

BUSINESS

Turnoff the heat on your boys

Arjun Singh Rathore

The global work force is more stressed out than ever before, leading to decreased retention rates, disengagement & poor productivity. Unrealistic expectations and a lack of work-life balance are the leading causes of stress. Managers should take an active role in helping their employees manage stress at work. This article is for managers and business owners who want to improve employee morale and boost employee retention by reducing stress at work.

A huge step towards the achievement of your targets is to set goals on a long-term basis. Tendencies to approach success and avoid failure are basic motivational force that plays a predominant role in the activation and persistence of human behavior in achievement contexts. Achievement of targets is our ability to identify a version of ourselves for future that we want and then to prioritise our time, energy and focus to create a plan and path that leads to achieving those goals. Achieving goal is the outcome or end result that we want to achieve when setting targets. When you have self-confidence, you believe achieving any goal is possible. It makes you confident to take on new challenges and create new experiences that you have never done before.

Most of the times the targets are set for Fast growth which usually comes at a cost. If your employees are working harder than ever but the quality of their work isn't rising along with the longer hours and increased production levels, it may be time to admit stress is a problem.

Still experiencing lingering effects from the recession, many companies are understaffed and workers are underpaid. The importance placed on hard work and making profits, and the rise of technology that enables the workload to follow you home, have driven stress levels to unprecedented heights.

In the American Psychological Association's recent Work Stress Survey, eight out of 10 people said that work is the source of their stress, and India is no exception to it. The survey also found that 42 percent of adults reported their stress levels have increased over the past five years. People perform best under pressure is a myth. One of the worst productivity killers, is when a boss imposes phony deadlines for no reason or exaggerates the need to hit goals or production levels. It is counterintuitive, but by saying this is the only opportunity we're going to have, you are increasing the likelihood that the staff won't do their best.

On the other side of the coin Yerkes-Dodson Law suggests that we need a healthy amount of pressure as well to prevent us from feeling bored or unmotivated. When employees are faced with pressure in the workplace, it motivates them to do their best work and perform successfully. Pressure creates a sense of urgency to complete a task or hit a deadline. Healthy amounts of pressure help the team to stay focused and productive. Too little pressure and employees are more likely to procrastinate, get distracted, or struggle to concentrate on the task at hand. The optimum level of pressure helps people to focus and do their best work. It's when the pressure becomes too much that problems develop. High levels of pressure can lead people to feel agitated, anxious and stressed.

To find the right level of pressure, you need to adopt the right tools, implement the right strategies and target the right goals. First of all, make sure that you have a sales dashboard that pro-

vides you with the information and metrics that you need. Use it to measure each team member's performance, the opportunity in the market(s) they deal with and set goals that accurately reflect that even catering specific targets to each individual.

Make sure you your team, both together and individually, have plenty of ability to generate business resources and use the team meetings as an opportunity to get their input. Ask them the following questions about the sales objectives you hit: Are these objectives achievable and realistic? Are you confident the team is capable of achieving them? Where might you face challenges? Do you need any more training and support to achieve them?

Stress results from too much pressure. It's normal to feel stressed at work, like when there's a looming deadline, or you have to work overtime in a last-minute push to get a job finished. Short-term stress like this is easy enough to get out of your system with a little down-time, an early night, or a workout. It's when stress becomes continuous that it can be detrimental to your team's health and the company's productivity. This can especially become a problem when the entire



team is going through the same challenging situation. And continuous stress without relief is known as distress or chronic stress, and this can have several negative side-effects.

There are many reasons your team might experience stress at work, but you can't afford to neglect the health of your number one business asset: the employee. As a manager it is important to be able to identify the specific stress triggering in your office. Doing so means you can take steps to minimize their impact. Stress can be flared up by a combination of any of these factors: Difficult working conditions, Poor management, Unmanageable workload, Long hours, Ill-defined expectations and responsibilities, Conflicting priorities, Conflict between team members, Low levels of trust, Lack of support & team collaboration and Job uncertainty.

