

WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES AND TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE IT: A REVIEW PAPER

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ABSTRACT

Stress management is the most vital topic of present-day competitive world wherein every individual, irrespective of gender, race, religion, caste, class etc. is going through stress and strain due to a variety of factors-specially ever growing cut throat competition in today's demanding world in which even sky is not the limit of success. The term stress means an imbalance between the mental and emotional levels of an individual. Stress reason out due to various external and internal factors. The present paper is an attempt to gather and present the reviews of the various researchers, so far has worked on the stress techniques and management. The paper is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data gathered from various published and online sources. The study will be able to get sight of the various factors responsible for the stress creation and the techniques used to minimize it.

KEY WORDS: *Stress, Stressors, Types, Effect of Stress, stress coping Mechanism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is the way to which human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The situation which makes us to become stress is known as Stressors. The pressures of working life can lead to stress if they are excessive or long-term. Examples of long-term or chronic stress are the fear, frustration and anger that may be produced by an unhappy relationship with one's boss or with a difficult customer, and the unhappiness of an unsuitable job. Up to a certain point an increase in pressure will improve performance and the quality of life (Selye, 1950). However, if pressure becomes excessive it loses its beneficial effect and becomes harmful.

1.1 TYPES OF STRESS:

- a. **Eustress:** These are also known as Positive Stress or good stress, which makes us to feel good and generate healthy effect. This type of Stress occurs for shorter duration time. Eustress gives ability to person to generate optimum output by performing best. In such situation person may thrilled, excited while watching Movie, Excited when won the Prize, Zeal for purchasing first car, happiness in accomplishing challenges, etc.
- b. **Distress:** This is called as Negative Stress, bad stress. This is opposite to Eustress. Death of someone you love, Illness, Financial crisis, Heavy work load etc, leads to Distress.
- c. **Hyper-Stress:** If the person pushed beyond what one can handle, which turns in to Hyper-stress. More times it occurs because workload. This type of stress occurs when constant heavy financial difficulties, work both at home and office, Continuous tension, travelling day and night etc.
- d. **Hypo stress:** This is directly opposite to Hyperstress. This type of stress experienced by people when they constantly feel bored, same task over and over again, restless work and lack of motivation.

1.2 CAUSES OF STRESS: Major causes of stress are as follows:

- Career concern
- Role Ambiguity
- Rotating work shifts
- Role conflict
- Occupational Demands
- Lack of participation in decision making
- Work-overload
- Work-under load
- Poor working conditions
- Lack of group cohesiveness
- Interpersonal & Intergroup conflict
- Organizational Change
- Lack Of Social Support

1.3 SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:

Changes in attitude, mood or behavior, Becoming irritable, aggressive, Conflict, Head ache, Fatigue, Increased absenteeism, altered performance, Diminished work relationships, Tiredness /lethargy/lack of interest, Changes in appearance.

1.4 PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR STRESS**Physical Skills**

- Breathing exercises
- Progressive relaxation
- Stretching exercise
- Walking and Sleeping

Mental Skills

- Meditation
- Yoga Practicing

Social Skills

- Meeting people
- Keeping pets
- Diversion Skill
- The activity which makes your mind off from problem.

Spiritual Skill

- Introspection exercise which helps you to connect you with yourself, which helps to find out meaning for life.

1.5 WAYS TO PREVENT STRESS

People tend not to think about stress and its consequences before getting it. On one hand this is right, what for to remember about negative things beforehand and fry oneself the nerves. But on another if a person knows what is stress and what are the causes of stress, he is prepaid and there are more chances to prevent its appearing. Stress situation can be prevented. It has been studied and estimated that a certain amount of stress is a good thing. There is a difference between good stress and bad stress. Professional work of the HR manager, who select the personnel in such a way, that it becomes possible to avoid unnecessary conflict situations. The people who choose the worker, nowadays more and more often ask about the ability working in groups, skills of negotiations and emotional stability

from the candidate on the position. This prevents the stress appearing because of the insufficient communication. Organization of feedback sessions, where workers in the presence of a qualified psychologist, express what they wanted to say earlier, but did not find the right time and place and where everything is said in front of each other, not behind the back. Correct, if the sessions are regular and employee have a possibility to express their thoughts regularly, the negative emotions will never be collected in someone's heart and will not make the person stressful. Of course the presence of a specialist is not obligatory. The possibility to communicate with the colleagues more than once a year, for example on Christmas Party, makes people relax and feel more confident with each other. The stress caused by the working relations will not appear in friendly environment. The worker oneself also should organize the trips to outside the city or even country, to change the atmosphere. To summarize the ideas of how the workers can be supported in stress situations, the main ways are:

- Talking to the worker in order to learn which way of emotional relaxation is the best exactly for him.
- Offering more breaks during some period.
- Giving the day off, or a vocation earlier.
- Show the interest in the person's work, problem and invigorate if possible.
- Treat someone's feelings seriously, with respect and understanding, without scarifies.
- Hire the psychologist or Stress Manager to consult the employees.

