



STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WORK BALANCE

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Abstract

Stress is common of every human life in day today activities. Stress is normal psychological reaction when the brain of the human being recognizes threats of life. Stress is both positive and negative stressors. It can help to cope with life challenges. The study mainly focuses on the learning strategies required to manage stressful situations in order to improve performance of the employee and individuals. The productivity of the work force is the most decisive factor as far as the success of an organization is concerned. The productivity in turn is dependent on the psychosocial well being of the employees. The organizations have been facing greater challenges in terms of technological revolution, service diversification and global banking. Stress is unavoidable on the part of the employees as the systems, procedures; techniques are getting complicated with the use of innovative and advanced technology. Every employee cannot cope with such rapid changes taking place in the jobs. This will lead to arising of stress among employees. Stress can affect one's health, work performance, social life and the relationship with family members. The stressors and its consequences are to be understood at individual and organizational level. An attempt has been made through this research paper to know the reasons of stress among the employees of any organization and the ways used by employees to cope with the stress generated at workplace The aim of this paper is to provide insight that will help the reader further improve his/her management competencies in managing stress in the workplace.

Keywords: Stress Management, Employees, Advancement of Technology, Yoga & Meditation.

Introduction

Human resource of any Nation is the most valuable resource. Healthy human resource is equal to healthy nation. With the changing Physical and Built environment of the present Indian society the physical and mental status of people are also changing. The most affected group is youth as they are full of energy and enthusiasm but this energy should be properly channelized. Today's youth is living in more stressful conditions which is affecting their health and ultimately affecting their potential Productivity. The progress of a country lies in the hands of youths. They are filled with tremendous and towering ambitions. It will be a great wastage of human resources if these youths are directed properly. Technology has revolutionized our perspective of the world. Email makes us easily accessible, professionals often feel pressured to be online at all times, even while on vacation or outside of traditional office hours. Excessively high workloads, with unrealistic deadlines making people feel rushed, under pressure and overwhelmed. Insufficient workloads, making people feel that their skills are being underused. A lack of control over work activities. Stress does not only affect us on an individual level, but it also impacts on our relations with family, friends, and our colleges at the work place. It also affects different facets of society like socialization, and even the economy, with regards to how stress impacts productivity. Work related stress is even more difficult (or stressful) than anyone could ever manage. Stress causes disease, and plays a role in how we can successfully perform. Recent studies have proven that having a good work life balance can significantly help to reduce stress in the workplace and therefore stress on your heart. Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity. Creating a balance between work and life can be challenging, whereas both demand your attention and energy. When properly balancing a



career and personal life, you become healthier, both mentally and physically and enjoy an enhanced lifestyle. With a work-life balance, you will be able to manage your time better, which will impact various aspects of your life positively. Maxwell Work life balance and Stress Management course is for anyone looking for work/life balance to decrease their stress and perform better at work.

Reviews of literature

B. V. Chalapathi, B.V. Raghavulu and P. Hariprasad (2008) studies reveals that empowerment means not just economic independence and it is much more than that when women are economically independent they can progress well in different spheres of life investment is also part of empowerment and women are being provided loans for investment.

Aparna Shrivastava (2012) defined women empowerment "is the process by which women mobilize to understand, identify and overcome gender discrimination, so as to achieve equality of welfare and equal access to resources."

Golla et al (2011) stressed on the need of women empowerment in terms that economically empowering women is essential both to realize women's right and to achieve broader development goals such as economic growth, poverty reduction, health, education and welfare. According to its authors, a woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make an act on economic decisions.

Objectives

- To Study the impact of stress on Health
- To understand the work balance and stress

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data and it has been collected from journals, book, libraries, Internet.

The Effects of Stress on the different parts of the Human body

If you're alive, you've got stress. Stress is a natural physical and mental reaction to both good and bad experiences that can be beneficial to your health and safety. Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones and increasing your heart and breathing rates. Your brain gets more oxygen, giving you an edge in responding to a problem. In the short term, stress helps you cope with tough situations. Stress can be triggered by the pressures of everyday responsibilities at work and at home. As you might expect, negative life events like divorce or the death of a loved one cause stress. So can physical illness. Traumatic stress, brought on by war, disaster, or a violent attack, can keep your body's stress levels elevated far longer than is necessary for survival. Chronic stress can cause a variety of symptoms and can affect your overall health and well-being.

