

### **Stress Management for Judges**

Before a month or so, in the late hours of night, leaving behind his wife and children sleeping, a Judge left his home. In the morning, his absence was noticed. His whereabouts were not known for several hours. By evening the corpse cut in two pieces by a train was recognised as that of the Judge. He put his life to end by throwing himself before a running train. Before few months of this instance, a Judge has chest pain since 2-3 days. He ignored to take medical assistance in time and suffered a massive heart attack losing his life. Before few months of that a Judge who was assigned with task of conducting trial of a sensitive case, suffered a massive heart attack and lost his life. These instances compelled me to write about stressful life of Judges and suggest some remedies.

Life of a Judge is stressful as he is burdened with workload beyond desired capacity. As Hon'ble Chief Justice of India expressed, Judge-Case ratio in India is very poor. The Judges right from the Apex Court to Magisterial level are disposing cases, still judiciary is blamed for backlogs. Beside workload, a Judge has to deal with complaining litigants, bullying advocates. With all his problems, he is required to give disposal as per the norms. He also overworks to get better norms to make out his case for promotion. He has to control the staff working under him. With these stressful situations, he has to maintain relations with his relatives, society and also with his superiors.

In addition to all these work place issues, a Judge has to tackle his family problems. Some may have matrimonial issues, some may have to tackle issue of education of children, health of children, health of parents and odd ones may have to deal with property disputes to protect their property rights.

Recently Hon'ble Apex Court and High Court has taken some steps to reduce the stress of Judges, however, as a Judge has to work in the present system, above mentioned categories of stressful situations cannot be avoided. It is however necessary to see that the stress experienced by the Judges should not lead to a situation which has recently faced by some of our Judges.

Medical college of Wisconsin has scientific study of stress. As per this study, "stress" is a well-known contributor to mood, mental disorders and suicide risk. Stress is a term often used synonymously with negative life experiences, or negative life events. Stressful life events can also contribute to subjective experiences of feeling "anxious". Anxious mood often represents a fear of anticipated negative events. Stress is a normal part of life. But if left unmanaged, stress can lead to emotional, psychological and even physical problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pains, or irregular heart beats.

Stress management suggests various ways to release stress. Stress relief techniques recognised by the experts require focus on relaxing mind or body. The said technique include writing down things which are bothering the person under stress, expressing feelings, laughing, drawing and even expressing anger when under stress also reduces the stress. Talking with friends, family, counselor about feelings creating stress is healthy way to reduce stress. Doing something you enjoy by taking out time also helps to relax. Hobbies such as gardening, creative activities such as writing, drawing, playing with and caring pets also release stress. Meditation also helps to release stress. Regular exercise is one of the best way to manage stress. Breathing exercises, progressive muscles relaxation also helps to reduce stress.

To be honest, all these techniques given by the experts help little to the Judges to reduce their stress. As the stressful situation of a Judge is very unique and created by the present system, system therefore has to evolve solutions. It is not that system is not taking care of a present situation of Judges. As I see it, the Judges, particularly the judges working

in mofussil places, are not properly informed about the available opportunities created within system to reduce stress.

Administration of a District Court is run by a Principal District Judge with the assistance of other District Judges working at the station. Second in hierarchy in the district is Chief Judicial Magistrate and Senior Civil Judges. Junior Civil Judges are more in number and many of them are fresh entrants in judiciary. Gone are the days when Principal District Judge was not accessible to all the judges. Now workshops are frequently held when judges working outstation gather at the District place and have access to the Principal District Judge. They can speak out their problem to Principal District Judge. If a judge under stress is hesitant to speak his problem with Principal District Judge, he can discuss his problem with any of District judges. In most of the cases speaking out problem to these senior judges will resolve the problem and he will be out of stressful situation. This system is prevalent in every district. If not, the Principal District Judge shall encourage this system.

Now the Hon'ble High Court has appointed Hon'ble Judges from the High Court as guardian judges for each district. Recently, I have attended marriage of a daughter of one of my colleague. I was pleased to see that Hon'ble Guardian Judge was conversant with all the judges working in the district and was frank with them. Most of the judges are not aware that many Lordships and Ladyships have successfully relieved several judges of their stress by counseling them and helped them to come out of stressful situation. Some Lordships even acted as mediators to settle matrimonial disputes of judges. In recent past Hon'ble Chief Justice has personally heard grievance of some of the judges. Hon'ble Chief Justice of India is always keen to resolve problems of Judges at grass-root level. Knowledge of these facts will itself assure the judges that they are not left alone to face the stress created in workplace. There have helping hands to liberate them from stressful situation.

Transfer of judges periodically also creates situation of stress for the judges. After every 3 years, a judge has to face this rigor. Stressful situations arises since opting probable place for transfer and continue till he settles down with his family in the place where he or she is transferred. Every judicial officer has to face this situation periodically. Hon'ble High Court, however now implemented accommodative transfer policy. Judges are allowed to give several options. Judges whose sons or daughters are in 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> std. are retained at the station. When husband and wife both are working, posting is given at such a place that both shall be at one station. In a given situation, judges are permitted to stay at nearby town when their place of posting is some remote station without proper facilities of education. Salary of the judges is handsome. Request of judges to purchase property is proceeded with all sensitiveness and as fast as possible. Registrar General is also accessible to protective. Other Registrars are also helpful.

If we compare all the facilities with facilities given to employees of government or employees of corporate sector, we find that the facilities given to judges are more better. Hon'ble High Court, the controlling authority to judges has taken so many steps to reduce the workplace stress. Revelation of these facilities will help the judges to feel comfortable.

Finally, I have to say that the life is precious. You are not limited to yourself. You are precious for your wife, children, parents. You are bread-earner of your family. If you are not there, how your family members will live? There is no problem in the world which has no solution. There is no problem in the world for which you should put your life at stake. Every morning in the life comes with new opportunities. Say to yourself that your life is precious and the opportunities which you think you have lost are again going to revisit your life. Take care of your health and your life.

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