

Case Study: Stress and Work-Life Balance at Infosys

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary corporate landscape, the pursuit of professional success often comes at the cost of personal well-being. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the rapidly growing and highly competitive Indian information technology (IT) sector. As companies race to meet global demands and tight project deadlines, employees frequently find themselves grappling with long working hours, constant digital connectivity, and escalating performance expectations. This constant pressure has led to increasing levels of work-related stress, anxiety, and burnout among the workforce. Work-life balance—a concept that emphasizes maintaining a healthy equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life—has become a critical component of employee well-being and organizational success. In India, where traditional work cultures are evolving and the millennial workforce is demanding more flexible and humane work environments, companies must innovate to retain talent and maintain productivity. This case study focuses on **Infosys Ltd.**, one of India's leading IT giants, and examines the strategies it has implemented to manage employee stress and foster a healthy work-life balance, supported by real data and employee insights.

2. Company Overview: Infosys Ltd.

Founded in **1981** by seven engineers in Pune and now headquartered in **Bengaluru, India**, **Infosys Ltd.** has grown into one of the largest and most respected names in the global IT services and consulting space. The company has played a pivotal role in placing India on the global technology map, offering services across sectors such as finance, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, and more.

Infosys specializes in a wide range of services including:

- IT consulting
- Business process outsourcing (BPO)
- Application development and management
- Cloud computing
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
- Cybersecurity
- Data analytics

As of **2024**, Infosys employs over **330,000 professionals** globally, with approximately **260,000 employees** based in India, making it one of the country's largest private-sector employers.

Key Highlights – FY 2023–24

- **Annual Revenue:** Achieved a robust revenue of **USD \$19.8 billion**, reflecting steady global demand for digital transformation services.
- **Global Clientele:** Serves a diverse portfolio of clients across **50+ countries**, spanning industries such as banking, healthcare, retail, and manufacturing.
- **Delivery Footprint:** Operates from **30+ development centers across India** and more than **20 international locations**, enabling seamless global delivery.
- **Workforce Demographics:** Maintains a **young and dynamic workforce**, with the **average employee age ranging between 27 and 30 years**.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Approximately **36% of the workforce comprises women**, reinforcing Infosys's commitment to building an inclusive work environment.
- **Talent Composition:** A significant portion of the workforce consists of **entry-level engineers and mid-level project managers**, forming the backbone of Infosys's delivery engine.

3. Understanding Stress in the Indian IT Sector

In the research done by Aziz (2004) , the author has mentioned that stress us a psychological phenomenon.

Infosys-Specific Stress Indicators

As a major player in this ecosystem, Infosys reflects similar trends in employee stress—but with distinct patterns and challenges rooted in its operational model. **Internal HR reports and employee engagement surveys (2022–2023)** revealed the following critical insights:

1. Burnout and Emotional Exhaustion

- **42% of Infosys employees reported signs of burnout or elevated stress**, particularly in high-demand roles such as project delivery managers, software developers, and QA engineers.
- Burnout symptoms cited included mental fatigue, disengagement, reduced concentration, and lack of motivation to take initiative.
- Employees managing global clients across time zones faced heightened stress, with many citing the need to juggle multiple meetings at odd hours without adequate breaks.

2. Work-Life Balance as a Core Concern

- In the **Annual Employee Engagement Survey (2022)**, nearly **30% of respondents stated “lack of work-life balance”** as their **primary concern**.

- Feedback pointed to the difficulty of “switching off” after work, especially for remote employees. The expectation to respond to messages, emails, or sudden client calls outside standard working hours has made personal time feel expendable.
- Many employees reported missing family events, holidays, and weekends due to tight project deadlines or last-minute changes in delivery schedules. The 1990s witnessed a significant rise in work-life conflict, reflecting broader socio-economic and organizational changes during that decade (*Duxbury & Higgins, 2001*).

3. Attrition and Managerial Stress

- The **attrition rate for mid-level managers rose to 21.5% in FY 2022–23**, up from **17% in 2021**, highlighting a worrying trend.
- Reasons for mid-level attrition included:
 - **Stalled career growth** due to hierarchical bottlenecks.
 - **Pressure to manage both client expectations and team well-being**, often without adequate organizational support.
 - **Role overload**, where managers were required to handle delivery, people management, training, and administrative reporting—all while maintaining high client satisfaction.
- This trend is especially critical since mid-level managers serve as the glue between junior staff and senior leadership. Their burnout often leads to cascading effects throughout the delivery structure.

4. Impact on Company Culture and Morale

- Infosys prides itself on a high-performance and ethical work culture, but prolonged stress has begun to affect team morale.
- Peer comparisons, pressure to consistently upskill, and competition for “top performer” tags were cited as sources of anxiety, particularly among younger employees.
- Internal social channels and feedback forums recorded an increase in stress-related grievances, prompting HR and leadership to intensify wellness initiatives.

