

STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR EMPLOYEES: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Extreme pressures become stress. Some experts consider stress to be as a subjective sensation as it differs with individuals with varied symptoms. When stress surpasses ability to handle, it becomes a threat to both physical and emotional well-being. While stress refers to the reaction of the organism, stressor implies perceived threat. Every one face challenges in life. These could be due to professional, societal and domestic environment. Stress symptoms include mental, social, and physical manifestations. Although stress is a biological term, it is commonly used in a metaphorical sense. These include exhaustion, loss of/increased appetite, headaches, depression, sleeplessness and oversleeping, weight loss, early oldness marks, negative behavior and thoughts. This paper takes a broader view of stress management practices for employees and explores the causes and some suggestions. It also explores how to come out from the primary stage of stress. In addition, it also explores how adaptation activities can result in mitigation as co-benefits and also some simple suggestion for mitigating the negative results of stress with relevant policy recommendations.

KEYWORDS: *Stress Management, Performance, Employees Satisfaction, Organization.*

Introduction

As we all know that the stress may occur in many forms such as psychological, emotional, physical, social, occupational or job-related. Stressful situations in the workplace create occupational stress which leads to negative and harmful effects on employers and employees in many forms.

According to an earlier report titled "All Stressed Up"- "Stress can actually help memory provided, it is short-term and not too severe. Additionally, stress causes more glucose to be delivered to the human brain, which makes more energy available to neurons." This, in turn, enhances memory formation and retrieval. On the other hand, if stress is prolonged, it can impede the glucose delivery and disrupt memory of human.

Now a day every organization faces issues and problems relating to morale, motivation, job-satisfaction, job-stress, leadership behavior, organizational climate, beliefs, attitudes, value systems, training, communication, conflict and negotiation, to determine the strategies for boosting the morale of employees under conditions of anxiety and stress, and to improve job satisfaction among the organizational personnel. The problems of indiscipline and the remedial measures to inculcate discipline have also been investigated. Psychosocial correlates of stress and techniques for its effective management have been thoroughly studied and self help guides have been developed for the employees as well as officers and employers. The officers and managers in an organization should be trained to acquire skills to build harmonious superior-subordinate relationships and good communication skill to pull the employees together to accomplish objectives with the aim to create a supportive atmosphere while working and encouraging an output-oriented behavior.

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However, stress within manageable limits is not only desirable but essential. It acts as an engine that drives humans to excel. Unless a human experiences sufficient stress, enough adrenaline does not get produced to propel him to strive for achieving objectives beyond his normal capabilities. Stress is thus, an integral part of human functioning and is a catalyst for fulfillment of aspirations.

Objectives of Study

- To explore the basic and brief introduction of human stress.
- To examine the negative results of stress on performance of employees.
- To evaluate the various practices of stress management at organization.
- To examine the present stress management practices for workers/employees.

Research Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. Secondary data will be collected from government reports, journals, articles, books etc. The data collected will be analyzed to understand the practices and follow up programmes of stress management in present scenario. This is to understand the present practices adopted by organizations in India are enough or need some reforms.

Hypothesis

- The performance of employees is not adequate due to stress.
- The stress management practices increase the productivity and performance of employees.
- Healthy practices for stress are available on workplace.
- HRM practices include the stress management for employees' satisfaction.

Stress

It is clearly understood that, though everyone faced stress at least once in life, it is still difficult to define the term of stress. Through the centuries the concept of the stress was changing, obtaining new meaning or returning to the old definitions.

Employee

An individual who works part-time or full-time under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, express or implied, is recognized rights and duties. Employees are greatest valuable assets of an organization. In an organization every employees will be more satisfied if they get what they expected with efficient work life balance and stress management policies. Good employment practice includes assessing the risk of stress amongst employees for healthy environment. This involves the following:

- Looking for pressures at work which could cause high and long lasting levels of stress.
- Deciding who might be harmed by these.
- Deciding whether you are doing enough to prevent that harm.

Employer

Organizations may have different reasons for wanting to implement stress management initiatives. One reason may be the need to reduce the costs to the organization of stress-related illness, absenteeism and staff turnover. It may be a humanitarian desire to improve working conditions. There may be regulations in place regarding the listing and assessing of workplace hazards, including hazards to mental health such as psychological stress, and to provide a safe working environment.

Stress Management Program

Organize a stress management program that focuses on different leave categories of employee's at all hierarchical level. Many situational observations of employee- employer interaction identified within the organization can lead to stress at work. It depends upon a clear plan, ongoing evaluations of progress, and clear goals for measuring success. Stress Management is interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. These can have an individual focus, aimed at increasing an individual's ability to cope with stressors. Stress Management programs can also have an organizational focus and attempt to remove the stressors in a role.

Signs of Stress in an Individual (4H)

- **How they Feel (Emotions)**
 - Anxious
 - Depressed/tired

- Angry/irritable/frustrated
- Apathetic/bored
- Negativity in thoughts
- **How they Think(Cognitions)**
 - Poor concentration and memory
 - Poor organization and decision-making
 - Less creative in problem solving
 - Hypersensitive to criticism
- **How they Behave(Reactions)**
 - Have accidents/make mistakes
 - Eating/sleeping problems
 - Take drugs
 - Problematic social behavior
- **Human Body(Diseases)**
 - Sweating, dizzy, nauseous, breathless
 - Aches and pains
 - Frequent infections
 - Asthma, ulcers, skin complaints, cardiac problems

Some Basic Causes of Stress

- Stresses faced by civilians generally relate to material and societal issues.
- Low salary structure as compared to others.
- Lack of family support in times of emotional disturbances.
- Bottled up discontentment with no escape valve results in a 'pressure cooker effect'.
- Home sickness: when serving area is out of home district or isolated, lonely.

Suggestions

Stress Management practice is an ability to maintain control when situations, people, and events make excessive demands. What you can do to manage your stress yourself? There are numerous self-managed strategies which can might reduce the effects of stress, and minimize its impact on daily activities.

Self-Managed strategies include the following:

- Stress can manifest itself in many ways but you must learn to recognize stress.
- Be happy if you have assigned work by Managers/officers or colleagues at workplace.
- Proper time management: utilize the time with positivity.
- Follow the daily routine pre defined schedule with faith.
- Take control: See if there is something you can change or control in the situation.
- Learn how to best relax yourself by Meditation and breathing exercises, this has been proven to be very effective in controlling stress.
- Every day early morning practice of clearing your mind from disturbing thoughts.
- Learn to recognize stress for what it is. Increase your body's feedback and make stress self-regulating.
- Avoid extreme reactions on meaningless and self made questions, like- Why hate, when a little dislike will do? - Why be depressed when you can just be sad?
- Do something for others and it will definitely help.
- Get enough sleep and take proper rest because lack of rest just aggravates stress.
- Try to "use" stress: If you can't fight what's bothering you and you can't flee from it, flow with it and try to use it in a productive way.
- Be positive in every situation of life and give yourself messages as to how well you can cope rather than how horrible everything is going to be.
- Don't sweat the small stuff because it is a part of life and try to prioritize a few truly important things and let the rest slide.

- Don't overwhelm yourself: Avoid fretting about your entire workload. Handle each and every task as it comes, or selectively deal with matters in some priority.
- Don't self-medicate or escape from present situation: Alcohol and drugs can mask stress. They don't help deal with the problems.
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs, and other compulsive behavior are often signs of stress so keep away from them.
- Feelings of alarm, frustration, or apathy may also accompany stress.
- Do meditation and develop a forgiving attitude.
- Most importantly when stress is putting you in an unmanageable state or interfering with your education, social and/or work life, seek professional help.
- Most important that if you seek help through an educational counseling center or a veteran's administration facility this will definitely help you.
- Organizational level Strategies to mitigate the employees stress include the following:
 - Assignment of work as per the quality of employees and workers.
 - Proper chart for every assigned work with sufficient handling time.
 - Group activities to be done in specified manner to make a healthy environment at work place and they may be conducted in formal or informal way.
 - Recognition must be given to every employee because everyone has their own ego.
 - Proper Interaction between the families of employees with each other.
 - One counseling desk should be created by employer where employees can approach and get fruitful result.
 - Develop a healthy relation between employers and employees.
 - Proper implementation of government policies guidelines for the benefit as well as development of employees.
 - Essential facilities should be given in proper way like Family Quarters facilities with all the facilities, Medical facilities, insurance, overtime, salary, other allowances and bonus.

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