While some work-related stress is inevitable from time to time, managers should take the necessary steps and develop a proactive plan to reduce workplace stress for their team. To start with:

Office environment: Bring nature inside to fight chemicals (the physical environment of the workplace had a measurable impact on worker well-being and behaviour).

Feedback and feeling valued: People need to know they are doing their job well. When your employees feel their work is valued, they are more able to cope with fluctuations in pressure without feeling stressed. Congratulate success, celebrate big wins, and even simply thank your team for their hard work. Simple gestures of acknowledgment and appreciation will promote a positive working environment and increase motivation.

Communication: Create a work environment where every team member feels valued and involved by encouraging open communication.

Clearly define job roles: Ill-defined job roles lead to confusion, increased workload, job insecurity, blame culture and conflict within teams.

Autonomy and trust: Trust your team to work hard without breathing down their necks. When you communicate faith in your team, you reinforce their self-belief.

Flexibility: Offering a more relaxed working schedule improves your team's work-life balance and helps to reduce the stress on team members with other commitments.

Time out: It can be hard to switch off from work in today's hyper-connected world (especially when we are stuck inside), but taking time out to relax and unwind not only helps reduce stress levels, it gives your team the chance to recharge and return to their job feeling refreshed.

At the same time an employee can also manage his/her stress by doing a number of things to cope better with the pressures of a constant quest for growth.

At workplace: By addressing the source of the problem you're taking the first steps in managing and reducing your stress levels.

Talk to your manager: Talking to team leader or line manager can help to ease the burden, as they can help you to confront the pressure, remove roadblocks and take practical steps to reduce your stress.

Ask for help: Aside from your manager, your fellow team members should know that you're struggling with pressures, and ask if they can help in any way.

Get organized: Take a step back and give yourself time to organize your workload, it can seem much more manageable. Write a 'to do' list, prioritize tasks by urgency, and turn off email notifications so you can work more efficiently without distractions.

Consider a CRM: This is the type of technology that helps your sales team focus their time on selling rather than wasting their time on complicated admin procedures.

Prioritize and focus: A simple and easy-to-use prioritizing activity will make you feel like you have an extra team member just to handle all of your seemingly endless data entry, tracking and reporting work.

Not having targets is an excellent recipe for average living. So to be successful, targets have to be set, either by the employer or by the employee himself, and keep trying unless you reach it, but do it in a stress free and cordial environment and not on the cost of collateral damage.

HERITAGE

Speaking London, Writing Tokyo

Shikha Magotra, Dr. Ajay Kaul

"I can speak in Dogri
I can eat in Dogri
I can paint in Dogri
I can wear in Dogri
I can live in Dogri
But, I can not write in Dogri."

Script is the only medium through which our mother tongue can live longer and farther. It not only gives the pictorial forms to our spoken phonemes but also carries our cultural imprints into it. Every distinct script of India reveals different diverse cultures living all over the country and adds colour/ flavour to the educated India. As development and writing in our script depicts the educated literate civilisations in India.

It is through the writings on the old scriptures, paintings, stone carvings, copper plates that we come to know about the folktales, cultures of the civilisations that existed in the past. Think how we came to know about our Ganmat- the old script of Dogri, it is through the inscribed akkhar on old temples all over the jammu region. This is what comprises our rich heritage.

Now, have you ever thought what would be our heritage in written forms after hundreds of years from now. Do you think Dogri written in Devanagari, in any way depicts our own Duggar culture.

It would become a part of Hindi Heritage, not Duggar heritage and we would lose our cultural writings then.

Is Dogri your mother tongue?

A language that is learned naturally once a person is born

growing up, it won't become your mother tongue as it didn't come naturally to you. So, are we losing our mother tongue?

Yes, we all are or at least the educated youth of the jammu region has lost it surely. The major reason for it is leaving our own script of Dogri language and adopting another more scientific and popular script for writing Dogri. No artificial limb can make us run faster than our own legs, no matter how much capable our medical science becomes! Similarly, using another more efficient script for writing our own language, when we already have our own script, won't make us more literate and capable.

