Stress Management at Workplace

L.Priya

Assistant professor,Dr. N. G. P Arts and Science College, Coimbatore – 641 048

ABSTRACT *Stress is a fact in our daily life. When a person needs help, it means the person feels physically and emotionally disabled. Most people believe that their capacity and capabilities are so little to encounter high level of stress. Today, with progress in all respects, human is facing new challenges in many different fields as if progress in turn creates new problems. Over a century, the nature of working has been changed widely, and still these changes are in progress. Following these changes, number of illnesses has been increased, morality and human aspects are faded and new problems are occurred every day, so that we are facing job stress which called "illness of the century".*

Introduction

Stress is a fact in our daily life. When a person needs help, it means the person feels physically and emotionally disabled. Most people believe that their capacity and capabilities are so little to encounter high level of stress.

Today, human is in a transition process from an industrial to a post- industrial world. Also, the post- industrial world, like the agricultural or industrial world has its own characteristics. People were living their own simple life over thousands of years, but an industrial revolution started to change their life in so many aspects.

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WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset a person's personal balance in some way. When faced with a threat, whether to physical safety or emotional equilibrium, the body's defenses kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the 'fight-or-flight' response. Its well known, what this stress response feels like: heart pounding in the chest, muscles tensing up, breath coming faster, every sense on red alert.

According to the American Medical Association, Stress is defined as "Any interference that disturbs a person's mental or physical well-being."

CAUSES OF STRESS:

The potential causes of stress are numerous and highly individual. What one considers stressful depends on many factors, including his personality, general outlook on life, problem-solving abilities, and social support system? Something that's stressful to one may not faze someone else, or he/she may even enjoy it. For example, the morning commute may make one anxious and tense because he worries that traffic will make him late. Others, however, may find the trip relaxing because they allow more than enough time and enjoy listening to music while they drive.

The pressures and demands that cause stress are known as stressors. People usually think of stressors as being negative, such as an exhausting work schedule or a rocky relationship. However, anything that forces one to adjust can be a stressor. This includes positive events such as getting married or receiving a promotion. Regardless of whether an event is good or bad, if the adjustment it requires, strains a person's coping skills and adaptive resources, the end result is stress.

Differences on Stress

Personal differences: the impact of personal differences on stress is very crucial. The normal levels of persons' resistance against stress are different.

Cultural differences: their impacts are also very important too. Results of a study shows that American managers are under stress less than Japanese and Brazilian managers are.

The gender differences: according to the results of a study, it is possible that women are more talented than men to be involved in 47% of Americans are worry about stress. About half of American, especially women, parents and working age people are worry about stress rate in their life. Women believe stress is more effective in them than men (%53 to %43). Women who are under stress report feelings such as anger, desire to cry and physical weakness, while men complain about difficulties in sleep, anger and sensitivity. At the end, women involve in high blood pressure, anxiety, depression and obesity more than men.

Consequences of Stress

Stress will have a lot of consequences and job effects such as migraine, alcohol or drug abuse and smoking cigarette, or physical and emotional effects such as migraine, high blood pressure and consequences concerning mental health such as depression.

According to other classification, stress consequences can be divided in 3 groups of individual, organizational and individual- organizational.

Individual Consequences

Individual consequences affect the person, mostly. However, this may also affect the company directly or indirectly.

Individual consequences may be divided as follow:
Behavior consequences: are reactions which can be harmful to the person and the others.

Mental consequences: depend on person's mental and physical health.

Physical consequences: would affect the person's physical state. Stress may result in physical disorders.

Organizational Consequences
It is clear that, as mentioned before, individual consequences can affect the organization, but stress has other consequences which may have effects on institution more directly.

Functional consequences which is lack of proper and correct function

Quitting, the most important kinds of quitting are absence and resign

Attitudes, job satisfaction, mood, organisational commitments get accordingly affected along with the personal motivation accordingly.

Personal - Organization Consequences
Exhaustion is the final consequence of stress that either affects person or organisation. Exhaustion is the feeling of fading. It appears when the person is bearing many pressures and little satisfaction.

Stress Management at Workplace
With knowing that stress is widespread in organizations and potentially is harmful, the organizations and persons should pay special attention to manage stress effectively. There is variety of personal and organizational strategies to manage the stress. Stress management can be performed either in form of eliminating stress factor or training the personnel to encounter conditions which create stress Many researchers have studied social, psychological and medical aspects of stress. The researchers with the workplace point of view regard working and professional environment as the main source of the job stress. Other studies have emphasized on personal differences Stress causes physical, mental and behavioural problems.

A person under stress is unable to pay attention to their work; therefore, it can harm them and others in that organization. Overall, job stress reduces efficiency and effectiveness of staff. Working conditions have a main role in creating stress for personnel, but the personal factors should not be ignored in this field Growth of studies on stress field has resulted in understanding of organizational stress, but unfortunately our understanding of workplace stress is limited because despite the improvements in the last years, most studies don't have true methodological frameworks .

There are two schools to study the stress: medical -psychological school and organizational school. In the medical-psychological school, stress is defined in terms of different parameters which affect the quality of working life and person's health. This school is based on a natural and medical science. The human body is known as a set of mechanisms that act in a stable and predictable state. Distance from this standard is known as a symptom of stress in personal level.

In organizational school, studies include spectrum of activities which are undertaken in an organisation and between the organizations. In the organisational school, the human body is being ignored socially and organizationally. In these studies, human body as the place of appearing stress is being forgotten. To eliminate the distance between the two approaches, the organisational studies should be performed with respect to person's stress and at the same time the organization should be taken into consideration. In order to encounter stress, there are two kinds of strategies, the first one works at individual level, and the second one works at the organisational level.

Stress Prevention Strategy
It is impossible to present a general solution to prevent stress, but we can introduce an instruction instead. To recognize the current problems, first we have to regard size and the available resources of the organization. Regardless of the method of information Gathering, data should include staff understanding of their working conditions, stress level, health and satisfaction. The list of the working condition, which may lead to stress and warning signs of stress and effect, could be a good start to make decision on collected information.

In the next stage, after recognizing stress resources and understanding its aspects, plan and execution of intervention strategy is adjusted. In small organizations, official discussions may create useful ideas on prevention which help to recognize stress difficulties. In the big organizations, an official process might be needed. Some interferes may be performed quickly, (such as improvement of communications, education etc.) whereas some others may need more time.

Conclusions
Although we cannot see the stress as a permanent negative phenomenon and there is some positive stress too, but it has a lot of effects on organization members. Affected by stress, managers, staff and clients will have the special psychological moods which may lead to actions directly reflected in activities and productivity of organization. Therefore, stress management and its implication for more creativity and quicker cursor movement toward the organizational targets is one of the goals which have been recently developed in organizations. The organizations can prevent negative stress and its consequences by training managers and personnel effectively for better recognition and management of stress factors.

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