

# Role Ambiguity and Burnout among Army Personnel



**Shivraj**

Research Scholar,  
Deptt. of Psychology,  
Meerut College,  
Meerut



**Manju Khokhar**

Associate Professor,  
Deptt. of Psychology,  
Meerut College,  
Meerut

## Abstract

Burnout is a psychological response to work stress that is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced feelings of personal accomplishments. In this research paper the researcher tried to find out the role of ambiguity in promoting burnout in army personnel, who were working at lower level. We conducted study on 306 junior level army personnel who were working soldiers; Maslach Burnout Inventory (General Survey, 1996) was administered. Total scores for each of the burnout dimensions were calculated for each participant. To find out predictors we use linear regression analysis to evaluate the association between role ambiguity and burnout. After that with the help of t test, higher and lower scores were compared. It was found that high role ambiguity is highly associated with burnout as compared to lower role ambiguity,  $P < 0.05$ . Thus it was proved that high role ambiguity is directly or indirectly influences the burnout among army personnel. In this respect research has applied application in the field of human resources management. Thus prevention of burnout should include both enhancement of the possibilities for developing the personnel's personal resources and improvement of social processes at work to promote more strong personal resources and face challenging work.

**Keywords:** Burnout, Ambiguity, Personnel.

## Introduction

In today's socio economic and technological changeable environment human behaviour is influence not only by external factors but also its interaction with internal environment of human being. It means that, now days human being are facing lot of psychological problems. Among all these psychological problem burnout is one of the important aspects of health problem. Burnout or occupational stress has become a major area of concern in the field of human resources management, a part from external or outside stressors, family related factors directly or indirectly related to burnout problem. The most important of them are work characteristics, organizational culture (environment) management styles including lack of participation, in decision making or policy making, lack of autonomy, lack of proper information etc. contributes the occupational stress, these factors further leads to burnout problem among employees (Jennings, 2008; Patrician et al, 2012; Ayala, Carnero, 2013; Kristensen et al, 2005; Radha, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Shinan-Altman and Cohen, 2010; Halbesleben and Buckley, 2004).

The empirical phase of burnout begins in the 1980's with the publication of the Maslach Burnout inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1982). Schaufeli and Enzenann (1998) gave a comprehensive list of symptoms of burnout. This list consists of more than 130 symptoms of burnout.

Maslach and Leiter (1997) defined burnout as "represents erosion in values, dignity and spirit and well, an erosion of human soul. It is a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into downward spiral from which it is hard to recover". In other word, we can simplify it by saying that burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do work.

If we reviewed research work in our own country we found that there are very few studies on burnout especially in Indian socio-cultural milieu with regard to military organization, where culture, rules and regulation are totally different from other organizations. In the context of armed forces, some research is available on the US military studies, military stressor faced by soldiers during peacekeeping mission such as isolation, ambiguity, powerlessness, boredom, danger and threat. Thus

keeping is mind dearth of studies in our Indian military organization. The present research investigation has been undertaken.

**Methodology**

The present investigation focused on the study of role ambiguity and burnout among junior level army personnel (soldiers). Following objectives and hypotheses were formulated.

**Objective of the Study**

To identify role ambiguity as a predictor of burnout among junior level army personnel.

**Hypothesis**

Role ambiguity would significantly affect burnout among army personnel.

**Sample**

The present research work was conducted on 344 army soldiers who were working at junior level. The sample was randomly drawn different unit of army. The age ranges of personal were 20 to 40 years.

**Tool Used**

For measuring of burnout Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-GS, 1996) was used. It measure burnout on three main dimensions as Exhaustion (EX), Cynicism (CY) and Professional Efficacy (PE). While role ambiguity was measured by using the personal data schedule where this variable was classified with high and low information about their work execution.

**Statistical Analysis**

The data was analyzed with the help of multivariate techniques, simple multiple regression analysis was applied find out predictor of burnout. Role ambiguity which was classified into high and low, considered as independent variable while burnout as dependent one. Our objective is to find out predictor for burnout among junior level army personnel. Multiple regression analysis is the way of studying the influences of several independent variables on the dependent one by using principles of correlation and regression. T test was also used to find out significant difference between high and low ambiguity group.