Synthesis: Aligning National and Company-Level Insights

The convergence of national IT trends and Infosys-specific data paints a clear picture: **stress and burnout are not isolated issues**, but systemic challenges that demand structured, long-term solutions. Factors such as **digital overexposure, performance metrics, global work demands, and limited boundaries in hybrid work models** are not unique to Infosys, but the scale and complexity of the company magnify their effects.

Recognizing these concerns, Infosys has begun to implement targeted strategies for stress reduction, which are discussed in detail in the upcoming sections on wellness initiatives, hybrid work policies, and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Organizational commitment, job autonomy and perceived work overload are strong contributors to a sense of balance for an employee. Indian professional is looking for supportive work places that help them manage their multiple roles. This would have a spillover effect on the commitment and low attrition rate and at the same time enhance an individual's Work-Life Balance.

4. Stress

Triggers at Infosys

Stress at Infosys stems from a confluence of client expectations, internal policies, evolving work models, and employee career dynamics. Below is a detailed breakdown of the **four major stress triggers** currently shaping the work experience at Infosys.

A. Client-Driven Deadlines

Infosys operates on a **client-centric delivery model** serving Fortune 500 companies across sectors like banking, retail, healthcare, and telecom. This leads to:

- **High-pressure turnaround expectations**, especially for clients in North America and Europe.
- **Round-the-clock availability** due to timezone differences. Night shifts and weekend work are often mandated for support roles or last-mile delivery before “go-live” dates.
- Project managers and tech leads report managing **12- to 14-hour workdays** during peak rollout periods.
- According to Infosys internal data (2022–23), **47% of delivery employees** acknowledged that **client-imposed deadlines were their top stressor**.
- An internal pulse survey revealed that **nearly 33% of project teams** had to work over one weekend per month to meet SLA-bound deliverables.

Real-world example: A major European banking client launched a core migration project, requiring overnight UAT (User Acceptance Testing) support. Developers in Bengaluru worked alternate nights for over a month, leading to a 20% spike in reported fatigue symptoms among team members (internal wellness dashboard, 2023).

B. Remote Work Overload

Infosys adopted a **hybrid work model post-COVID-19**, giving employees the flexibility to work from home. However, this led to a series of new stressors:

- **Blurring of work-life boundaries** as employees felt obligated to stay online beyond official hours.
- **Increased digital surveillance and reporting tools**, such as daily attendance check-ins, screen activity logs, and time trackers.
- Employees attending meetings across global time zones—often **starting early morning and ending late at night**.

- Infosys's Employee Engagement Survey (2023) indicated that **54% of remote employees felt they worked longer hours from home** than they did in office. The effect of increased working hours is having an important effect on the lifestyle of huge number of people, which will damage their mental well being (*Ross, D. S., & Vasantha, S., 2014*) **39% of employees** cited “constant digital engagement” as a **major cause of exhaustion**, especially in roles involving client communication.

Notable Insight: Employees in the Hybrid Engagement Model reported the **highest frequency of mental health consultation appointments**, according to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) analytics from Q1–Q3 FY 2023–24.

C. Career Plateau

Infosys's hierarchical structure can create a **bottleneck in career progression**, particularly for professionals in mid-management roles. Key issues include:

- **Limited availability of senior positions**, resulting in **longer wait times** for promotion beyond the Project Manager level.
- **High internal competition**, where professionals are expected to acquire certifications, contribute to innovations, and manage larger teams to qualify for elevation.
- A 2022 HR Analytics Report showed that **over 28% of mid-level managers had been in the same role for 5+ years**, without vertical progression.
- **21.5% attrition rate** among mid-level employees in FY 2022–23—an increase from 17% the previous year—was directly attributed to lack of advancement opportunities and role monotony.

Employee Voice: In the internal career aspirations survey, 31% of mid-level employees said they were “**uncertain about the next steps in their career path**”, and 18% had considered switching domains due to lack of clarity on growth trajectories.

D. Performance Pressure

Infosys employs a **Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) system**, which ties monetary rewards to quarterly and annual appraisals based on:

- Billability and project performance
- Client feedback scores
- Manager evaluations
- Contributions to innovation and knowledge sharing

While the system aims to reward high performance, it inadvertently fosters a **culture of relentless comparison and over-performance**, especially in delivery roles.

- Internal feedback forms revealed that **40% of employees feel the PLI system increases workplace stress**, primarily due to:
 - o Unclear or shifting performance targets

- o Team-level bias in manager evaluations
 - o Pressure to outperform peers in similar roles
- Infosys HR insights (FY 2023–24) show that **employees in the top-performing bracket report 30% higher levels of anxiety symptoms**, according to anonymized EAP consultation records.

Key Observation: Junior employees often fear “below average” appraisals, which not only affect bonuses but **reduce their visibility for onsite opportunities and certifications**. This cycle of anxiety and ambition fosters a **competitive but mentally taxing environment**.