The moment we left our own script- Namay Dogra Akkhar, knowingly or unknowingly, we separated it from our basic primary education system. The script was no longer taught in schools for education. Slowly, people felt no need of knowing about its characters or even recognise it. It was cut from the literate urban regions of Jammu. The mother tongue too became restricted to the rural division only. Eventually, the literate educated ones stopped talking in mother tongue too, especially in front of children as they didn't wanted their children to move to the rural areas.

So, our mother tongue was killed by ourselves and the new generation is no longer directly connected to it. Education is the backbone through which any language survives and lives longer periods of time. As devanagari was adopted, there was no need to learn Dogri. Because the language was written using hindi alphabets. So, why not teach hindi directly. Sooner, people started thinking- What is the significance of writing in mother tongue with no cultural identity associated?

Presently, Dogri language is confined to some specific literary organisations only in the urban Jammu. Besides being incorporated as an official language of India in 2003, it is still struggling for its existence among its own people.

Existential Crisis

Among the major different scripts of India, each depicting its own culture, symbolically represents their mother tongue in visual form. Other languages which use these scripts for writing do not have their own visual cultural identity/ existence. They tend to merge in either of these scripts. So is our Dogri language which uses Devanagari for writing. Moreover, it has its own fully developed script already named Namay Dogra Akkhar, which is not even recognised by its own people.

Think how beautiful it would be if we could write in the original script of Dogri as- (Bhaarat).

Keh naa ae tunda? (Roman Script)
केह नाँ एह तुंदा ? (Devanagari Script)
केह नाँ एह तुंदा ? (Namay Akkhar)

Which of these you think would depict our culture?

BOOK-REVIEW

SONCHI SODUR - A collection of essays

Upender Ambarad

The book titled "Sonchi Sodur" has been authored by the reputed Kashmiri poet and writer Shri Bal Krishen Sanayasi. It is a compilation of eight essays running into 304 pages, and has been written in Nastaliq Kashmiri.

The book is a compendium of meticulously written essays, which are rich in both, the content and the details. The thoughtfully included first write-up is about our mother tongue, Kashmiri, which the author regards as a vibrant socio-cultural marker of the society. The different features of the language, including its history and progression from the earlier times have also been explored in it. According to the author, the mother tongue - spoken as well as written, needs to be preserved and promoted as it represents both, the soul of an individual and the collective existence of the society.

"Falsafa, Nafsayaat Tae Adabpara" meaning "Philosophy, Psychology and Literary Genre" is the next essay in the book. It speaks of a common strand running between human psychology and the literature as a wide range of emotions portrayed in the literature like affection, ecstasy, love, grief, rage, and social concerns are bound by the psychological bearings. It is supplemented by the fact that some of the imminent therapists and psychologists happen to be creative writers and poets. Furthermore, the psychological study of literature is said to create a comprehensive picture in the reader's mind.

The succeeding article is with the heading "Lal Vakhun Hund Nafsayati Aahung" meaning the "Psychological aspects of Lal Vaakhs". The writer delves into the basal semblance between the psychology and the Vaakhs of Lal Daed, who is regarded as the supreme saint-poetess and finest exponent of the mystic poetic outpouring. The author traces a connect of psychology with that of poetry as both operate under realm of human mind, consciousness and sub-consciousness. It involves thinking, feelings and a whole set of mental process which eventually precipitates an appropriating emotional response among the readers. The employed symbols, images, metaphors, riddles and paradoxes, as per the writer, having roots in the unconscious become outlets of the deep and latent meanings both at the literal and the deeper symbolism level.

"Tasawuf", is another incorporated essay. It is an Arabic word, meaning

"Islamic mysticism", generally known as Sufism. The write-up is centered upon the fundamentals of inwardness, discovery of the self, spiritual development, subjugation of the improper inclinations and ethereal enlightenment. It also speaks about keeping the body, the mind and the intellect pre-occupied in the unrestrained love for the supreme, so as to arouse the Divine conscious. The Sufi poetry as a meta-physical practice has immensely contributed to create a repertoire of spirituality related literature in Kashmiri.

