STRESS MANAGEMENT – TOOL FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Priya Gupta

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,

Arya P.G. College, Panipat

Abstract

Be it younger generation, adults or Senior citizens, every one of us today are coming to know of the disease only when it reaches to its last stage. This shows that we are not aware of the symptoms, causes, effects of the disease and what techniques and tips to be adapted to avoid the trauma. Here little effort has been made to educate the masses about stress and stress management in general. This manuscript emphasizes the root cause of the anxiety as well as assorted approaches towards stress management for efficiency and enhanced performance.

Introduction

The workplace of the 21st century is a fast-paced, dynamic, highly stimulating environment which brings a large number of benefits and opportunities to those who work within it. The ever-changing demands of the working world can increase levels of stress, especially for those who are consistently working under pressure. Whilst pressure has its positive side in raising performance, if such pressure becomes excessive it can lead to stress which has negative consequences. Stress is not a disease, but it can lead to a reduced ability to perform at work and have an impact on a person's health and wellbeing Change in working practices, such as the introduction of new technology or the alternation of new technology or the alternative of targets, may cause stress, or stress may be built into an organizations' structure. Organizational

stress can be measured by absenteeism and quality or work. Stress affects as well as the individual within them. An organization with a high level of absenteeism, rapid staff turnover, deteriorating industrial and customer relations, a worsening safety record, or poor quality control is suffering from organizational stress. The Garden of Eden began as a tranquil stress environment. However when Adam was given the tantalizing chance to eat the forbidden fruit, he was thrust into mankind's first stressful situation. Adam was offered a choice and, as we know, decision-making is the breeding ground for conflict, frustration and distress.

Definitions:

Stress in individual is defined as any interference that disturbs a persons' healthy mental and physical well being. It occurs when the body is required to perform beyond its normal range of capabilities.

Behr and Newman define job stress as "a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning".

Stress is a dynamic condition, which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Stress is associated with constraints and demands. The former prevent you from doing what you desire, the latter refers to the loss of something desired.

Coping With Stress at Work Place

With the rapid advancement of technology, the stresses faced at work have also increased. Many people dread going to work, hence the term "Monday Blues". What is the reason for this? There is partly the fear from being retrenched in bad times, leading to greater job insecurity on the part of those who remain. Undoubtedly, occupational stress is one of the most commonly cited stressors faced by people all over the world.

Stress refers to the pressure and reactions to our environment which results in psychological and physical reactions. While some stress is good for motivation and increasing efficiency, too

much stress can result in negative impacts such as reduced effectiveness and efficiency. More and more people are feeling isolated and disrespected at work, and this has led to greater occupational stress. Many companies have taken to consulting experts and professionals on ways to increase connectedness and motivation of their employees. Some companies organize parties and make their employees feel valued at work. These are measures to motivate employees and help them to feel secure at their jobs, translating into greater productivity. However, not all companies have such measures in place, and some have not gotten it quite right. Hence, it is up to you to make sure that you can cope with stress at your workplace, and use it to help you work better. Here are 3 simple steps to help you with coping with stress in the workplace.

Step 1: Raising Awareness

Help yourself to identify when you are facing rising levels of stress, tipping the scales from positive to negative. This is important, as being able to identify signs of being stressed can help you to take steps to ensure that your overall quality of life does not drop. If left unacknowledged, the problem will only snowball, leading to disastrous consequences to your health and overall well being. You can identify if you are feeling stressed by checking if you have any physical or psychological reactions, such as excessive sweating or heart palpitations, or the onset of headaches, irritability or the need to escape. If you experience any of these reactions, identify if you are feeling any overwhelming negative emotions, and if you are constantly worried.

Step 2: Identify the Cause

You need to be able to analyze the situation and identify what is causing the rise in stress. These stressors can be external and internal. External stressors refer to things beyond your control, such as the environment or your colleagues at work. Internal stressors refer to your own thinking and attitude. Often, we only start reacting to stress when a combination of stressors working together exceeds our ability to cope. Keep a diary or a list of events that have caused you to feel strong negative emotions, or that are likely stressors. This will help you to identify the causes of your stress. Whilst it is not always possible to eradicate them, we can change the way that we cope with it.

