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CONTENTS

Sr.		Page
No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	No.
1.	THE THRESHOLD EFFECT ON MILITARY EXPENDITURE: A PANEL SMOOTH TRANSITION AUTOREGRESSION APPROACH	1
	PO-CHIN WU & CHIA-JUI CHANG	
2 .	JOB STRESS AMONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS: AN EMPIRICAL COMPARISON	6
	RIZWANA RAFIQ, DR. PARVEZ AHMED SHAH & DR. ALI M ALMEDABESH	4.4
3.	IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE ACCOUNTING PRACTICE IN CCI: CEMENT CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED DR. SAMIR M. VOHRA	11
4.	GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF KASHMIR HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY DURING LAST DECADE (2005-2014) ADIL AHMAD RESHI & DR. PRABAKAR PANDAY	17
5.	EVOLUTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DHANYA ANNA KURIAN & DR. SHIKHA KAPOOR	21
6.	EXPLORING THE PERCEPTION OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT GRADUATES TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP DR. ANIL CHANDHOK & DR. BHAVET	28
7.	A STUDY OF THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH JAN DHAN YOJNA: ISSUES, PROSPECTS AND PERFORMANCE SWATANTRA KUMAR & DR. SANJAY BAIJAL	38
8.	CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS FOR BLOOD DONATIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRY: A STUDY ON RAJSHAHI CITY IN BANGLADESH SHIB SHANKAR ROY	43
9.	CHALLENGES FACING COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: THE CASE OF TAITA TAVETA COUNTY BONAVENTURE FELIX MWANDAU MWAKIO	58
10.	REVISITING HOFSTEDE: IS IT RELEVANT IN GLOBALIZED ERA? DEEPTI SEHGAL	61
11.	VARIABLE AFFECTION ON FINANCIAL INVESTMENT OF SALARIED PEOPLE AT NANDED CITY DURING 2012-2013: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY NANDKUMAR BABURAO BODHGIRE	64
12.	DOES GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AFFECT PERFORMANCE OF COMPANIES? SHWETA SHARDA	69
13.	PARADIGM OF INDIAN TOURISM IN THE CHANGING SCENARIO KAPIL SHANKER TIWARI	80
14.	DEPOSITORY SYSTEM IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW LENY MICHAEL	85
15.	A STUDY ON INCOME FROM SALARY AND SOME DEDUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO INDIAN I.T. ACT, 1961 AND DTC BILL, 2013	89
1.0	DR. SIDDHARTHA SANKAR SAHA & MITRENDU NARAYAN ROY RISK MANAGEMENT IN E-BANKING: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES	0.1
16 .	DR. K.S.SEKHARA RAO & C. PADMA PRIYA	94
17.	FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG INVESTORS: THEORY AND CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE DEEPAK, PARDEEP SINGH & ARNAV KUMAR	99
18.	WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS IN KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA SUNITA DEVI	104
19.	A STUDY OF FOREIGN INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT (FII) & ITS IMPACT ON STOCK MARKET IN INDIA NIDHI KHANDELWAL	107
20.	THE IMPACT OF INFLATION RATE AND INTEREST RATE ON REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE: EVIDENCE FROM INDIA	110
	MUHAMMAD AHMAD USMAN	

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVE

HYPOTHESES

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JOB STRESS AMONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS: AN EMPIRICAL COMPARISON

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ABSTRACT

Stress in the current scenario is considered to be universal phenomenon and people in almost all walks of life experience stress to a very great extent. Due to the impact of globalization the influence of stress in this era of high technological speed, global competition and consumerism is found to be increasing at a greater pace. Workers who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Aim: So, the aim of this paper was to identify the relationship between Job Stress and Job Control (i.e. Skill Discretion and Job Authority) and Job Demand among the public and private sector Cement factory workers in Kashmir Division of J&K State. Methods: The sample size consists total of 300 workers, 150 workers were selected from public sector and 150 from private sector. The Job Control and Job Demand were measured by using Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) and job stress was separately measured by Job stress questionnaire. Results: The results indicated the prevalence of job stress was 2.86 in public and 2.31 in private sector. Multiple regression analysis indicated that only Job authority was significantly associated with job stress. Whereas, Skill discretion and Job demand does not share any relationship with the job stress. Conclusions: Study revealed that operational level factory workers were experiencing high levels of job authority which in turn gives rise to job stress, because high levels of authority is always accompanied by the high levels of accountability.

