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Consequences of Stress in Work Place and it's Management: A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract

Work related stress is inevitable in present competitive environment. People working in different organizations or institutions are facing stress. It creates mental pressure, worries, tension that seriously affects our ability to work and thinking. Stress is the mismatch between a person and his environment. Huge amount of money is lost every year in every organization for job related stress. It seriously affects our precious lives. So stress management is necessary for every organization and every people. Proper stress management can only help the stress affected people and organization. This paper seeks to present some idea about the characteristics of stress, it's consequences and it's affective management for better peaceful life.

Key Words: stress, job stress, causes, sign, consequences, management.

Introduction

The concept of stress was first introduced by Hans Selye in 1936 in the life science. Stress in the effect of the malfunctioning of the body mind interaction. Stress is common to every people irrespective of their profession and age.

Stress is a big problem in today's competitive environment. Stress creates pressure, tension which adversely affects our thinking and efficiency. It seriously disturbs to achieve our goal. People who feel stress cannot do their work efficiently and effectively.

If somebody suffers from mental tension, fatigue or tremendous strain at the mental level then some disease like hypertension, ulcer, stroke, cancer, heart attack, sleeping disorder and absenteeism may occur.

Though India is a fast developing country is yet to create facilities to mitigate the adverse effects of work stress. The study of work stress in the member states of European Union, points out that an average of 22% of the working Europeans experience work stress (1).

The social and economic cost of stress to corporate world is insurmountable. Now stress has become an important subject in medical sciences, behavioural sciences and social sciences. This paper seeks to present some thoughts about the sign of stress, consequences of stress and management of stress.

Concept of Stress and Job stress

The word 'stress' has been derived from French word "destresse" which means oppression or constriction. Stress is not always bad. It has good side also. For example positive stress occurs when

a person gets topper in the annual examination or wins a latter he/she suddenly starts shouting or crying. It is a sign of good stress.

Stress is the effect of a mismatch between a person and his/her environment. Most behavioral scientists define stress as the adaptive response of a person to an external situation or action that places excessive mental and physical demands on him/her.

Job stress may be defined as the harmful physical and mental responses that occur when the requirements to the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Causes of Job Stress

Threat from the top level of the management.

- Not having duty and spend an idle time.
- Doing repetitive work
- Time pressure and deadlines for completing a job.
- Fragile working environment.
- Making many decisions at a time.
- Repetitive placement in work.
- Excessive travel with traffic jam.
- Not having good relation with fellow workers.
- Not having equitable salary and other financial benefits.

It is noted that work stress occurs among the employees at the context of work and at the content of work (2). The potential stressors for these hazards in the context of work are organizational culture and function, role in the organization, career development, decision latitude and control, interpersonal relationship at work, work-home interface and change (2, 3).

The studies on the effect of work stress among men and women working groups in USA and found that due to high Psychological work demands like excessive work load and time pressure leads to work stress and cause depression and anxiety in young working adults (4).

Two major factors responsible for work stress due to the improper work schedule are shift work and long working hours. The studies conducted in Italy among the shift workers observed that shift work leads to poor sleep and health related problems (5).

Sign of Job Stress

a) Performance of the work :

- Taking more time to do the work.
- Forgetfulness.
- Unnecessary error.
- Lack of controlling of the work.
- Lack of decision making ability.
- Loss of motivation and commitment.
- Inconsistent performance.

b) Withdrawal attitude from the work :

- Coming very late to join the work.
- Step out early from the work.

- Tendency to absent from the work.
- Attitude of resignation.
- Lack of social contract.
- Elusiveness or evasiveness.

c) Regressive attitude :

- Crying.
- Unnecessary argument.
- Clueless sensitivity.
- Irritability or moodiness.
- Overreaction to the Problems.
- Personality clashes.

d) Aggressive attitude :

- Malicious gossip.
- Vandalism.
- Shouting.
- Poor employee relations.
- Temper outburst.

e) Psychophysical sign :

- Nervous Stumbling
- Sweating.
- Tiredness.
- Tension.
- Headaches.
- Hand Tremor.
- Rapid weight gain or loss.
- Constantly feeling cold or worm.

Consequences of Job Stress

Working people who face stress may develop some physiological and psychological disorder like tension, headache, weakness, high blood pressure, heart pounding, indigestion, Constipation, bored with the job, anxiety, depression, irritation, low self esteem, fatigue, low satisfaction etc. Due to mental stress of the employee the organization cannot achieve its goal. Productivity of the organization will be lower. Therefore profitability of the organization will also be lower. Work life pressure of the employees affect tremendously to the organization's growth, existence and stability.

How to manage the stress?

Job stress management can improve job related symptoms of guilt, depression, anxiety and low self esteem. Job stress management also reduces job related psychosomatic symptoms such as insomnia, ulcers, headaches, constipation, indigestion, heart pounding, eating disorder etc. Here some rules are mentioned how to reduce stress.

Get moving

Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Once you are in the habit of being physically active, try to maintain regular exercise into your daily routine.

Avoid the Stressor

Avoid the people who consistently causes stress in your life.

Adopt a Healthy Life Style

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Reduce caffeine and sugar.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes and drugs.
- Get enough sleep.
- Make time for fun and relaxation.
- Spend time with family, watch movies, listen music.

Time management

- Evaluating how your time is spent.
- Update your to do list every day.
- Learn to say “no” to nonessential task.
- Break large projects into small parts.
- Accept challenges within your limit.

Once a person was asked by swami Gokulananda how the person handled worry or excitement.

He replied the following –

1. Don't think that the entire responsibility of the world is on your shoulders.
2. Determine to like the work given to you.
3. Plan your work and follow the plan meticulously.
4. Don't try to do everything at once.
5. Get a correct mental attitude.
6. Be efficient in whatever you do.
7. Practice to be relaxed.

In reducing mental tension Napoleon's statement is helpful. He said that when he was preparing to sleep he would close all the drawers of his mind, that is, keep all thoughts at bay, so that he would get deep, restful sleep instantly. As a result Napoleon could work even for eighteen hours each day without feeling the least fatigue.

Conclusion

Job stress has been a great concern to the management, employees, and other stakeholders of the organization. Researchers agree that stress is a serious problem in many organizations. The cost of occupational stress is very high in many organizations. A good number of people are finding their jobs stressful. Research evidences all over the world show that stress adversely affects physical and mental health of the people in the organization.

Social and economic cost of job stress is also rising. The cost associated with work place stress indicates an international trend among industrialized countries. A recent report says that work related ailments due to work related stress is likely to cost Indian's exchequer around Rs. 7200 crore

between 2009-2015 (6). Stress affects employee turnover, output and organization's performance or individual performance. Authorities are reluctant to reduce the stress of the employees. If the authority provides psychological need for the well being of the employee, it is sure that the organization would make more revenue.

Effective stress management can only provide relief to stress affected employee of the organization. Happiness leads to less stressful life and make the organization healthier and more stable.

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