

Abstract

Media reports of suicide amongst civil servants in Pakistan have remained a deeply worrisome phenomenon in recent years. These reports lead to widespread guessing and conjecture about the possible reasons for the reported suicide; the void of accurate and complete public information is routinely filled with rumour, conjecture and speculation. A popular perception which finds ready buyers is that civil servants work in a uniquely stressful work environment and consequently suffer from extreme psychological stress. Proponents of this framework point to several key stressors for civil servants including fear of “accountability”, pressure by political bosses to make illegal accommodations, and demands by seniors to accomplish tasks within unrealistic timelines. These stressors are thought to create a ‘stress milieu’ that contributes to poor mental health and extreme psychological distress amongst civil servants. This study finds that stress is experienced by the majority of the civil servants, and they manifest many physical, mental and behavioural symptoms of stress. While, Work-life imbalance deserves special attention; external pressure is not evidenced to be a significant stressor; boss support and colleague support serves in coping with stress and viewed as supportive occupational factors. The study shows job demand and job control to be moderate level of stressors.