Step 3: Coping with Stress

In order to deal with the situation that is causing you stress, you need to calm your mind and body so as to stave off the reactions and cope with it in a positive way. This can be through different methods, such as taking time off. If a situation is triggering your stress and you are unable to calm down, remove yourself from it. Go outside and take a walk to calm down. Alternatively, you can try implementing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing. If it is an internal stressor, stop your thought process until you are able to deal with it logically. The key to making these 3 steps work for you is to practice them. These are not instantaneous solutions, and you need to condition your mind and practice them so that you can implement it when you are feeling stressed.

Phases of stress

- **Alarm Reaction:** In the alarm phase, the individual mobilizes to meet the threat. It has two phases. The first phases includes in initial "stock shock phase" in which defensive mechanism become active. Alarm reaction is characterized by autonomous excitability; adrenaline discharges; increase heart rate, ulceration. Depending on the nature & intensity of the threat and the condition of the organization the period of resistance varies and the severity of symptoms may differ from "mild invigoration" to "disease of adaptation".

- **Resistance:** In the resistance phase, the individual attempts to resist or cope with the threat. Maximum adaptation occurs during this stage. The bodily signs characteristic of the alarm reaction disappear. If the stress persists, or the defensive reaction proves ineffective, it may overwhelm the body resources. Depleted of energy, the body enters the phase of third.

- **Exhaustion:** Adaptation energy is exhausted. Sings of the alarm reaction reappear, and the resistance level begins to define irreversibly. The organism collapses. We can identify three important sectors of life in which Stress originates. These are

  * Job and the organization

  * The social sector

  * Intra psychic sector
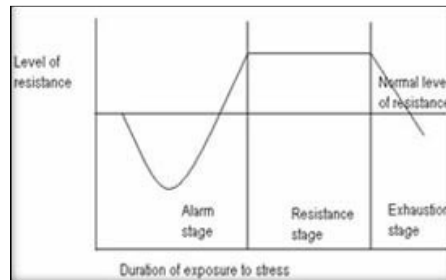
Job and organization, refers to the totality of the work environment (task, atmosphere, colleagues, compensation, policies, etc.). The social sector refers to the other such factors. The Intra psychic sector encompasses those things, which are intimate, and persona, like temperament, values, abilities and health. It is contended that stress can originate in any of these sectors or in combinations thereof.

In the figure below it can be seen that the magnitude of stress emanating from the stress to learner limit of the individual to handle these stress. This indicates a balanced state.

Objectives of the Study

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Stress is not necessarily bad in and of itself. Although stress is typically discussed in a negative context, it also has a positive value. It's an opportunity when it offers potential gain. Consider for example, the superior performance that an athlete or stage performer gives in "clutch" situations. Such individuals often use stress positively to rise to the occasion and perform at or near their maximum. Similarly, many professionals see the pressures of heavy workloads and deadlines as positive challenges that enhance the quality of their work and the satisfaction the get from their job. The types of stress are named as eustress and distress.

- **Distress** is the most commonly-referred to type of stress, having negative implications, whereas
- **Eustress** is a positive form of stress, usually related to desirable events in person's life. Both can be equally taxing on the body, and are cumulative in nature, depending on a person's way of adapting to a change that has caused it. Stress management is the

need of the hour. Moreover, be it our anxiety, mind-body exhaustion or our erring attitudes, we tend to overlook causes of stress and the conditions triggered by those. In such unsettling moments we often forget that stressors, if not escapable, are fairly manageable and treatable.

Research Methodology

To fulfill the objective of research study has been based on primary data. The primary data is collected by administering pre tested structured questionnaire. The genesis of different questions incorporated in the questionnaire is to acquaint ourselves with the persons reactions, opinions and suggestions to reduced stress. Questionnaire were devised and circulated to persons working in different organizations. Supplementary information's were sought through personal interviews, discussions and consultations with executives of different organizations. ABC and Burnout Strategy are used to measure and control stress.

Organization-individual normal interaction pattern

S.T.L – stress tolerance level

In the figure we find that job and organization loads have increased and have made a dent in the personality. In this stage, we find minor surface changes taking place, which are quite manageable.

MINOR SURFACE CHANGES

1. Adaptation attempt

2. Extra effort

3. Excessive concern of task

4. Worries

5. Anxiety

In the stage three and the figure below, we find that job and organizational loads have become unmanageable and interact with intrapsychic loads. This is the stage at which he negative consequences of the stress become apparent. Most of the stress related diseases emerge at

this point. When the situation persists we move into the next stage in which we start operating beyond the "stress tolerance limit".

MAJOR SURFACE DISFIGURATION

1. Frantic copying

2. Extra ordinary effort

3. Worry and anxiety about the self

4. Onset of physiological symptoms

5. Aggressive tendencies
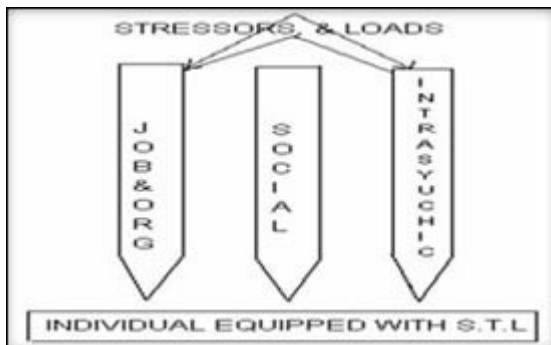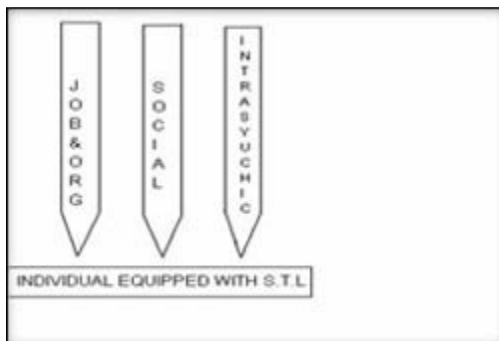
Several types of breakdowns and cracks are observable in this stage i.e., fourth stage. If unchecked the situation may culminate into the last and most intense phase wherein complete disintegration of personality takes place. At this stage, the individual requires proper psychological and medical care.

**Breakdowns and cracks: failure in coping**

A. Work related symptoms

1. Lack of concentration

2. Affected clarity of thinking & decision – making

3. Frequent absenteeism

4. Affected team work

5. Aggressive behavior

B. Physiological symptoms

1. Headache / Migraine

2. Insomnia

3. Lack of appetite

4. Digestive disorders

5. Sexual disorders

6. Temperamental chang

Pestonjee has also developed a model to explain how we cope with stress reactions. It is called the BOUNCE model because the behavioral decomposition taking place due to stress tense to get reflected in interpersonal reactions. The reactions are received & analyzed by the environment, which in turn, bounce back signals to the individuals to bring about a change either at the orgasmic level or at the response level.

THE BOUNCE MODEL STRESSORS
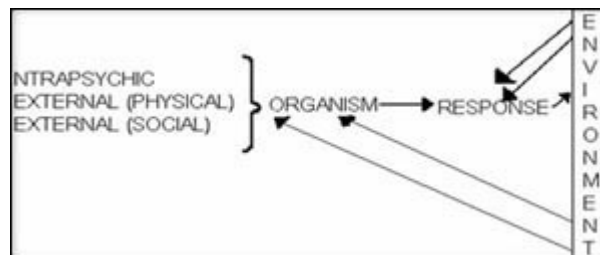
BURNOUT STRESS SYNDROME (BOSS)

Boss can lead to at least four types of stress related consequences such as, depletion of energy reverses, lowered resistance to illness, increased dissatisfaction and pessimism and increased absenteeism and inefficiency at work.

HONEYMOON STAGE

This stage can be describe as accounting for the euphoric feeling of encounter with the new job such as excitement, enthusiasm, challenge and pride. Dysfunctional features emerge in two ways first; the energy reverses are gradually depleted in coping with the demands of a challenging environment. Second, habits and strategies for coping with stress are formed in this stage which is often not useful in coping with later challenges.

FUEL SHORTAGE STAGE

This stage can be identified as composed of the value feelings of loss, fatigue and confusion arising from the individual's overdraws on reverses of adaptation energy. Other symptoms are dissatisfaction, inefficiency, and fatigue and sleep disturbances leading to escape activate such as increased eating, drinking & smoking.

CRISIS STAGE

When these feelings and physiological symptoms persist over period of time, the individual enters the stage of crisis. At this stage he develops "escape mentality" and feels oppressed. Heightened pessimism, self-doubling tendencies, peptic ulcers, tension headaches, chronic backaches, blood pressure.

HITTING THE WALL STAGE

This stage of BOSS is characterized by total exhaustion of one's adaptation energy, which may mark the end of one's professional career. While recovery from this stage elude may be resourceful to tide over the crises.

* If the stress for the day to day adaptability of man to his environment and results in the maintenance of internal steady state (homeostasis) it is known as neustress. For example, one produces neustress in order to breath, work.

* Stress is through of in negative terms. It is thought to be caused by something bad (for example the boss gives a formal reprimand for poor performance). It the stress response is unfavorable and potentially disease producing, this is known as distress. Constant worry in a susceptible individual can lead to ulcers.

Reduction or elimination of stress is necessary for psychological and physical well being of an individual. Efficiency in stress management enables the individual to deal or cope with the stressful situations instead of avoidance. Strategies like tie management, body-mind and mind-body relaxation exercise, seeking social support help individual improve their physical and mental resources to deal with stress successfully.

Apart from helping employees adopt certain coping strategies to deal with stress providing them with the service of counselor is also useful.

Many strategies have been developed to help manage stress in the work place. Some are strategies for individuals, and other is geared toward organizations.

INDIVIDUAL COPING STRATEGIES:

Many strategies for helping individuals manage stress have been proposed.
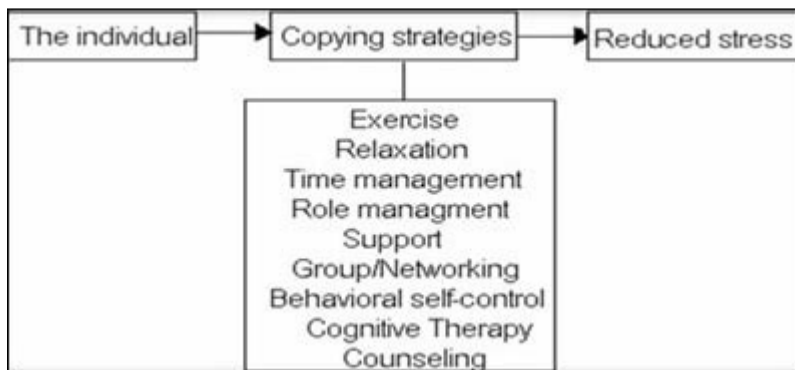
Individual coping strategies are used when an employee under stress exhibits undesirable behavior on the jobs such as performance, strained relationship with co-workers, absenteeism alcoholism and the like. Employees under stress require help in overcoming its negative effects. The strategies used are:

EXERCISE

One method by which individual can manage their stress is through exercise. People who exercise regularly are known to less likely to have heart attacks than inactive people are. Research also has suggested that people who exercise regularly feel less tension and stress are more conflict and slow greater optimism.

RELAXATION

A related method individual can manage stress is relaxation. Copying with stress require adaptation. Proper relaxation is an effective way to adopt.

Relaxation can take many forms. One way to relax is to take regular vacations; people can also relax while on the job (i.e. take regular breaks during their normal workday). A popular way of resting is to sit quietly with closed eyes for ten minutes every afternoon.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is an often recommended method for managing stress, the idea is that many daily pressures can be eased or eliminated if a person does a better job of managing time. One popular approach to time management is to make a list, every morning or the things to be done that day. Then you group the items on the list into three categories: critical activities that must be performed, important activities that should be performed, and optimal or trivial things that can be delegated or postponed, then of more of the important things done every day.

ROLE MANAGEMENT

Somewhat related to time management in which the individual actively works to avoid overload, ambiguity and conflict.

SUPPORT GROUPS

This method of managing stress is to develop and maintain support group. A support group is simply a group of family member or friends with whom a person can spend time. Supportive family and friends can help people deal with normal stress on an ongoing basis. Support groups can be particularly useful during times of crisis.

BEHAVIORAL SELF-CONTROL

By consciously analyzing the cause and consequences of employees own behavior, he or she can achieve self-control. They can further develop awareness of their own limits of tolerance and learn to anticipate their own responses to various stressful situations. The strategy involves increasing an individual's control over the situations rather than being solely controlled by them.

COGNITIVE THERAPY

The cognitive therapy techniques such as Elli's rational emotive model and Meichenbaum's cognitive strategy fir modification have been used as an individual strategy for reducing job stress.

COUNSELING

Personal counseling help employees understand and appreciate a diverse workforce, the holistic approach adopted by the counselor gives him a comprehensive view of the employee as client and enable him to deal the issues of work related problems in a larger context with his awareness of the inter-relationship among problems in adjustment with self, other and environment and that a work concern will effect personal life and vice-versa, the employee would receive help regarding the problem in all life.

One of the advantage of the individual interventions is the individual can use these skills to improve the quality of life in offer domains like family, social support and self, thus reducing the negative carry of experiences in these domains into the work life which might affect his occupation mental health.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

The most effective way of managing stress calls for adopting stressors and prevent occurrence of potential stressors.' Two basic organizational strategies for helping employees manage stress are institutional programs and collateral programs.
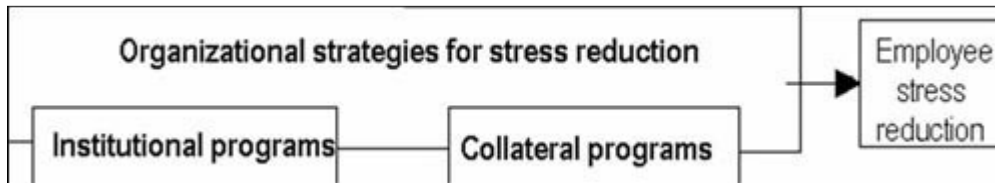
Work Design	Stress Management programs
Work schedules	Health promotions programs
Culture	Other programs
Supervision	

Institutional programs

Institutional programs for managing stress are undertaken to established organizational mechanism for example, a properly designed job and word schedules can help ease stress. Shift work in particular can constantly have to adjust their sleep and relaxation patterns. Thus, the design of work schedules should be a focused of organizational efforts to reduce stress.

The organization's culture can also used to help to manage stress. The organization should strive to foster a culture that reinforces a healthy mix of work and nonworking activities. Finally, supervision can play an important institutional role in overload. In managing stress, a supervisor is a potential manager source of overload. If made aware of their potential for assigning stressful amounts of work, supervisors can do a better job keeping workloads reasonable.

COLLATERAL PROGRAMS

In addition to their institutional efforts aimed at reducing stress, many organizations are turning to collateral programs. A collateral stress program in an organizational program specifically created to help employees deal with stress. The organizations have adopted stress management programs, health promotion programs and other kinds of programs for this purpose.

CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

The effect of stress is closely linked to individual personality. The same level of stress affects different people in different ways & each person has different ways of coping. Recognizing these personality types means that more focused help can be given.

Stress shows itself number of ways. For instance, individual who is experiencing high level of stress may develop high blood pressure, ulcers, irritability, difficulty in making routine decisions, loss of appetite, accident proneness, and the like. These can be subsumed under three categories:

1. Individual consequences
2. Organizational consequence
3. Burnout

Individual consequences:

Individual consequences of stress are those, which affect the individual directly. Due to this the organization may suffer directly or indirectly, but it is the individual who has to pays for it. Individual consequences of stress are broadly divided into behavioral, psychological and medical.

- Behavioral consequences of stress are responses that may harm the person under stress or others. Behaviorally related stress symptoms include changes in productivity, turnover, as well as changes in eating habits, increased smoking or consumption of alcohol, paid speech, and sleep disorders.

- Psychological consequences of stress replace to an individual mental health and well-being from or felling depressed. Job related stress could cause dissatisfaction, infact it has most psychological effect on the individual and lead to tension, anxiety irritability, and boredom.

- Medical consequences of stress affect a person's well being. According to a research conducted, it revealed that stress could create changes in metabolism, increase heart and breathing rates, increases blood pressure bring out headaches and induce heart attacks.

Organizational consequences:

Organizational consequences of stress have direct affect on the organizations. These include decline in performance, withdrawal and negative changes in attitude.

- Decline in performance can translate into poor quality work or a drop in productivity. Promotions and other organizational benefits get affected due to this.
- Withdrawal behavior also can result from stress. Significant form of withdrawal behavior is absenteeism.
- One main affect of employee stress is directly related to attitudes. Job satisfaction, morale and organizational commitment can all suffer, along with motivation to perform at higher levels.

Burnout

A final consequence of stress has implementation for both people and organizations. Burnout is a general feeling of exhaustion that develops when an individual simultaneously experiences too much pressure and few sources of satisfaction.

ABC Strategy

A – Awareness (It deals with causes of stress and how to react the stress)

B - Balance (Balance between positive and negative stress. How much can you cope with it becomes it negative)

C – Control (What you can do to help yourself to overcome the negative effects of stress.)

Findings and Conclusion:

The research shows the information of the level of stress which the employees are facing as the workload for the existing employees are high. So they are facing the problem of work overload and thus they get stressed. It is analyzed from the questionnaire filled by the employees that the employees who have scored more than 20 marks in the burnout test are not satisfied with the performance which they give in the organization. Thus it is proved that the employees who are desired to give better performance than their original performance are found more stressful than the others. While at the same time the employee that have scored less than 20 marks in the burnout test are satisfied with the performance. Very rare of the employee are to be found

suffering from depression. It is proved from the survey that the employees who have scored more than 25marks in the burnout test are concern about the opinion of their colleagues. And the employees who got less than 25 marks do not mind about their colleague's opinion. Thus it is proved that the colleagues opinion also play a lead role in the increase and decrease of the stress level. Those who mind about their colleague's opinion are found to be more stressful .The employees who have scored 28-29 marks in the burnout test don't believe in sharing their problems with their spouse or friend or any closed one. Thus we can say that sharing your problems with your spouse or close friends is a better idea to reduce stress. One of the questions was asked that were their social life balanced? It is observed that the employees who have scored above 20 marks in the burnout test did not have their social life balanced. Thus it is proved that stress may affect our social life also. The employees were asked whether they plan their work or not, moderate answers were given. Thus we can conclude that planning of the work may help to reduce stress level. This aspect depends upon the dedication of work. So it is meaningless to compare this question with the burnout test. A question was asked that weather you get stressed at the non-achievement of their target? All the employees have responded positively. But this is not concern with the burnout score. From this we can conclude that all the employees are given achievable target and naturally by the non-achievement of the target all the employees may get stressed. One of the other possibilities is that the employees have responded positively to show themselves to be good. The employees having more than 10 marks in the burnout test says that they are under stress.

The above analysis is done by the data received from the questionnaire. So the accuracy of data depends upon the response of the employees.

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