Central Nervous and Endocrine Systems

Your central nervous system (CNS) is in charge of your "fight or flight" response. The CNS Instantly tells the rest of your body what to do, marshaling all resources to the cause. In the brain, the hypothalamus gets the ball rolling, telling your adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol. When the perceived fear is gone, the CNS should tell all systems to go back to normal. It has done its job. If the CNS fails to return to normal, or if the stressor doesn't go away, it takes a toll on your body. Symptoms of chronic stress include irritability, anxiety, and depression. You may suffer from



headaches or insomnia. Chronic stress is a factor in some behaviors like overeating or not eating enough, alcohol or drug abuse, or social withdrawal.

Respiratory and Cardiovascular Systems

Stress hormones affect your respiratory and cardiovascular systems. During the stress response, You breathe faster in an effort to distribute oxygen and blood quickly to your body core. If you have preexisting respiratory problems like asthma or emphysema, stress can make it harder to breathe. Your heart also pumps faster. Stress hormones cause your blood vessels to constrict and raise your blood pressure. All that helps get oxygen to your brain and heart so you'll have more strength and energy to take action. Frequent or chronic stress makes your heart work too hard for too long, raising your risk of hypertension and problems with your blood vessels and heart. You're at higher risk of having a stroke or heart attack. The female hormone estrogen offers pre-menopausal women some protection from stress-related heart disease.

Digestive System

Under stress, your liver produces extra blood sugar (glucose) to give you a boost of energy. Unused blood sugar is reabsorbed by the body. If you're under chronic stress, your body may not be able to keep up with this extra glucose surge, and you may be at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The rush of hormones, rapid breathing, and increased heart rate can upset your digestive system. You're more likely to have heartburn or acid reflux. Stress doesn't cause ulcers — a bacterium called *H. pylori* does — but stress may cause existing ulcers to act up. You might experience nausea, vomiting, or a stomachache. Stress can affect the way food moves through your body, leading to diarrhea or constipation.

Muscular System

Under stress, your muscles tense up to protect themselves from injury. You've probably felt Your muscles tighten up and release again once you relax. If you're constantly under stress, you Ur muscles don't get the chance to relax. Tight muscles cause headaches, back and shoulder pain, and body aches. Over time, you may stop exercising and turn to pain medication, setting off an unhealthy cycle.

Sexuality and Reproductive System

Stress is exhausting for the body and for the mind. It's not unusual to lose your desire for sex when you're under chronic stress. However, men may produce more of the male hormone Testosterone during stress, which may increase sexual arousal in the short term. For women, stress can affect the menstrual cycle. You might have irregular or no menstruation, or heavier and more painful periods. The physical symptoms of menopause may be magnified under chronic stress. If stress continues for a long time, a man's testosterone levels begin to drop. That can interfere with sperm production and cause erectile dysfunction or impotence. Chronic stress may make the urethra, prostate, and testes more prone to infection.

Immune System

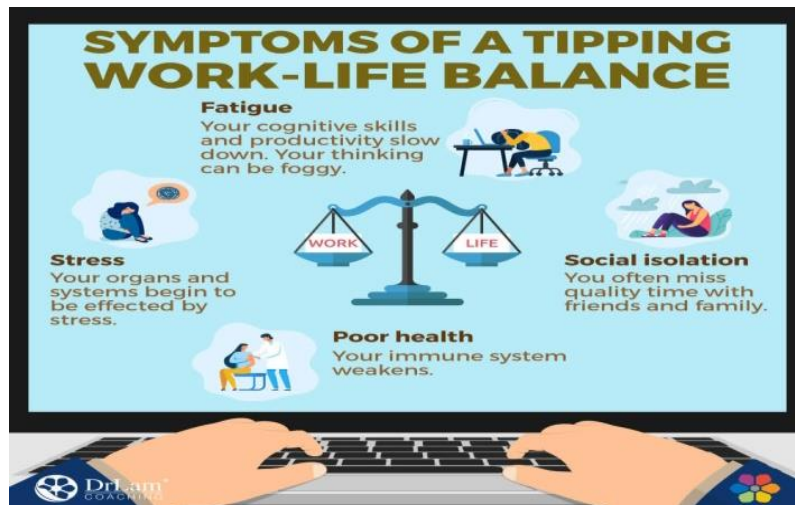
Stress stimulates the immune system. In the short term, that's a bonus. It helps you stave off Infection and heal wounds. Over time, cortisol compromises your immune system, inhibiting histamine secretion and inflammatory response to foreign invaders. People under chronic stress are more susceptible to viral illnesses like influenza and the common cold. It increases risk of other opportunistic diseases and infections. It can also increase the time it takes to recover from illness or injury.