KEYWORDS

job authority, job demand, job stress, skill discretion.

INTRODUCTION

oday it is believed all around the world that even a little bit of stress will slow down the employees' work performance. Job stress is rapidly increasing and has become challenge for the employers, because high levels of stress results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and collection of other employee problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular problems (Meneze, 2005). A substantial evidence base has linked chronic stress at the workplace with large number of negative physical, psychological and social consequences for employees, (Caulfield et al., 2004; Dollard, 2006; Dollard & Knott, 2004; Ettner & Grzywacz, 2001; Senol-Durak, Durak, & Gencoz, 2006). Overall, 30 million working days are being lost due to work related ill-health with 6 million losses due to workplace injuries. Stress-related distraction or sleepiness account for an estimated 60 to 80 percent of accidents on the job, according to the (American Institute of Stress). Workers' compensation claims for stress are increasing substantially every year, threatening to bankrupt the system in several states. An estimated one million workers miss work each day because of stress, costing companies an estimated \$602 per employee per year. Other national studies revealed, that about one-fifth of the staff turnover can be related to stress at work (CIPD, 2008a) especially, among the employees who stated that they 'always work under pressure', and also their accident rate is about five times higher than that of employees who were 'never' subjected to work under pressure (Euro-found, 2007). Researches carried out in the Indian perspective also supports the fact that work related stress and mental fatigue is found to affect the Indian workers at the operational level to a very great extent and in such an environment, it becomes the responsibility of the employing organizations and the individuals to identify the causes of stress at the workplace and make efforts to reduce them for the effectiveness and efficiency of bot

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In industrialized countries, there have been quite dramatic changes in the conditions of work, during the last few decades due to the economic, social and technical developments. As a consequence the people today at work are exposed to high quantitative and qualitative demands at the work place which results into job stress. Nishitani and Sakakibara (2006) found that, Obesity was associated with psychological stress responses of tension/anxiety, especially tension. Tension/anxiety was also related to job demands positively and job latitudes negatively. The study suggests that obese male Japanese workers tend to be in a stressful state from high job demands and low job latitudes at the workplace. Such stressful conditions may affect eating behaviors to eat much and contribute to obesity. Shigemi et al. (1997), T. Cox et al. (2000) & Mackay et al. (2004) found that, contents of job also leads to work stress, these factors arise due to improper design of the task, work load and work pace, and work schedule. There are several aspects of job contents, which were found highly stressful, hazardous, and these include low value of work, low use of skills, repetitive work, uncertainty, lack of opportunity to learn, high attention demands, conflicting demands, and insufficient resources. The research work revealed that ,work related stress hazards arise due to meaningless tasks and lack of variety etc...It is also noted that most stressful type of work are those which have excessive demand and pressures that do not match with the workers knowledge and abilities, report issued by World health organization (WHO), (2007). In (2013) Jong Ku Park conducted a study to examine whether job stress related to work demand and decision latitude is associated with smoking, blood pressure, lipid level (including total cholesterol, triglyceride, HDL cholesterol), and homocystein as risk factors for cardiovascular disease in Korean male workers on the postulation of Karasek's Job Strain Model and results revealed that decision latitude w

support at workplace. These results indicate that job stress is associated with cardiovascular risk factors and might contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease. Pilar et.al (2013) revealed that, men have showed only one dimension i.e. Job demands as a significant stressor (quantitative demands), whose effect on job stress is weakened slightly by the direct effects of control and support. With women, in contrast, emotional and intellectual aspects (qualitative demands) were also found statistically significant. Today, in view of the complexity and ever-increasing changes of the society as well as the improvement of technology; job stress has become a serious threat to humans and has severely affected the health and performance of the employees in both the sectors, whether private or public. The following discussion would shed further light on this phenomenon.

