

struggles of the working class in view of Steven Greenhouse's book "The Big Squeeze"

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Introduction

What precisely is workload stress, and are there ways to avoid it? These questions are usually what every employee in an organization eventually succumbs to in order to seek a way out of their overwhelming, stressful situation. At times, the organizational goals or objectives can subject people to go under immense amounts of stress that can lead to various forms of emotional, physical, and mental instability. Most often, employees are subjected to unachievable or unattainable goals. From an analysis of the workplace environment, numerous variants are prevailing that can contribute to factors of workplace-associated stress. These factors can be interpreted in terms of their effect on health, social status, and socioeconomic class. Their presence in the workplace is evidence-building that leads to a case for employees' affectivity dropping, low performance, and job security concerns. Steven Greenhouse's literature "The Big Squeeze" also looks into these factors and measures their impact on people's lives. The Big Squeeze looks into one of the least inquired but one of the most prominent issues that have surfaced in the United States economy. It's effective on levels of socio-economic status and class, with evidence leading towards the fact that organizations are profiting more while the working class, namely the employees, are suffering from stagnating levels of wages.

Discussion

The book by Steven Greenhouse investigates the many factors that constitute numerous variations of stress, namely those prevailing in the organizational workplace environment. These stress indicators are the results of various changes that have been occurring at a time when an economy is noted to be rising, and a better future can be envisioned on the basis of this. This turnabout has resulted in becoming a cause of low self-esteem and a continuous moral decline for various employees. The main instigator behind this factor is the evident fact linking organizations profiting while employees belonging to various socio-economic statuses are suffering from stagnating wages, with no hopes of increasing them in the near future. These conditions have given rise to situations of economic downfall and a noticeably high turnover rate among employees. One of the factors that are mainly

contributing to this issue is the fact that globalization has taken the world into a strong grasp (Greenhouse). Every company is presently seeking ways to convert its operations to match the requirements of being a global competitor. However, no matter how noble the cause may seem, the issue is still aligned with the fact that globalization has not been done properly. A level that will accommodate the needs of the employees on different levels. The book provides a more in-depth knowledge of the ever-growing aggressiveness directed at workers.

The book covers interviews with different employees, and each case gives a distinctive approach toward the work stress incurred by each employee in their respective organizations. The employees in the American workplace are forced to work in undesirable conditions. The issue has been a focus of debates in the economic and financial world, based on the work hours that the employees have to attend and the fact that these high-intensity work hours only contribute to low wages despite their efforts. Surveys and research into this issue have brought unchallengeable facts that American employees are being pushed a little too far to work less flexible hours while getting less compensated for it at the same time. A situation that precisely fits the scenario of workers being shuffled into the Big Squeeze.

Stress Accumulators & the Big Squeeze

The inflexible work hours, as mentioned above, have been looked into by economists and sociologists, which suggest that the current trend in the market is shifting from the manufacturing department towards the direction of presenting services. It is another factor that the present-day working-class employees are not so determined to keep track of their hours with the clock, as is the case with the workers in the manufacturing department. The current trend is inclined towards the concept of finishing work according to a defined “deadline,” which compels workers to put in as many hours as they can (the most noticeable hours are up to 90 hours) before the deadline is met. Also, it is an overgrowing trend that is evident in the technical and engineering fields (Greenhouse). This new culture has forced people to shift their working hour patterns despite their ethnic background, social status, and class in society. It brings forward the question of whether the working class in American society is working more hours than the rest of the world.

Another contributor to this factor is the fact that stress levels have elevated with the modern advancements in the field of technology. People now are more connected with work than they ever were before. People can now carry their laptops and cellphones, and they are forced to check in with their deadlines and projects to ensure that they are on schedule with things. It has caused a decline in social time; people spend with their families or their social circle and are more engaged with their workplace and out-of-the-office boundaries. This factor, from a social perspective, is leading most workers to become distant from their families, especially women, since they try to cope with the rising financial crisis and eagerly attempt to support their families through any means necessary, including extensive work hours and taking on more workload than they can handle (Greenhouse). So, in a way, the modern-day work setting is leaving an impact on all aspects of life, including gender, class, status,

health, and race. Some people have been noticed to deliberately reduce their 60 hours a week work shift in response to their mental and physical health deteriorating gradually as the workload increases.

In comparison to the trends that are being practiced in the current market setting, it reveals a distinguishable statistic of a current ongoing poverty level among various walks of life, a continuous struggle being carried out to attain more wages, and a general inequality prevailing in society. This has caused a significant gap among families with fewer working hours, people retiring at an early age, and a general sense of the inadequate distribution of pensions is noticeable in the system. Analysts in the market have revealed that this trend is only likely to grow in the coming years if no proper action is taken on this issue. The work hours are being extensively tiresome, and the turnover rate is growing in the market. However, an in-depth analysis of this factor has revealed another point: there is a general inequality in the distribution of money in different job roles, and thus, there is a clear distinction between social class and status (Greenhouse). It is another fact that married women from a higher social status are working longer hours for the acquisition of wages to support their families. It is a major disadvantage for people belonging to a lower working class, who are studied to be working more hours at a lower ranking position but aren't compensated enough. The most affected parties in this matter are the immigrants, Hispanics, and black people. These factors are common derivatives of stress inducers.

Conclusion

In a certain concluding manner, the above points can be summarized in the sense that people are being subjected to extensive hours, which is causing a divide. The book by Steven Greenhouse investigates the many factors that constitute numerous variations of stress, namely those prevailing in the organizational workplace environment. These conditions have given rise to situations of economic downfall and a noticeably high turnover rate among employees. The book covers interviews with different employees, and each case gives a distinctive approach toward the work stress incurred by each employee in their respective organizations. Surveys and research into this issue have brought unchallengeable facts that American employees are being pushed a little too far to work less flexible hours while getting less compensated for it at the same time. Another factor is that the present working-class employees are not so determined to keep track of their hours with the clock, which compels workers to put in as many hours as they can. This new culture has forced people to shift their working hour patterns despite their ethnic background, social status, and class in society. Another contributor to this factor is the fact that stress levels have elevated with the modern advancements in the field of technology. People can now carry their laptops and cellphones, and they are forced to check in with their deadlines and projects. This factor, from a social perspective, is leading most workers to become distant from their families. Trends that are being practiced in the current market setting reveal a distinguishable statistic of the current ongoing poverty level among various walks of life. Inadequate distribution of pensions is noticeable in the system.

References

Greenhouse, Steven. The Big Squeeze. Westminster: Anchor Books, 2009. Print.