Sources of Stress in work place

- Functional and Strategic Role within the organization.
- Personality and stress coping.
- Work relationships.
- Career development.
- Culture and atmosphere within the organization.
- Link between home and work
- Factors unique to the job
- Role in the organization
- Career development
- Organizational structure / climate

Work balance and Stress



The Impacts of Workplace Stress

Workplace stressors are classified as physical and psychosocial. Physical stressors include noise, poor lighting, poor office or work layout, and ergonomic factors, such as bad working postures.

Psychosocial stressors are, arguably, the most predominant stress factors. These include high job demands, inflexible working hours, poor job control, poor work design and structure, bullying, harassments, and job insecurity. Workplace stress not only affects the worker, it also has adverse effects on company performance well. The effects of job-related strain are evident in workers' physical health, mental health, and their behavior. These effects occur in a continuum, beginning as distress in response to stressors. Distress, in turn, leads to elevated blood pressure and anxiety, which increase the risk of coronary heart disease, substance abuse, and anxiety disorders.

The impact of stress on cardiovascular disease has been well established: Studies have shown that workplace stress is a strong risk factor for precludes to cardiovascular disease (obesity, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure) and of adverse cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke. There is also a growing body of evidence that work-related stress increases one's risk of diabetes. Other physical health problems linked to workplace stress include immune deficiency disorders,



musculoskeletal disorders including chronic back pain, and gastrointestinal disorders, such as irritable bowel syndrome. Workplace stress also has adverse effects on workers' mental health, with an increased risk of anxiety, burnout, depression, and substance use disorders. Workers who are stressed at work are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as cigarette smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, and poor dietary patterns. with these attendant health effects, workplace stress reduces employee productivity, increases absenteeism and presenters, increases the number of days taken off work for doctor visits, and increases healthcare costs incurred by employers. Workplace stress is also linked to higher accident and injury rates and higher turnover rates, both of which increase administrative costs.

Workplace Interventions for Reducing Stress	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redesigning the work environment Providing breaks and nap-times for employees ▪ Increasing employee participation in decision making and work planning ▪ Increasing time and resources for completing specific job tasks ▪ Matching job description with employee skills and qualifications Creating clear promotion and reward pathways Eliminating physical hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substituting with safer equipment and technology • Establishing control measures to reduce worker's exposure to occupational hazards • Promoting the use of personal protective equipment Training and education of employees • Cognitive behavioral therapy training for workers • Routine health surveillance - screening for high blood pressure and stress symptoms

Individual Oriented Strategies for Coping with Stress

Solo-Activities :- Reading, Writing, Photography, Art, Playing a musical instrument, Collection of different things, Running, Hobbies, Vacations.

Group- Activities: - Sports, Games, Eating out, Vacations. Solo-Passive/Group-Passive: - Television, Movies, Shows & Theatre, Listening to music, Concepts, opera, Sporting events, Vacations. Yoga &

Meditation: - it is helpful in overcoming the stress

The Organizational Oriented Strategies for Coping with Stress

- **Flex time.** Allowing workers to start or end the workday earlier or later can reduce work/life stress, especially for working parents. Flex time can also reduce the stress of commuting in rush hour traffic.
- **Job sharing.** This allows at least two people trained to perform each job, enabling each employee to have time off without losing productivity.
- **Work from home.** Working from home results in higher morale and job satisfaction and lower employee stress and turnover, The prime reason is that working at home provides employees more control over how they do their work, Working at home also helps workers better manage work/family demands.



- **Longer lunch hours.** Extending the lunch hour may help discourage snacking and fast food. Adequate time may also encourage time for calming or other stress-reduction activities such as walking.
- **Healthcare advocacy.** Offering an expert who can personally address healthcare issues, such as helping to resolve medical bills and interacting with insurance and providers, can help employees reduce worry and stay focused on their job [6].
- **EAPs (Employee Assistance Programs)** EAPs are typically offered by the HR department as part of the employer's health insurance plan to assess and address personal issues that affect employee performance and productivity. Issues can range from substance abuse to family problems, and EAPs often include counseling benefits. EAPs for substance abuse can reduce workers' compensation claims, employer healthcare costs, and absenteeism.

Conclusion

Stress can make an individual productive and constructive when it is identified and well managed. In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow anger and energy into something positive. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful for coping the stress. Stress can be minimized if companies take the right steps. Stress-free employees perform better, work harder, feel happier and have a long term commitment to the organization as compared to their counterparts. Having broader perspective of life will definitely change the perception of stress. Let us hope that we will be successful in making distress into eu - stress for our healthy lifestyle as well as organizational well-being.

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