



Stress Management : Effects and Coping Strategies at work place among employees

KEYWORDS

Stress, Workplace Stress, Coping Strategies, Employees, Stress Management.

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ABSTRACT Stress has become significant due to dynamic social factor and changing needs of life styles. Stress is man's adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioral changes. Stress management is exploring different stress coping mechanisms that can be used to help improve and reduce stress symptoms in those individuals suffering. Stress can make a person productive and constructive, when it is identified and well managed. The focus of the paper is to study the stress level among different people and to suggest the coping strategies. Some of the stress coping strategies identified by this study includes stress management programs, physical activities planned in job design, life style modification programs, finding triggers and stressors, supportive organization culture, stress counseling programs, and spiritual programs. Stress issue has become contemporary, being an occupational hazard needs to be addressed without delay. Hence the importance of the study of stress at various levels is growing. This paper concludes that positive attitude and meditation will be helpful for coping the stress and it will definitely change the perception of stress.

Introduction:

Stress can be defined as a physical or emotional response to external and internal conditions. The response to these conditions creates a reaction experienced by the body, which if not released, will cause physical changes that can lead to a variety of illnesses and permanent damage. The concept of stress can be seen as negative and positive. Positive stress is perceived by some to act as a motivating factor and help achieve objectives. Whereas, negative stress takes a sometimes debilitating toll on the body and creates physical and mental problems. Stress management is exploring different stress coping mechanisms that can be used to help improve and reduce stress symptoms in those individuals suffering. Various approaches to stress management are being applied within organizations worldwide but before the approaches, individuals need to identify the source of the stress whether it be work or personal. There are many different techniques to help manage stress. Each individual person may have different types of stress. Different techniques may work better than others depending on your level or type of stress and maybe and your lifestyle. A number of factors (environmental, organizational and individual) moderated by individual differences cause an employee to feel stress. The more frequently these factors occur and the more intensely they are experienced by the employee, the greater the stress that he experiences; job related tension tends to decrease job satisfaction and performance. Stress is defined as an imbalance between demand and resources or as occurring when pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope. Moreover, it is a person's physiological response to an internal or external stimulus that triggers the fight-or-flight response. It is experienced by an individual if some factors, called stressors, stimulate the feeling of hopelessness, lack of coping mechanism, and pressure. It causes individual to become disoriented and imbalanced.

Review of literature :

Dayo Akintayo (2012) found that working environment is significantly related to workers' morale and with perceived workers' productivity. Dr. K. Chandrasekar (2011) revealed that environmental factors are conducive to work that affect attitude of employees to work are- interpersonal rela-

tionships control over environment, shift, emotional factors, job assignment, overtime duty, extended work. L.S. Kang and R.S. Sandhu (2011) in their article said that Stress is an individual's state of mind in an encounter of a demanding situation or any constraint in the organization which he/ she feels harmful or threatening for her/himself. Stress emerges from various energy sapping conditions in the working environment. R Neelamegam and S Asrafi (2010) in their article said that Stress is a general term applied to the pressures felt in life. Stress at work is almost inevitable in many jobs. It has become a major buzzword and a legitimate concern of the time. According to N. Kathirvel (2009) Stress is the reaction that people take due to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. It arises when they worry that they cannot cope. Stress is a demand made upon the adaptive capacities of the mind and body. Kulkarni (2006) in an article Burnout said that rapid change of the modern working life is associated with increasing demands of learning new skills, need to adopt to new types of work, pressure of higher productivity and quality of work, time pressure and hectic jobs are increasing stress among the workforce. Further he added that privatization and globalization have ignited mergers, acquisitions and precarious employment. Sharma, Khera and Khandekar (2006) Computer Related Health Problems among Information Technology Professionals in Delhi – A publication in Indian Journal of Community Medicine in January 2006 found more on visual stress and musculoskeletal symptoms, initially being mild and temporary and later with increasing years assuming more intense and permanent nature. It also found that computer related morbidity had become an important occupational health problem and of great concern. It suggested an immediate need for the concerned authorities to collaborate and enforce suitable preventive measures.

