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JOB STRESS & EMPLOYEE BURNOUT: AN OVERVIEW**DEEPIKA SHARMA****ASST. PROFESSOR****RELIABLE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY
GHAZIABAD****DR. M. L. GUPTA****CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH ADVISORY BOARD; &
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MEERUT****ABSTRACT**

Stress is a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities. Job stress can lead to poor performance on the job, excessive use of alcohol or drugs, poor attendance or overall poor health. This paper focuses on the current strategies adopted by the companies to overcome stress and what should company do to make the workplace stress-free. The paper also looks at the issue of employee burnout and the techniques to tackle the same.

KEYWORDS

Stress, Burnout, Employee, Stressor.

INTRODUCTION

In today's challenging environment stress has become a pre condition for an employee to accomplish a challenging and more demanding job. Tight Schedules, high standard of performance, getting his expectations and aspirations fulfilled he is forced to have a stressful and hectic lifestyle. Stress may affect an employee at any stage of his career, the man or women on the shop floor is just as vulnerable as the man or women on the board of directors. What is stressful to one may not be so to another person. So far as routine and usual matters are concerned, he can solve and tackle them without any difficulty. But in other situations, he may experience the gap between excessive demand of the situation on the one hand and resources position, capacity and time and other requirements on the other. In such a situation, if he fails to meet demand he experiences stress and other psychological problems.

The first step towards stress management is to identify the sources (Stressors) from which stress arises. Stressor can be anything that causes stress. Efforts have to be made to identify the cause for stress so as to reduce or eliminate such stressors. Till date many studies have been carried out on different aspects of stress in different professions. Chandriah et al(2003) identified role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable groups and political pressures, powerlessness, intrinsic impoverishment, low status work and strenuous working conditions as sources of stress among different age groups of managers working in different large scale industrial settings. Cooper and Marshall have identified six sources of stress for the people at work. These include:

- 1) Factors intrinsic to the job,
- 2) Role in the organization,
- 3) Relationship at work,
- 4) Career development,
- 5) Organizational structure and climate;
- 6) Extra organizational sources.

It is evident that the various causes of stress discussed above may be either related to the demands of the situation, or his resources position. Thus, to measure the total amount of stress experienced by an individual in a given situation, the net effect of the above stressors is determined.

CAUSES OF JOB STRESS

Most of the time, it's the major sources of stress that lead to job burnout and health problems. Job stress can affect your home life too. Here are some common sources of major job stress:

1. Lack of control. Feeling as if you have no control over your work or job duties is the biggest cause of job stress. People who feel like they have no control at work are most likely to get stress-related illnesses.
2. Increased responsibility. Taking on extra duties in your job is stressful. You can get more stressed if you have too much work to do and you can't say no to new tasks.
3. Job satisfaction and performance. Do you take pride in your job? If your job isn't meaningful, you may find it stressful. Are you worried about doing well at work? Feeling insecure about job performance is a major source of stress for many people.
4. Uncertainty about work roles. Being unsure about your duties, how your job might be changing, or the goals of your department or company can lead to stress. If you report to more than one boss, juggling the demands of different managers can also be stressful.
5. Poor communication. Tension on the job often comes from poor communication. Being unable to talk about your needs, concerns, and frustrations can create stress.
6. Lack of support. Lack of support from your boss or coworkers makes it harder to solve other problems at work that are causing stress for you.
7. Poor working conditions. Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions, such as crowding, noise, or ergonomic problems, can cause stress.

According to Swami Nikhilananda, the answer to stress can be found in every letter of the word "stress" which is as under:

STRESS**S** = Strength, physical and mental**T** = Traffic control in mind (thoughts)**R** = Re-design lifestyle**E** = Erase anger, fear and ego**S** = Sharing knowledge, workload, experience and sorrow**S** = Surrender to the lord

STRENGTH

To cope with stress one has to develop physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual strength. A strong healthy body and mind are developed through proper diet, exercise and pranayam. Through 'satsangs' and other learning's the mind can be strengthened.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

To reduce the degree of stress we need to regulate and control our thoughts. This is because orderly and methodical thoughts help in minimizing stress. For this purpose one should live for the moment, which means eat while eating, work while working, and leave the home at home and the office in office.

REDESIGNING LIFESTYLE

Usually, we tend to view life and ourselves through our own philosophy. We have to readjust and re-orient it as per the needs of the situation. It would enhance our capacity to bear a heavier load.

ERASING NEGATIVITY

To gain mental strength, one has to erase ego, anger, fear and jealousy. By doing so, negative emotions will be controlled and increased mental strength may be channelised to combat stress.

SHARING

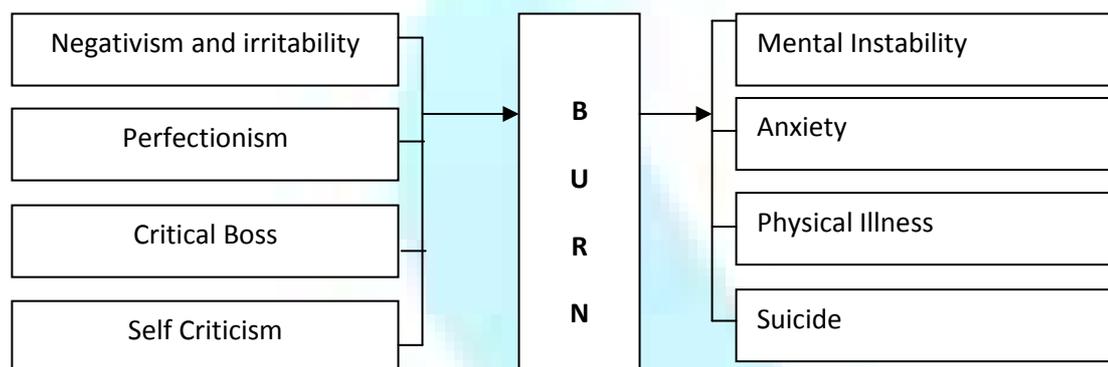
By sharing, exchanging and delegating experience, workload, sorrow and situation one can reduce stress and bring it to a moderate level.

SURRENDER TO THE LORD

The last but most effective strategy to cope with stress is to surrender to the Lord. One should free his mind from the burden of worries and become instruments in the hands of the Lord. This kind of attitude which is difficult to develop may ensure efficiency, success and freedom from stress.

BURNOUT

In the words of Herbert J. Freudenberger, Burnout is a state of fatigue to produce the expected reward. It may be defined as the total depletion of physical and mental resources caused by excessive striving to reach an unrealistic work-related goal.



Without work, all life goes rotten, but when work is soulless, life tifies and dies.

CURRENT STATUS OF JOB STRESS IN INDIAN ARMY

As per reports appearing in the press, the Indian Army lost 333 soldiers due to suicides and 75 soldiers to fratricide during the period 2004 to 2006. A number of studies have been carried out to identify reasons for unacceptable levels of stress felt by Indian soldiers.

Stresses faced by soldiers are entirely different from those faced by civilians, both in nature and intensity. Some of the major peculiarities are as follows:-

- Whereas stresses faced by civilians generally relate to material and societal issues, soldiers face both physical (threat to life) and emotional stresses. Civilians have their families with them to share their concerns unlike a soldier who has to bear it all alone
- Military's highly disciplined, hierarchal and restrictive environment deters giving vent to or sharing pent up frustrations. However disturbed a soldier may be he has to put up a façade of bravado. Bottled up discontentment with no escape valve results in a 'pressure cooker effect'.
- Serving in isolated, lonely and oxygen-starved high altitude areas of the Himalayas affects physiology and psychology of soldiers.
- Inability to be with parents and family in times of domestic emergencies weighs heavily on the minds of many soldiers.
- The search for recognition is one of the pursuits which all human beings indulge in and continuously strive for. The same is equally applicable to soldiers. They draw strength to face privations from the love and respect that their countrymen extend to them. They wonder if the nation recognizes their services and values them.

CURRENT STATUS OF JOB STRESS IN BPO's

BPO Companies are now making efforts to help their employees cope with stress because it is an occupational hazard. For example, night shifts are rotated on a regular basis. However deadlines cannot be controlled.

Most of the BPO's arrange feel good activities like an indoor picnic or an official dinner once in every three months. This helps the employees speak to their senior management in an informal manner. Employees are also given recognition by being designated as "Employee of the week" or "employee of the month".

BPO's like Stream have appointed "Fun managers" whose job is to arrange for a party or a movie for the entire office once in a month. Similarly ICICI Onesource has an executive who is required to spend at least 2 hours daily at the shop floor daily talking to the employees about their daily life.

Another BPO, 3Global organize sports events like cricket tournaments to ensure their employees are engaged in physical activities.

CURRENT STATUS OF JOB STRESS

We all know that stress is bad. As an investor, it is very important to stay balanced while trading because Monday - Friday you are in the game whether you like it or not. So how do you fight stress?

- Use stop loss orders.
- Don't watch your streamer live all day every day.
- Refresh your portfolio balance only once a day
- Have a investment strategy
- Eat healthy foods
- Get enough sleep each night
- Don't surround yourself with stressed individuals
- Stay calm in intense situations: stop, think, then act

Stress balls are one such instrument which helps in reducing the stress levels amongst the traders while trading or in bullish scenario.

CURRENT STATUS OF JOB STRESS IN OTHER CORPORATE SECTORS

American Express, Gillette, Reliance and Maruti, Lucent Technologies and other companies have tied up with Apollo's master health check up. Some organizations have also started help lines.

ITC organizes regular Yoga sessions for its employees. These regular Yoga sessions have helped the employees to overcome stress and work with greater efficiency and productivity.

COPING STRATEGIES USED BY MNC's ARE

1) Stress Reduction and stress management programmes

Stress reduction programmes aim to identify relevant organizational stressors and to reduce their effects by redesigning jobs, reallocating workloads, improvising supervisory skills, providing more autonomy and job variety. Stress management schemes usually focus on training individual employees, or their workgroups, to manage their stress symptoms in more effective ways. Stress control systems usually combine stress reduction (stressor control) with stress management (individual stress control).

2) Job redesign

Jobs may be a source of stress to many individuals. Properly designed jobs and work schedules can help ease stress in the individuals and the organization.

3) Collateral Programmes

A collateral stress programme is an organizational programme specifically created to help employees deal with stress. Organizations have adopted stress handling programmes, health promotional programmes, career development programmes, and other kinds of programmes for this purpose.

4) Counseling

Counseling is discussion of a problem with an employee with a view to helping the employee cope with it better. Counseling seeks to improve employee's mental health by the release of emotional tension which is also known as emotional catharsis. People will get an emotional release from their frustrations and other problems whenever they have an opportunity to tell someone about them.

5) Meditation

Another way to reduce stress is meditation. Meditation involves quiet, concentrated inner thoughts in order to rest the body physically and emotionally. It helps remove a person from a stressful world temporarily.

6) Yoga

Nowadays Yoga is acknowledged as one of the important devices for reducing stress, both in personal life and the workplace. Through regular practice of yogic exercises the nervous system is stimulated, neuromuscular coordination is strengthened and various glands are activated.

7) Bio-feedback

Bio feedback is also being used as an important device for reducing and controlling stress. This technique of changing undesirable physiological responses by doing some physical exercise. In this technique, electronic instruments are used for recording undesirable changes caused by stress. In order to bring it back to normal, a state of relaxation is induced. The tendency to relax is voluntary on the part of the individual. By measuring bodily changes caused by stress one can learn to respond to such changes as effectively as possible.

8) Informal Organization

Modern managers strongly believe in encouraging the formation and growth of an informal organization within a formal one. It is because informal relations which are personal and social in nature not only fulfill social needs but also provide a more humane and relaxed environment to employees.

CONCLUSION

Job Stress is a condition arising from the interaction of the people and their jobs, and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. Stress may be understood as a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints and opportunities. However stress is not always unpleasant. To be alive means to respond to the stress of achievement and the excitement of a challenge.

Thus to conclude we may say, Stress is the spice of life and the absence of stress makes life dull, monotonous and spiritless. There is infact growing evidence that people need a certain amount of simulation and that monotony can bring on some of the same problems as over-work.

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