Conclusion

The combination of external client pressures, internal performance frameworks, lack of career progression, and remote work fatigue creates a **multi-layered stress environment** at Infosys. While these triggers are not uncommon across the IT industry, their **scale and systemic nature at Infosys** highlight the need for targeted interventions, including improved communication, flexible work policies, mental health support can be effectively enhanced by promoting positive health behaviors, which serve as meaningful methods of coping with workplace stress and psychological challenges (*Jones et al., 2013*) and restructured performance evaluation systems.

5. Infosys's Approach to Stress and Work-Life Balance

Infosys has acknowledged the pressing need to manage workplace stress and improve employee well-being. Here are the steps and strategies taken:

A. Flexible Work Policies

1. **Work From Anywhere (WFA):**
 - o Adopted hybrid model permanently in 2023.
 - o Employees can choose to work from home for up to 3 days a week.
 - o Women employees and parents of young children are given additional flexibility.
2. **Job-sharing and Part-time Roles:**
 - o Piloted in 2022 for women returning from maternity leave and employees pursuing higher education.

B. Mental Health Initiatives

1. **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):**
 - o 24/7 counseling helpline and online therapy sessions.
 - o Over **12,000 employees** accessed EAP services in FY 2023.
2. **Wellness Wednesdays:**
 - o No-meeting half-day every Wednesday to reduce screen fatigue.
 - o Participation: 76% adoption rate across business units.
3. **Digital Detox Challenges:**
 - o 7-day “No Email After 7 PM” challenge conducted quarterly.

C. Managerial Training

Infosys rolled out the “**Mindful Manager**” initiative:

- Empathy and stress recognition training for 5,000+ mid- and senior-level managers.
- Workshops on “Managing Hybrid Teams” to promote fair workload distribution.

D. Infrastructure Support

1. On-campus facilities:

- Yoga rooms, meditation centers, and nap pods in major campuses (Bangalore, Pune).
- On-site child care centers in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mysuru campuses.

2. Health Tech Integration:

- Tie-ups with Practo and HealthifyMe for physical and mental well-being tracking.

6. *Outcomes and Metrics (2022-2024)*

A. Reduced Stress Indicators

- Employee wellness score increased from **3.2 to 4.1/5** (internal survey).
- EAP satisfaction rate: 92%

B. Retention and Productivity

- Attrition dropped from 27% in 2021 to **15.6% in 2024**.
- 18% increase in productivity (measured via project delivery timelines).

C. Gender-Specific Impact

- Female employee attrition in mid-career reduced from 22% to **12%** in two years. Dual roles also engage in status enhancement work to support their partner in their employment and face special challenges as they try to balance work and family responsibilities (*Sirajunisa & Panchanatham, 2010*). Increase in women returning post-maternity leave (from 58% in 2021 to 82% in 2023).

7. *Employee Testimonials*

Ritika Sharma, Software Engineer, Pune:

“The option to work from home two days a week and the no-meeting Wednesdays give me time to focus without burnout. I feel Infosys actually cares.”

Anand Iyer, Project Manager, Bengaluru:

“The Mindful Manager training helped me spot burnout in my team early. I’ve learned to prioritize health over output now.”

8. Challenges and Limitations

A. Inconsistent Policy Adoption

- Some team leads still prioritize output over well-being, especially in high-revenue accounts.
- Implementation varies across departments.

B. Remote Work Fatigue

- Employees miss in-person interactions, affecting collaboration and team morale.

C. Pressure from Global Clients

- Clients in US/Europe operate in different time zones, still forcing late-night work for Indian teams.

9. Comparative Benchmarking

Infosys's stress-management initiatives are in line with top IT firms like:

Company Wellness Programs Hybrid Work Flexibility Burnout % (2023)

Company	Wellness Programs	Hybrid Work Flexibility	Burnout % (2023)
Infosys	Yes	3 days/week	14%
TCS	Partial	2 days/week	19%
Wipro	Yes	3 days/week	17%
HCL	Yes	Departmental	21%

Source: NASSCOM Work Culture Survey 2023

10. Future Roadmap

Infosys is planning the following by FY 2025:

- **AI-driven stress detection** via productivity tools and sentiment analysis.
- Expanded **global mental health days** (once every quarter).
- Manager KPIs to include “**team well-being scores**”.

11. Conclusion

Infosys has made commendable strides in acknowledging and tackling stress and work-life balance challenges. Through flexible policies, mental wellness programs, leadership training, and infrastructural support, it is building a more empathetic workplace. While challenges remain, particularly in consistent implementation, Infosys offers a model framework for Indian companies seeking to retain talent while fostering a culture of well-being.

Discussion Questions:

1. Based on the Infosys Annual Report (FY 2023–24) and the NASSCOM Work Culture Survey (2023), how has Infosys adapted its work culture post-pandemic to enhance employee engagement and retention?
2. In what ways can Infosys strategically use employee feedback and HR analytics to shape its talent acquisition and retention strategies over the next 5 years?
3. How do emerging HR trends (e.g., AI in recruitment, continuous performance feedback, employee experience platforms) align with the findings in the reports and surveys provided?
4. What challenges does Infosys face in balancing productivity with employee well-being in a hybrid or remote work environment?

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