The narrative with the heading "Sufi Poetry- An analysis", explores the fundamentals of the inner feelings, the universality of love, spiritual love and the aspiration on the part of the seeker to relate



it to the humanity at a deeper level. It also acquaints the reader about religious harmony, casting away of narrow minded rigidities and the polarity between the worldly love -"Ishaq-e-Majaji" and the love in the truest sense, meaning "Ishaq-e-Haqiqi". It is also supplemented with the inclusion of appropriating accounts and notable couplets of the legendary Sufi poets - Soch Kraal, Shamas Faqeer, Rehman Dar, Ahmed Batwari, Nyama Sahab, Ahed Zargar, Samad Mir etc. This inclusion heightens the transcendental dimension of the written account.

The article titled "Leela poetry and its backdrop", is another well written essay. The leela or the devotional poetry, as we know, is a reverential genre of the Kashmiri literature which connects us with the Divine. These poetic compositions, having a spiritual feeling and an element of surrender impacts the reader

at the emotional, mental and insightful levels. It also facilitates a personal engagement with the Divine. The writer regards the pangs of longing and one's quest for the transcendence as the defining elements of the devotional poetry; the main objective being the realization of the Absolute Supreme. The sequential details given in it appraises us about the indefinable charm and the devotional depth of the poetry of Lal Daed, Rupa Bhawani, Parmanand, Prakash Kurgami, Krishen Joo Razdan, Pt. Govind Koul, Bona Kak, Pt. Neelakant, Lakshman Razdan, Fazil Kashmiri, Master Zind Koul, Sarvanand Koul Premi, P N Koul Sayal etc.

The other essay "Kashmiri Leela Poetry after 1990" is like a time rewind as it explores its journey and development after the 1990 exodus of the community. It provides a first-hand glimpse of the textual details of the leela poetry and the poets who have contributed significantly to this literary form. The inclusion of selected couplets and their related illustrations add to the richness of the documented description. A host of present-day devotional poets are also notably mentioned in the narration, as they have also contributed their literary might to enrich the Leela poetry.

In the concluding write-up - "Kashmiri Nazam and its development" the author has recounted the characteristics, changing aspects and progression of Kashmiri Nazam, which includes its structural experiments as well. An honest effort has been made to document the details starting from Paramanand to the times of the modern nazam. The modern nazam starting with Mahjoor and Azad made further strides under the influence of then prevailing progressive moment. Its elaborate account and evocation also form a part of the narration.

Furthermore, the book also includes prologues written by reputed Kashmiri writers Dr. Shad Ramzan and Dr Ratan Talashi, who have acknowledged the sincere literary efforts put in by the author in writing this book. The author, Shri Sanayasi, is also a versatile poet, with three Kashmiri poetic collections and an opera to his credit. All these creative works have enjoyed all round applause and acclaim amongst the native literary circles.

The book is priced at Rs 400/- and has publishing address of 61-A, Basant Nagar, Roop Nagar, Jammu.

In plain speak, the book "Sonchi Sodur", written by Shri Bal Krishen Sanayasi is lucidly written and exquisitely crafted literary work, which makes a compelling and an engrossing read. It is bound to be useful for both - the academic and the general readers, who will enjoy reading it.

'Return Gift' - A work of deep perception

Suman K Sharma

Shashi Pathania's collection of Dogri poetry, 'Return Gift' (Dogri Sanstha, Jammu, 2022), stands out as a work of deep perception.

True to the Dogra tradition, the first poem in the collection, 'Prarthana' (Prayer), is an invocation to God. Here is no mendicant supplicating before the Deity for a favour, but an ardent lover confiding to Him of her love. 'Migi tere nai pyar ai' - I am in love with you: Mira-like she asserts (15). It is not a passing fancy of hers. Shashi Pathania has imbibed the divine grace through the nitty gritty of her life. Patience she has gathered from human condition, wisdom from the problems that she had to face and knowledge that she gleaned from her experiences. When she wanted to have a friend, who came to her but God Himself ('Sab Milda Ai' - Everything is Within the Reach, 128). A devotee with such firm conviction as hers basks in His glory despite the gloomiest of circumstances ('Ohda Noor' - His Grace, 130).

The poet has been a teacher for the most of her life. 49 of her 74 poems in the book either impart a lesson or throw a new light on the most mundane aspects of life. The eponymous poem 'Return Gift', which happens to be longest one in the collection (74-77), does one better. It is both didactic and looks at a very special phase of life from an entirely different perspective. The first three stanzas are devoted to mark the poem as a return gift to the poet's children for felicitating her on the Mothers' Day. The following four stanzas are confessional in nature. Carrying the children in her womb for nine months and sustaining them with her life blood brought her rich praise. She rejoiced in the glory of motherhood as well. But not for once did she utter a word about the silent sufferings of the unborn who were confined helplessly in the dark dungeon of her belly. The rest of the poem dwells upon yet more agony babies have to undergo while taking birth. It is not a mother in her labour-pains. She says it is the baby who suffers the most while fighting out its way into the world. She uses the simile of a seedling tearing open the earth's surface to make her point. The poem concludes with a motherly admonition to her offspring to bear up with the troubles and tribulations of life with as much fortitude as they put up with the untold pains of being born.

Even a teacher/poet is but a person of flesh and bone like anyone of us. S/he too has a selfhood which oftentimes cries out for its singularity. There are nearly a dozen-and-a-half poems that bring the reader face to face with the person which the poet Shashi Pathania is. In 'Shahkar' - Masterpiece (23-24) - Shashi Pathania affirms her uniqueness without a trace of false humility. In her, "Nature created a masterpiece with a rich pallet of emotions, giving her the vitality of brooks, the dynamism of springs and the sympathy of breath..." (23). This superb creation got sullied

and out of shape by the world's constraints and contamination. Even so, the poet assures us that by dint of her concerted effort she is regaining now her pristine form moment by moment "hun partoa karni-n aan pal-pal/apne moool roopai ch" (24). Does such a self-sufficient person fall in love? The last poem in the collection 'Aks - Image' (131) offers a clue. "Ajj apne aapai nai milna ai" confides Ms Pathania, "Jislai sheeshe ch jhanti mari ai/Taan sheeshe ne teri gai soorat usaari ai - Today I am to meet my own self...When I peeped into the mirror.../Then the mirror formed the very visage of yours. But for such a tryst, she had to prepare herself diligently - rubbing off lust with the cleansing 'butna' of love, removing dryness with the unguent of pride, applying the kohl of bashfulness to her eyes and adorning her forehead with the bindi of trust and confidence.

As expected, a poet of Shashi Pathania's sensibilities could not be devoid of a sense of humour. In 'Lekhak' - Writers - (65), she compares writers with three types of mothers. Writers who nourish their creations with their lifeblood like a hen does its eggs are of the first kind. The second type is like the mothers who adopt children of others - neither the egg is theirs, nor the womb. And the third is similar to child-lifters who steal away the creation of someone else. Onlookers, while showering praise on them are amazed. Such creations match neither in form nor in content with their presumed creators. 'Ahinsa' - Non-violence (27) and 'Makodiyani' - Ants (72-73) are the poems written in similar satirical vein.

Pathania's diction is without blemish. "She is never caught in the fascination for words," observes Ved Rahi in his Preface (9). Her style is unpretentious. She uses language as a workman's tool. In this largely pedagogical work, one would hardly find any apophthegms. To quote meaningfully, one would require more than one lines from her poems. To her, a poem comes riding on thin air, hardly giving her a chance to put it down on paper (11). That explains her penchant for free verse, which gives her liberty to be true to her emotions. Yet, her words have a music of their own like the gurgle of a mountain stream. "Vakt da dhoobi ussi/Halaat de patde par/pataaki-pataaki marda ai" ('Dard-Duaa'58), for instance, is not only a telling metaphor on human condition, but the onomatopoeic words 'pataaki-pataaki' evoke also the ruthless thrashing of man by Time the Washerman.

Ved Rahi enthusiastically calls 'Return Gift' 'Dogri Kavita da Nama 'Dhya' - A New Chapter of Dogri Poetry' (5). There is much substance in Shashi Pathania's own advice to her readers, "...Read the poems as if you were reciting a poem of your own to someone...so that these poems should feel like your very own feelings..." (12).