JOB-STRESS AMONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

A public sector organization is assumed to operate in a different way than a private sector organization. Also Public Administration scholars tend to assume that employees across public and private sector organizations behave significantly in different ways. It was Murray (1975) who sparked a true series of studies with an essay in which he essentially stated that although separate approaches to management science have developed in the public and private sectors, both sectors are facing similar constraints and challenges (Murray 1975). Now, the rapid advances in technology and accelerated international trade and competition, have thereby intensified organizational pressures to maximize profit while minimizing costs, besides resulted in increasing demand for higher productivity and greater accountability in the public sector, and greater profitability in the private sector. The causes of job stress are important not only for its potential implications for stress management at public and private sector organizations among operational level workers but also for enhancing an understanding of strategic human resource management. Lewig and Dollard (2001) found that public sector employees are subject to greater work-related stress than private sector employees and also workplace environments in both sectors have been increasingly characterized by intensified pressure on employees to perform at consistently higher levels, with longer hours, reduced staff numbers, insecure employment patterns and employer empowerment (Caulfield, Chang, Dollard, & Elshaug, 2004; Dollard, 2006; Dollard & Knott, 2004; Polanyi & Tompa, 2004; Stebbins, Thatcher, & King, 2005). All these factors have been identified as contributing to the creation of a stressful work environment and increased risk of psychological problems in both the sectors. A survey report prepared by Ricardo et.al (2007) revealed that public sector workers are significantly more i.e. 64% likely to report stress to be the leading hazard of concern at work than workers in

In this study the researcher has taken all the dimensions of the Job Demand Control model separately i.e. Skill discretion, job authority and Job demand to measure their relationship with the job stress, which is an attempt in this paper to find out their individual impacts. So, the literature regarding each pioneer is discussed as under;

JOB-CONTROL: A SOURCE OF STRESS

'Job-Control' involves how much influence workers have on how they perform their duties, including aspects such as their work pace (Cousins et al., 2004). Taris (2006) concluded that, the dimensions of Demand and Control by themselves, specifically high Demand and Low Control, have been found to be significantly associated with work stress and ill health – a finding supported by several studies (e.g., Carayon & Zijlstra, 1999; Parker, Axtell, & Turner, 2001; Smulders & Nijhuis, 1999). In Karasek's (Job demand and control model), Job control is itself taken as the combination of two other dimensions which are skill-discretion and job authority as explained below;

SKILL- DISCRETION

Skill discretion means the degree of a job needs to be creative or using the high level of skills. Wahlstedt (1997) found that Skill discretion was correlated with lower levels for sleep difficulties and gastrointestinal complaints. Mikkelsen, A., & Saksvik P.Ø. (1999) found that decrease in anxiety, increase in skill discretion, learning climate, and management style; does not make any impact on stress. Holman, et al., (2007) found that high Skill Discretion have been shown to increase the job stress among the workers. (Jandaghi et.al 2011), found a positive relationship between skills and stress and recommended that allow people to use their skills, competencies and capabilities with proper freedom, and skill discretion.

JOB-AUTHORITY

Authority'means institutionalized and legal power inherent in a particular job, function or position that is meant to enable its holder to successfully carry out his or her responsibilities Karasek (1979), Heron et.al (1999) found that, the groups with low authority and high control were more likely to have a poor understanding over the principles of management of stress and to have poor coping skills. On the other hand, no association was found between job control and psychological distress (Marshall et al., 1997), between job control and job stress (Searle et al., 1999) and between job control and workers' stress, anxiety and depression Edimansyah et al. (2008). Brough and Pears (2004), in their study of 205 public sector human service workers, found that high job authority increases the outcomes. The findings of the research study conducted by Kumar & Madhu (2011), reported that the low level of job authority or control among workers is the main cause of work stress.

JOB-DEMAND: A SOURCE OF STRESS

Job-demand includes factors intrinsic to the job such as working conditions for example, noise, temperature, lighting or ventilation, shift work, long or unsociable hours, workload etc (Ricardo et.al 2006). It was also noticed that higher level of job demands with lower level of support at work resulted in increased job stress (C. Ben 2007). And the work related stress hazards like depressive disorders and abdominal fat among workers were found due to the high work related demands (L. Levi 2000).

NEED OF THE STUDY

In view of the extant research review cited above, it is evident that, Job Demand-Control (JDC) model is among the most widely used job stress models related to the characteristics or contents of job and numerous studies have been conducted by using Job Demand, Control model particularly to check the levels of stress, physiological-well being, health problems especially, related to heart diseases, mental distress, physical injuries etc among the operational level workers in various manufacturing industries. However no study has been carried out so far by using the Robert Karasek's Job-Demand-Control Model particularly over the Cement Manufacturing Industry workers. Also, no study has been conducted on job stress at local level among the operational level workers of cement industry in both private as well as public sectors in Kashmir Division of J&K State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been designed to find out the contributory factors leading to stress by using the Robert Karasek's, Job Demand & Control Model among the workers of Cement Manufacturing Industry of both public and private in nature of Kashmir Division with the following set of objectives.

- 1. To critically review the extant literature available on the topic of research undertaken.
- 2. To identify and make a comparative assessment of the factors responsible for causing stress among the respondents of the organizations under study.
- 3. To determine the relationship between job stress and Job Demand and Control Model to the operational level factory workers.
- 4. To provide suggestions on the basis of the results of the study and the coping strategies in order to minimize the levels of stress among the respondents of the sample study organizations.

HYPOTHESIS

Keeping in view the above set of objectives the following hypothesis has been framed for the present study;

- ➤ H1: "Skill Discretion is a significant source of stress for operational level factory workers"
- > H2: "Job authority is a significant source of stress for the operational level factory workers"
- ➤ H3: "Job demand is a significant source of stress among the operational level factory workers"

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study researcher adopted the Job Content Questionnaire developed by Robert Karasek, (1979) for measuring the job related causes of stress, and the Job Stress Questionnaire developed by Lambert, Hogan, Camp & Ventura (2006) was adopted to measure the levels of stress and both of them were clubbed to form a comprehensive questionnaire which measured all the factors together. The job control scale was the sum of two subscales i.e. skill discretion measured by 4 items, and job authority, measured by 7 items, job demand scale was measured by 4 items and the job stress was also measured by 4 items. For each item, the responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (partially agree), 4 (agree) to 5(strongly agree). In the state of J&K two leading cement manufacturing organisations were selected for the present study namely JK Cements Ltd. {falling under the category of Public Sector} and the other one namely Khyber cements Pvt. Ltd. {which belongs to the category of Private Sector}. Apart from convenience based sampling method the above mentioned two organizations have also been selected on the basis of their dominance in the state of J&K.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample size for the present study was selected from the operational level workers and not from the employees engaged at top or middle level in both the organizations in order to ensure that the data collected doesn't mislead the results. The sample size from each organization was chosen on the basis of proportionate sample method (i.e. Total population of workers in each organization/Total population of both the organizations*Sample size calculated by using sample size calculator). So a total sample of 300 workers were selected from both organizations (i.e.150 workers from public and 150 from the private sector factories).

INSTRUMENT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In order to check the reliability and validity of the Job Content Questionnaire in our settings, the responses were received from the (50) operational level workers, in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire the correlation between the items of the various dimensions was calculated by using SPSS version 20. The Cronbach's apha coefficient for all the dimensions are revealed in table (1) shown as under;

TABLE 1: CRONBACH'S ALPHA COEFFICIENTS (α) OF THE *JCQ SUBSCALE (N=50)

Scale (No. of items)	Cronbach's (α) coefficient
Stress (4)	0.863
Skill discretion (4)	0.749
Job authority (7)	0.875
Job demand (4)	0.682

*JCQ=JOB CONTENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: This indicates a very good internal reliability, based on average inter-item correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed that, there was a significant difference of opinions among the respondents regarding their job stress as reflected in Table (2). The mean score of stress in public sector workers was 2.86, and the mean score of private sector was 2.31, which indicated that the public sector workers were experiencing relatively more stress than their private counterparts. And the difference in such mean score was statistically tested using t-test and was found to be significant ($\alpha > p$) at 95% confidence level, which supports the findings of Lewig and Dollard (2001) that public sector employees are subject to greater work-related stress than private sector employees & also the report prepared by Ricardo et.al (2007), revealing that public sector workers are significantly more i.e. 64% likely to report stress to be the leading hazard of concern at work than workers in the private sector with only 46%. Whereas Dollard and Walsh (1999) reported that private sector workers in Queensland, Australia, had made twice as many stress claims as public sector workers. And, Bhanu & Jha (2012) also found private sector employees are facing slightly more stress than those in the public sector.

TABLE 2: INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST FOR COMPARISONS OF STRESS LEVELS

DIMENSIONS	NOORG*	**N	Mean	t-value	Sig.
STRESS	Public	150	2.8600	5.931	.000
	Private	150	2.3117		

^{*}NOORG= Nature of Organizations

Bivariate Correlation Analysis of various Dimensions contained in Table (3) revealed that Job stress was positively associated with the Job Authority (**r** = **0.200****), which means that increase in this factor will lead to increase in stress levels of workers and vice versa, favoring the findings of Ben (2007). And, it was also found that Job Demand (**r** = **-0.081**) and Skill Discretion (**r** = **0.042**) has nothing to do with the job stress of workers as there was no correlation found between the two, which does not support the findings of (Karasek & Theorell, 1990, Cox et.el, 2000 & WHO Report, 2007).

TABLE 3: CORRELATIONS MATRIX AMONG VARIOUS DIMENSIONS

DIMENSIONS		STRESS	SKILL DISCRETION	JOB DEMAND	JOB AUTHORITY
STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	DATE DISCRETION	305_52777175	105_710711011171
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
SKILL	Pearson Correlation	.042	1		
DISCRETION	Sig. (2-tailed)	.467			
JOB DEMAND	Pearson Correlation	081	.013	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.162	.824		
JOB	Pearson Correlation	.200**	.016	110	1
AUTHORITY	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.789	.058	

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Since no other dimension except job authority was found to be associated with the Job Stress it becomes imperative to understand which variable is having a deeper and significant impact over the job stress? For this purpose it becomes necessary to perform the regression analysis of the data which will further help us to test our hypothesis. So, Table (4) revealed that, the significance of model in terms of overall fit is expressed by F = **4.650**.The Beta value of **0.192** Table (5) revealed, Job authority shows that there is a significant (p<0.05) and positive impact of this factors over the job stress. Whereas, the Beta value of skill discretion is **0.040** and job demand **-0.060** revealing that there is no significant (p>0.05) impact of these two factors on Job stress. In other words only the job authority was much useful to predict the job stress of cement factory workers of Kashmir Division as compared to job demand and skill discretion.

^{**}N= Number of respondents

^{*.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 4: REGRESSION ANALYSIS MODEL SUMMARY

	ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	9.614	3	3.205	4.650	.003 ^b	
	Residual	203.988	296	.689			
	Total	213.602	299				
a.	a. Dependent Variable: STRESS						

b. Predictors: (Constant), JOB_AUTHORITY, SKILL_DISCRETION, JOB_DEMAND

TABLE 5. COFFFICIENTS

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Т	Sig.		
		В	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.097	.743		1.478	.141		
	SKILL_DISCRETION	.110	.157	.040	.702	.483		
	JOB_DEMAND	117	.110	060	-1.058	.291		
	JOB_AUTHORITY	.606	.180	.192	3.367	.001		
a.	a. Dependent Variable: STRESS							

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Results from the regression analysis demonstrated that among the independent variables only Job Authority showed its impacts over the job stress as its t-value was statistically significant at 95% confidence level, which supports our following hypothesis.

H2: "Job authority is a significant source of stress for the operational level factory workers" this is in consensus with the findings of research study conducted by Kumar & Madhu (2011), reporting that the low level of job control among workers is the main cause of work stress.

On the other hand t-value of Skill Discretion & Job Demand was not statistically significant at 95% confidence level, which reveals that these two variables does not affect the Job Stress significantly, so this rejects our hypothesis given below.

H1: "Skill Discretion is a significant source of stress for operational level factory workers" which does not support the findings of Holman, et.al. (2007) that high Skill Discretion has been shown to increase job stress among the workers.

H3: "Job demand is a significant source of stress among the operational level factory workers" and does not support the findings of (Karasek & Theorell, 1990, Cox et.al. 2000 & WHO Report, 2007).

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The in-depth analysis of job stress, along with Job demand and control model related to the contents of job which are Job Control (including skill discretion & job authority) & Job Demand revealed the following findings:-

- 1. There was a presence of 51% of stress among the operational level workers of cement factories of Kashmir division in both the sectors which was reflected by the overall average mean score of 2.58 on a 5 point Likert scale.
- 2. Public sector workers reported the experience of higher levels of stress reflected by the mean score of 2.86, as compared to their private counterparts with the mean score 2.31 and the difference were statistically significant.
- 3. However the bivariate correlation and regression analysis revealed that job stress was found to be significantly associated with job authority which confirmed our hypothesis H2. Whereas no correlation was found for skill discretion and job demand with job stress which rejected our hypothesis H1 & H3.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR VIZ, J & K CEMENTS LTD.

One of the prominent causes of stress among the J&K Cement workers was low job authority which means workers were not given proper authorities at their work i.e. they are not allowed to take their own decisions at work, they don't have choice in deciding what to do and how to do it, they are not being constituted about the changes at work etc. Although, the skill discretion being a part of job control in Karasek's Job demand and control model does not show any relationship with the job stress which actually serves the purpose of this study because in almost all the studies skill discretion was measured together with the job authority but in this study skill discretion was measured separately and does not show any relationship with the job stress. Whereas, there was a high job authority only among the particular section of workers, which should be addressed by the management through proper distribution of job authority on the basis of qualifications as well as better work experience and not on the basis of favoritism and seniority only, organization should introduce the counseling services for the workers within the organizations in order to provide therapeutic services that tend to reduce the effects of work-related stress on workers health and welfare. Also task or work guidance programmes that could foster prevention of mental disorder, resulting from stress on the job on the part of workers, should be inaugurated at the workplace. Re-engineering of skills or skill development programmes should be organized for the workers on continuous basis in order to help the workers to equip with the technological know- how and knowledge that are required for coping with pressure emanating from the organizational change.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR VIZ, KHYBER CEMENTS PVT. LTD.

As reflected from the findings of the present study that, there is a moderate level of job stress also present among the workers of Khyber Cements Pvt. Ltd. but, when compared to J&K Cements Ltd. the level of stress was found to be low. So, it is equally important for the management of the Khyber Cements pvt. Ltd. to organize the Stress Management Programs available for the factory level workers and if the mechanism is already in place then they need to improve their programs in this direction to help the workers in controlling their levels of stress properly. The researcher could also find the only one cause of job stress among all the causes mentioned in the present study among Khyber Cement workers or we can draw an inference that private sector workers were having a low job authority and which should be addressed by the management through proper distribution of job authority on the basis of qualifications as well as on the basis better work knowledge and experience. Workers should be given the opportunities to participate in the design of their own work situations and in the processes of change and development affecting their work. Empowering workers or providing them opportunities to flourish especially in deciding about their job related decisions and actions. Ensuring that, the workers must have job securities and opportunities for their career development.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the other studies are not flawless similarly the present study also has certain limitations, which are as under:

- 1. The sample was taken from two organizations only namely, JK Cements Ltd. & Khyber Cements Pvt. Ltd. Of Kashmir Division.
- 2. Additionally, data was collected from the operational or lower level workers only, while excluding the other levels of the organization.
- 3. Finally, this research was confined to measure only few contents like job authority, job demand and skill discretion. So, there is lot of scope to make further additions in the dimensions and their impact on job-stress.

SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The researchers can extend the present study by measuring the responses from more related organizations.

- 2. The researchers can carry furthermore studies on large geographical areas.
- 3. It is also suggested to carry out the study concerning this topic and industry with some more dimensions.

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