Sources of Occupational Stress:

Although occupational stress initially arises from constituent factors of job and its psycho-physical environment, these factors are not inherently stressors. In fact, the personal characteristics of an employee, cognitive appraisal of the job factors and resources determine, the extent of stress experienced from a job factor or situation. Howev-

er, some job factors or work conditions are likely to cause stress to majority of the workers which may vary from worker to worker. The pressures caused by the job factors are mediated by the personal characteristics of the worker. Hence, all the sources of occupational stress are of two types i.e. Individual variables

which includes an employer's age, sex, health, status, experience and socio cultural back ground .Second is Work Setting Variables which includes Job role, Job characteristics and attributes, physical work conditions and technology, performance feedback and reward system,

interpersonal relations at work .

Effects of Stress :

Stress is not automatically bad for individual employees or their organizational performance. Stress has both desirable and undesirable effects. It is functional as it acts as a stimulant, but prolonged stress becomes dysfunctional. Individual reactions to stress situations also differ. The most serious effects of stress relate to performance. It is said that moderate levels of stress stimulate the body and increase its ability to react thereby enabling the individuals to perform better. But too much stress places unattainable demands or constraints on the individual which results in lower performance. The physiological stress-effects may result in physical ailments, digestive problems, sleep trouble, erratic breathing, muscular problems, headaches and other aches, frequent urination, cardiovascular troubles, severe symptoms including ulcer, heart attacks, arthritis and even cancer, susceptibility to allergies, fatigue, rapid gain or loss of weight.

The psychological symptoms of stress-effects are as follows Chronic anxiety or restlessness, anger, depression, nervousness, irritability, shouting-high pitch voice, tension, frustration, boredom, no enthusiasm, fear of uncertainty, fussiness, dissatisfaction, worry, fatigue, exhaustion, feeling of failure, insecurity, inability to cope, feelings of isolation, withdrawal, alienation, self pity, confusion about roles and duties, inflexibility, moody, impulsiveness, impatience, feeling of unwanted, inability to concentrate, lack of decision making ability, guilt

feeling and memory lapse. Stress-effects can result in a number of behavioural symptoms which are as follows Forgetfulness, accident proneness, inability to take decision, declined job performance, increased job dissatisfaction, increased absence, work alcoholism, lack of trust, lack of concern for organization, refusal to talk or discuss, social isolation, increased criticism, jealousy, nail biting, hair pulling, lip smacking, teeth grinding, finger tapping, knee jogging, compulsive eating, compulsive chewing, over eating or under eating, intake of alcohol, drugs, anger, unprovoked shouting and gossip.

Stress Management Coping Strategies :

Stress is a fact of life and individuals react to stress in different ways. Some individuals deal with stressors in a positive way with a proper understanding of the phenomenon and its effect. Taking appropriate action to optimise, reduce or prevent stress may be beneficial both for the individual and organization. Stress management is a means to enhance coping with external stressors and

their internal consequences. Effective stress management can be done at the individual level and at the organizational level in many different ways. Some specific techniques that individuals can use for coping with

stress include Physical Exercise like walking, jogging, swimming, aerobics, riding bicycle, playing outdoor games etc. ,Relaxation Practices like Yoga, Meditation, Recreation and Leisure time activities like music, entertainment, painting, movies, parties, proper diet, sleep, Time management, Behavioural Self Control, Networking or Social Support .This kind of socio-emotional support received from personal relationships is necessary not only outside the work place but also within the workplace. The Organizational Oriented Strategies for Coping with Stress includes Flex time which allows workers to start or end the workday earlier or later can reduce work/life stress, especially for working parents, Job sharing, working from home results in higher morale and job satisfaction and lower employee stress and turnover, extending the lunch hour may help discourage snacking and fast food. Adequate time may also encourage time for calming or other stress-reduction activities such as walking.

Conclusion: