Expectation Conflict experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Expectation Conflict experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.943571) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. But the results indicate that the Men employees have less mean score (37.33) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (40.00) in this research. This shows women employees' have high-level stress compared to men employees. Role expectation conflict refers to disparity in actual job performance and expectations of superiors and colleagues (Maunz & Steyrer, 2001).

Z-test Role Erosion:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Erosion experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Erosion experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is accepted here, because z-value (1.137111) is less than the tabulated value. The result of the test indicates that there is no significant difference between Men and Women in their role stress. Though at 5% level of significance level there is the z value indicates that there

is no significant difference between the role stress experienced by both men and women, but still the mean score of men (51.33) is high when compared to the mean score of women (42.67) in this research. This shows that the Men have high level Role Erosion Stress when compared with women. In India, three critical factors – Role Erosion, Inter-Role Distance, and Role Stagnation - are seen as the major sources of stress (Pestonjee, 1997).

Z-test Role Overload:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Overload experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Overload experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.943571) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. The results indicate that the Men employees have less mean score (37.33) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (40.00) in this research. This shows women employees' have high-level stress compared to men employees. Rogers (2004), while studying 700 IT directors found that they were not able to maintain a healthy work-life balance. It was reported that around 83% of them were not able to sleep and 70% remained constantly worried about the instability of IT system. The most significant stressors reported are work overload, career opportunities, role ambiguity and role conflict and working with diversified personalities (Calbon 1994).

Z-test Role Isolation:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Isolation experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Isolation experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.680355) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men

and Women employees in their role stress. The results indicate that the Men employees have more mean score (43.00) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (42.00) in this research. This shows men employees' have high-level stress compared to Women employees. Role isolation can result from role overload since an employee who has much work may not be able to interact significantly with colleagues and significant others (Bakker 2005).

Z-test Personal Inadequacy:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Personal Inadequacy experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Personal Inadequacy experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.637524) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. But the results indicate that the Men employees have less mean score (32.67) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees (36.33) in this research. This shows women employees' have high-level stress compared to men employees. Personal inadequacy was also found in relatively high level. This form of role stress takes place when individuals feel they are not adequately skillful, competent and trained to meet the demands of their role (Pestonjee 2001).

Z-test Self Role Distance:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Self Role Distance experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Self Role Distance experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is not accepted because z-test value (2.894831) is higher than the tabulated value. The result of the z-test indicates that there exists significant difference between the Men and Women employees in their role stress. But the results indicate that the Men employees have less mean score (40.33) in relation to organizational role stress compared to Women employees

(41.33) in this research. This shows women employees' have high-level stress compared to men employees. Self role distance refers to the demands of the job that may conflict with one's personal beliefs, e.g. blood transfusion is not permitted by certain religious beliefs (Begat et al, 2005).

Z-test Role Ambiguity:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Ambiguity experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Ambiguity experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is accepted here, because z-value (1.626151) is less than the tabulated value. The result of the test indicates that there is no significant difference between Men and Women in their role stress. Though at 5% level of significance level there is the z value indicates that there is no significant difference between the role stress experienced by both men and women, but still the mean score of men (37.33) is high when compared to the mean score of women (35.67) in this research. This shows that the Men have high level Role Ambiguity Stress when compared with women. **French & Caplan (1970)** found that role ambiguity was related to a similar cluster of symptoms. They also showed that role ambiguity was related to increased blood pressure and higher pulse rates. Later research by **Margolis et al. (1974)** found a number of significant relationships between role ambiguity and symptoms of depression and low job motivation and intention to leave the job.

Z-test Role Inadequacy:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in Role Inadequacy experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in Role Inadequacy experienced between Men and Women employees in BPO sector.

The null hypothesis is accepted here, because z-value (1.753619) is less than the tabulated value. The result of the test indicates that there is no significant difference between Men and Women in

their role stress. Though at 5% level of significance level there is the z value indicates that there is no significant difference between the role stress experienced by both men and women, but still the mean score of men (37.67) is high when compared to the mean score of women (36.33) in this research. This shows that the Men have high level Role Inadequacy Stress when compared with women. Role insufficiency refers to a failure of the organization to make full use of the individual's abilities and training (for example, O'Brien, 1982). Such insufficiency has been reported to lead to feelings of stress (Brook, 1973) and is associated with psychological strain and low job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bhalla *et al.*, 1991).

CONCLUSION:

The study mainly focuses on the role stress experienced in the BPO sector. The study have highlighted that there is a significant difference between the role stress of men and women employees of BPO sector.

It was found that men experienced more role stress than women in certain cases like Inter role distance, Role Erosion, Role Isolation, Role Ambiguity and Role Inadequacy. Also by looking at the various aspects of components of role stress, it was found that women have experienced more role stress than men like Role expectation conflict, Role Overload, Personal Inadequacy and Self Role distance stress.

The absence of an effective coping strategy may lead to burnout as a result of role stress. Ultimately, burnout may affect the functioning, and effectiveness of the organization and its employees. Therefore, there should be more social and organizational supports as well as better resources and opportunity to extend collaborative relationship among faculty at different levels and departments, and to develop appropriate coping strategies and eventually other forms of possible interventions considered suitable (Lease HS: 1999)

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