If the support is provided in the place, from where the stress originated, the effectiveness of such support is much higher. This means, if the employee gets the help from his colleagues or boss, he can get out from problematic situation, caused by work. However, the stress caused by other than working facts, also affect the working process, and that is why the managers of the company should anyway try to support the stressed employee. It is very important to create the relationship at work, which will be steady to all the stresses. In order to be able to create them the person must really wish that and only energetic and healthy person can have such a desire.

—Bonuses, expression of gratitude for good work, and positive and respectful attitude towards the employees, those things make the workers a little bit happier, and happy person cannot be stressed. The leadership plays an important role in preventing the stress as well, because usually they are the first ones, who know about coming problem in the company, for example the bounded dismissals. The way how the leaders give the problem to the employees decides would be there any stress situations or not.

To turn to psychologist is useful not only when it is visible need for him, but also as preventive measures. The psychologist will not only professionally probe the state of collective atmosphere, but also will do that in very nice and easy way, for example research through the games. Through those games people are more relaxed, open and truthful more; it is more interesting and attractive than ordinary psychological tests or interviews.

Anyway the best way to prevent stress at work and in life generally is to follow healthy life style. Healthy lifestyle builds energy naturally and stress prevention. Sport, natural food, vitamins, good sleep are the choices which can significantly improve our health and well being. When person is in good physical condition, there is much less chances of getting into the stress situations.

1.6 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Minter (1999) defines stress as “harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker.”

Schuler (1982) is of the opinion that stress is “perceived dynamic state involving uncertainty about something important”.

Pestonjee (1992) defines stress as occurring when demands on an individual exceed his adjustment resources. He is of the view that while stress is generally believed to have a deleterious effect of health and performance, recent research has revealed that a minimal level of stress is essential for effective functioning. It is the individual's reaction to stress which makes all the difference and may prove to be harmful. According to him the interest in the issue has been rising and calls the present century as the ‘age of anxiety and stress.’

Sapolsky, (2004) also has explained how anticipation of a stressful event can become a source of stress. Surprisingly, the body reacts in the same predictable way to an actual stressing event as it would to an anticipated stressing event (Sapolsky, 2004). Commonly accepted definitions of stress have also been provided by earlier researchers, such as (Selye, 1956; and Lazarus & De Longis, 1983).

According to Selye (1956) generalized adaptation theory, stress is defined as any reaction of the body to a demand. Demands can be anything ranging from physical injury or tension to extreme heat or cold. Stressors are either

internal or external stimuli that an individual believes to be demanding. Stressors can be psychologically, physically or socially inflicted. In Selye's theory, the body reacts to stress sequentially, according to three stages. The first is the alarm stage. A typical physical reaction to the alarm stage is movement of the body's defense mechanisms, such as a change in hormone levels with the expansion of the adrenal cortex. Psychological reactions to the alarm stage occur in three steps: alertness to the stressor, augmented anxiety levels, followed by task and defense oriented behaviors (Selye, 1956).

The resistance stage is the second phase of the body's reaction to stress. In general, during this stage of resistance, the body tries to adapt to the stressor. Physical reactions aroused during the alarm stage return to normal and psychological reactions turn to coping mechanisms. If the person's coping is ineffective and this stage is extended, the body moves into the next stage of exhaustion.

In the exhaustion stage, the body cannot resist stress any further. Physical reactions include swelling and depletion of adrenal glands damage to the lymphatic system. Psychological symptoms can be as severe as disorganization of perceptions and thoughts. The body exhibits symptoms to damaging stress in biological and psychological manifestations. These manifestations can be anxiety, irritability, headaches, gastrointestinal upset, high blood pressure and depressive symptoms (Selye, 1956).

Lazarus & De Longis, (1983), who have done extensive work in the field of stress, developed two models of life stress as it exists in the research. These two different models are the life events and daily hassles. In the life events model, it is argued that certain life events bring about change and force the individual to adapt, causing stress (Lazarus & De Longis, 1983). The second model, daily hassles, Lazarus and DeLongis argued, is the basis of defining stress. Daily hassles is a term used to identify the exasperating and stressful burdens people deal with every day that increases stress levels. Anxiety about losing weight, undemanding work and lack of family time, would all be considered daily hassles

Stress can also have diverse sequential durations, such as acute and chronic stress. According to Oxington, (2005), chronic stress includes stress that is not short term. Health concerns, lingering problems and financial difficulties may be sources of chronic stress. Acute stress on the other hand is caused by a reaction to a short-lived, urgent threat. This threat can either be real or perceived (Violanti, 1983)

Kavitha in her research titled —Role of stress among women employees forming majority workforce at IT sector in Chennai and Coimbatore|| (2012), she has focuses on the organizational role stress for the employees in the IT sector. She found in her research that, women face more stress than men in the organization and she viewed to be more specific married women faces more stress than the unmarried women.

Satiya S. & Khan W. in their research work titled —Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Occupational Stress among Working Professionals|| (2013). According to them Occupational Stress is as same as Job Stress that needs to be controlled at the workplace otherwise it will negatively affect on employee's work attitudes & behavior. This study investigates that, the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress.

This study revealed findings that, Emotional Intelligence is a most significant predictor of Occupational Stress.

1.7 CONCLUSION

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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