**Table-1  
(Simple Multiple Regression for Role Ambiguity on Burnout)**

Predictor	Understandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t value
	B	Std. Error	Beta value	
Role Ambiguity	2.179	1.006	-0.121	2.167*

\*significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Role ambiguity emerged as important predictors of burnout among army personnel, who were working at lower rank. To find out significant difference between high and low role ambiguity t test was used. The result obtained by t test are presented below-

**Table-2  
Comparison between High and Low Ambiguity Group on Burnout**

Group Compare	N	Mean	SD	t value
High Ambiguity group	54	46.56	7.046	1.986*
Low Ambiguity group	290	44.63	6.442	

\*significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Above table highlighted that junior officers who have high role ambiguity (M<sub>1</sub>-46.56) have more burnout as compared to those who were found low on role ambiguity (M<sub>2</sub>-44.63) higher mean are showing more burnout problem, t value 1.98 was found significant at 0.05 level of significance. It showed that higher the role ambiguity, higher will be the burnout among junior level army personnel.

On the basis of these findings we can interpreted our findings by saying that there are many factors that promote burnout problem. Role ambiguity emerged as important factor that promote the problem of burnout, because role ambiguity arises due to lack of proper information during performing their organizational duties; or not found relevant information to excursion or to perform, their work role. This aspect of work also determine how their performance was being judged rightly, ridged and consider whether the decision they made were the right ones, so role ambiguity (lack of information) was consistently associated with psychological strain. Thus it is suggested that during working hours junior officer should be well informed about other assign duties. So that after completing their assign duties, they felt something worthwhile means felt intrinsically motivated, since the data has been conducted from the military organization where job hierarchy play very important role. Personnel who were working at lower level are not very clear about the nature of their work so role ambiguity can interfere with positive emotions of individual involved. Stress generally make impairment in alertness and performance, lack of knowledge on the part of soldiers lead to psychological distress, which causes heavy causalities, deployments in war zones vs expected mobilization of units, endurance in the adverse climate and also being away from family members are related to their frustration among actively performing military duties army personnel. This phenomenon is amply reflected in our findings where role ambiguity emerged as important factor (predictor) for burnout in army personnel in India. In this respect the paper has applied application. On the basis of these results we may be permitted to suggest they burnout must be reduced at any case because it not only lead them serious mental and physical health problem, but also harmful even for those who closely associated with then and the organization in which they serve. These some intervention strategies (such a job redesign, job enrichment, job enlargement, socio-technologies approach and finally goal setting, meditation and other

such strategies) should be evolved to reduced burnout among army personnel.

#### References

1. Ayala, E. and Carnero, A. M. (2013) *Determinants of Burnout in Acute and Critical Care Military Nursing Personnel: A Cross-Sectional Study from Peru*. PLOS ONE 8(1): e54408. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0054408
2. Enzmann, D., Schaufeli, W. B., Janssen, P. and Rozeman, A. (1998). *Dimensionality and validity of the Burnout Measure*. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 71(4).
3. Halbesleben, J. R. B. and Buckley, M. R. (2004). *Burnout in Organizational Life*. *Journal of Management*, 30, 859-879. DOI: 10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.004
4. Jennings, B. M. (2008) *Work Stress and Burnout Among Nurses: Role of the Work Environment and Working Conditions*. In: Hughes RG, editor. *Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses*. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 1–22.
5. Kokkinos, C. M. (2007). *Job Stressors, Personality and Burnout in Primary School Teachers*. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, 229-243.
6. Kristensen, T. S., Borritz, M., Villadsen, E. and Christensen K. B. (2005) *The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory: A new tool for the assessment of burnout*. *Work and Stress* 19:192–207. DOI: 10.1080/02678370500297720
7. Lang G.M., Patrician P., Steele, N. (2012) *Comparison of Nurse Burnout Across Army Hospital Practice Environments*. *J Nurs Scholarsh* 44(3): 274–283. doi:10.1111/j.1547-5069.2012.01462.x.
8. Maslach, C. and Jackson, S.E. (1982) *Burnout in health professions: A social psychological analysis*. In: Sanders, G.S. and Suls, J., Eds., *Social Psychology of Health and Illness*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, 227-251.
9. Maslach, C. and Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It*. New York: Jossey-Bass
10. Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E. and Leiter, M. (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychological Press. 52p.
11. Radha, R. (2007). *Indian Model of Executive Burnout*. *Vikalpa*, 32(2), 23-38. DOI: 10.1177/0256090920070203
12. Shinan-Altman, S. and Cohen, M. (2010). *Nursing aides' attitudes to elder abuse in nursing homes: The effect of work stressors and burnout*. *The Gerontologist*, 49, 674-684.

Please add Latest Review till 2018