



Physical Illness faced by Women Employees Working in BPO Industry

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BPO, Health problem

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ABSTRACT BPO and IT industries are the fastest growing industries in India .Nowadays women are working almost in all types of professions which that there is no gender differences in their work. The educated women now find employment opportunities in BPO's and IT industries. It has been noticed that BPO is one of the industries, which has been witnessed a high scope for women and also helped them more. According to the survey, out of 400 million of workforce in India, around 30-40 percent consists of females. Women working in these industries facing many problems like physical, psychological and discrimination at work and it also affects their work and family. These problems are caused by long working hours, irregular shifts, high targets, insufficient holidays and mental pressure, etc. This article outlines the various health problems faced by Women Employees in BPO.

Introduction

The BPO industry accounts for a revenue of \$101 billion and has emerged as one of the largest private industries providing direct employment to women. The liberalization of Indian telecom industry in 1994 gave the IT sector an unexpected boost. ITES and BPO are core sector of IT. Since its ascent in 2001, large numbers of women are working at BPO in India. NASSCOM president Som Mittal (2013) said BPO industry can meet the vision 2020 target of touching \$ 225 billion by 2020 because of various opportunities available in BPO industry like voice process, semi voice process or back office support, medical transcription, medical billing, data entry and data processing, data conversion services , IT help desk services, E-mail support, knowledge process outsourcing, recruitment process outsourcing, education process outsourcing, legal process outsourcing, technical writing and content writing.

The IT and BPO industry currently employs about 2.8 billion employees. According to NASSCOM survey (2013) out of 400 million of workforce in India, around 30-40 percent are females. Exciting work and work environment attracts the young women to join in this industry. The entry level of women employees can be 18 years with higher secondary certificate and it does not require any professional skills so even poor and middleclass families also can easily join in BPO and earn attractive salaries. The annual growth rate of the salary in this sector will raise up to 15 % every year and also entitled to a number of benefits. Employment in the BPO sector has lead to reach their career milestones and financial goals much earlier than before but the women employees in the BPO sector experience high levels of stress and health issues which are the result of working in closely monitored environments with pressure to meet ambitious performance targets. Strict deadlines, repetitive task, long working hours, insufficient holidays and breaks and responding to telephone calls often in shift have resulted in absenteeism and attrition among many young women employees. . A number of women entering in BPO sector have direct proportion with the number of BPO's experiencing physical and emotional problems such as panic attacks, depression, relationship problems, alcoholism and sleeping and eating disorders. According to DQ-CRM BPO E-Sat Survey 2012 stress and health issues are the main reason for leaving this job from the industry. The present paper examines the health problems faced by working women in BPO industry.

Physical Problem faced by women employees in BPO industry

Women employees are more stressful than employees in other sectors. This industry inevitably put strain on women to a great extent as compared to men. Women in BPO industry suffers from physical and psychological problems due to work tension. Nowadays in cities, major portion of patients visiting the doctor consist of BPO and IT employees because of depression, fatigue, hair loss, vocal problem, High blood pressure, eye strain, back pain, menstrual disorder, digestive disorder and sleeping disorder which are caused by work pressure, heavy work load, long and late working hours, irregular shifts, deadlines for work completion, attending continuous phone calls, insufficient holidays and problem of balancing work at home and office. On account of all these major problems faced by the women society, the researcher interested in analysing the physical problem faced by BPO women employees.

Objective:

The study is carried out to understand the demographic profile and the various physical problems faced by women employees in BPO industry.

Review of literature

- ❖ The Hindu Business line report (2013) evaluated that balanced life style is very tedious and the survey found 36% respondents were obese, 21% suffered from depression and 12% had high blood pressure .
- ❖ A.Kumudha, J. Jancy Rani (2012) in their article 120 samples were taken and observed from that 56% of the respondents suffered from backache, 31% were attacked by frequent cold & headache, continual tiredness is common among 55%, 33% are suffering from throat infection, 50% digestive disorder, a major chunk is suffering from high blood pressure i.e. 60%, 63% of the respondents complaint about feel angry & irritable, 60% experiences eye problem, and sprains & strains are experienced by 43%.
- ❖ Data Quest survey (2012) found that the employees in BPO faces number of health related problem like sleeping disorder, digestive system disorder, visionary problem, depression, ear problem, stomach problem, voice loss, chest related problem and back pain.
- ❖ Amrita Gupta (2012) reported that high percentages of the women were found to have the following problems: sleeping difficulty and high blood pressure (60%), cold and headache (55%), digestive and menstrual problems (50%), respiratory illness (45 %), and backaches (30%).

- ❖ Dr.Anoop Panday and Ms.Ritu Bali (2011) observed that 30 - 40 percent of the employee working in the call centers / BPO complained of eye problems, soreness, dryness, blurred vision, light sensitivity, head ache, digestive disorders together called as computer vision syndrome and 34 percent of employees are suffering from disease called Dysphonia i.e., inability to speak which is characterized by croakiness of voice, irritating cough, poor vocal power, inability to modulate and breathing difficulties.
- ❖ BPO E – Sat Survey (2007) released that sleeping disorders, digestive system related disorders, eye sight problem, severe stomach related problem, depression are the top 5 ailments affecting the BPO employees.

METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive research has been adopted for the present study. The information is obtained from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data is in the questionnaire form and it is collected from the women employees at BPO in Chennai. The sources for secondary data include books, journals and websites. Area of the studies confined to Chennai city. Samples are collected from 150 women employees working in BPO industry. Convenient sampling method is adopted for collecting primary data. Data's were analysed with the help of simple percentage analysis.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to find only the health problems faced by women employees working in BPO industry in Chennai. These results are not generalised to other industries and other cities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent's Profile

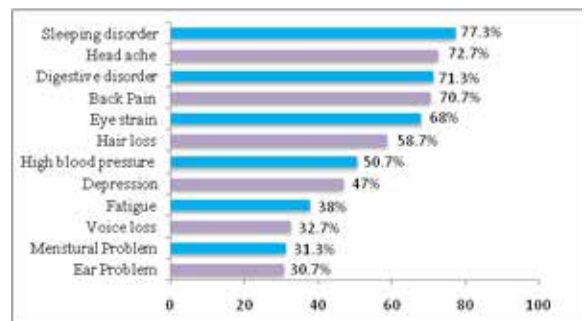
From the demographic data it is understood that 63% of the respondents belong to the age group of below 25 years, 24% of the respondents are in the age group of 26-30 years and only 13% of the respondents are in the age group of above 30 years. It's clear that the BPO companies catch the attention of employees in the age group of below 25 years. It is inferred that, BPO jobs are mostly suitable for youngsters. In respect of marital status of the respondents, is 75% of the respondents are unmarried, 25% of the respondents are married. It is cleared that the majority of the employees in BPO are unmarried. With regard to the educational qualification of the employees, 56% of the respondents Under Graduates, 23% of the respondents are having Post Graduates, 13% are other categories and remaining 8% of the respondents are professional degree. With respect to the income of the employees, 69% of the respondents are earning a monthly income of Rs.10000 to Rs.20000, 24% of the respondents are earning Rs.20000 to Rs.25000 and 7% of the respondents earning above Rs.25000. The highest percentage(69%) of the respondents are earning a monthly income of Rs.10000-Rs20000. With regard to the experience of the employees, 56% of the respondents have got work experience of below 2 years, followed by 37% of the respondents are having 2-4 years of experience and remaining 7% of the respondents have above 4 years of work experience. 59% of the respondents work in rotational shifts, 22% work in night shift, 14% of the respondents work in general shift, 15% of the respondents work in second shift. The following table explains the various health problems faced by women employees in BPO.

Ranking Order of various physical illness experienced by the BPOs Employees

S. No	Physical illness	Total Yes Score / 150	Percentage	Rank
1	Sleeping disorder	116	77.3	1
2	Eye strains/Eye sight	106	70.7	4
3	Depression	107	71.3	3

4	Menstrual disorders	47	31.3	11
5	Back Pain	102	68	5
6	Digestive disorders	109	72.7	2
7	High blood pressure	76	50.7	7
8	Voice loss	49	32.7	10
9	Ear problem	46	30.7	12
10	Hair loss	88	58.7	6
11	Fatigue	57	38	9
12	Head ache	71	47	8

The above table can be represented in pictorial form Percentage of health Problem



Sleeping disorder:

Sleeping disorder in BPO is due to irregular shifts and long working hours. They find it very difficult to get into sleep because of the changes in sleeping hours. The majority 116 respondents (77.3%) out of 150 respondents admitted that they have sleeping disorders.

Digestive Problem:

72.7% of respondents are affected by digestive problem because of changes in shift. They cannot eat properly and regularly which affects their eating time and habit resulting in digestive disorder.

Depression:

Depression is another problem in BPO. It arises due to heavy work load and long working hours. As they cannot concentrate on their family and personal work, they become depressed. 71.3% of respondents are affected by this problem.

Eye Problem:

In BPO, the works are mostly done by using computers, such long time of usage without any rest causes eye irritation and eye sight problem. Out of 150 respondents, 70.7% of respondents are suffered by this illness.

Back Pain:

Back pain is the fifth major problem for BPO employees. The people who are sitting for long hours without any movement and relaxation which causes back pain. 68% of the respondents reported that they are suffering from back pain.

Hair loss:

The workers in BPO industry have insufficient time breaks so they will not be having proper food which leads them to unhealthy and during the eye contact with the system, the rays absorbed will generate the heat inside the body which leads to hair loss. 58.7% of respondent experience this illness.

High blood pressure:

It is a well known fact that blood pressure is directly pro-

portional to work stress. BPO employees always have heavy work load and more work pressure and therefore 50.7% of respondents are having high blood pressure.

Head ache:

47% of respondents reported that they are suffering from severe migraine due to stress and strain.

Fatigue:

In BPO, 38% of employees suffer from loss of sleep, work - alcoholic and issue of work report on the spot will make the respondent tired and that also led to the fatigue condition.

Voice loss:

Voice loss is also an another problem in BPO. 32.7% of respondents experience that voice loss is due to continuous answering of phone calls.

Menstrual disorder:

31.3% of respondents suggest that the menstrual disorder is due to stress. Of course stress is due to the heavy work load and work pressure.

Ear Problem:

Ear problem is also one of the illnesses in BPO. 30.7% of respondents affected by ear problem. The reason for this problem is due to the using headphones persistently and the maximum hertz decibel will hurt ear drum and it may also leads to deafness.

Conclusion:

From this we can understand that the women employees in BPO are having various physical problems due to stress which will affect their health.

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