MANAGING STRESS AND COPING WITH STRESS AT WORK PLACE

Faiza Fathima*, Dr. K. Sreekanth**   Dr. T. N Murty***
*Research Scholar, Hyderabad Business School, GITAM University, Hyderabad Campus, India.
** Professor in Hyderabad Business School, GITAM University, Hyderabad Campus, India.
***Professor and Director, Nimra College of Engg & Tech., Vijayawada, India.

Abstract
Stress is a fact of life. But too much stress can breakdown a person's physical, mental and emotional health. Planning can help people to manage stress in their lives. They must begin to make choices that support their values and develop a personal plan to take charge of their lives. Work stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual confronts with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both certain and important

Key Words: Stress, Work Place, Management.

Introduction

The origin of the term 'stress' is ambiguous. It is a common term which began life in the 14th century. It meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. These days, however, the term revolves around the medieval definition, in which 'stress' simply meant 'hardship'. The recent scientific developments inform us that 'stress' is actually good for us. Stress is derived from the Latin word stranger, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or affliction. Stress is a physiological and psychological imbalance. Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their wellbeing. Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources. Stress is the body's way of reacting to any situation and it can have serious repercussions on an individual's life. Yet, people fail to realize the importance of stress management in their lives. Effective managers can stay in control of life, without panicking even under stressful situations. They handle stress by planning work, taking regular breaks, and rejuvenating them. It isn't easy to find a generally acceptable definition of stress. The word with different people takes different meanings . . . be it professionals, psychologists, doctors, engineers, management consultants, all use the word in their own distinctive ways. Management consultants talk in terms of organizational challenges, psychologist in terms of human behaviour and doctors in terms of psychological mechanism.

Objectives of the Study
1. To ascertain the stress management techniques of the organization
2. To suggest the implementation of coping mechanism among the Executives.

Managing Stress at Work Place

Stress management is dealing with stress in a positive way to ensure good health and general wellbeing. Although stress in a changing world is inevitable executives have options on how to manage it. Stress management includes regular relaxation, physical exercise, talking with others, making time for social activities and reasonable self-statement. To master change, workers need to assess the need for stress management and develop strategies for reducing the impact of stressful changes at work. Learning changes at work. Learning to lower the stress load will enable staff to function and adapt more effectively.

Stress management helps executives to cope when change threatens to become overwhelming. Ideally one would like to see change unfold in a systematic way that allows one to remain calm, confident and optimistic. Stress can cause unpredictable and immeasurable problems to an individual and also to the organization. It can cause job-related problems like negating safety norms, indifferent job performance, quality compromises, not caring for others and surroundings, forgetfulness, uncharacteristic clumsiness, defying authority, defensiveness and violent behaviour. Stress in an inevitable outcome of modern-day complex life, in organizations after the arrival of multinational companies in India.

Since stress results from both a given environment and individual appraisals of that environment, individuals and organizations must collaborate to manage stress. Coping strategies are not a stable personality characteristic rather individuals modify coping strategies according to the nature of the stressor and experiences during and between stressful episodes (Folkman and Lazarus, 1980). This indicates that employees can learn to manage stress effectively.

Coping includes eliminating or reducing stress, modifying one's appraisal of stressors, or managing discomfort. Coping is distinguished from defensive behaviour, in that coping is flexible, purposive, reality-oriented, and differentiated, while defensive behaviour is rigid, reality-distorting and undifferentiated.

A variety of programmes exist to help individual employees cope with stress. The most common approach, the medical model, aids individuals already suffering from stress. Such programmes evaluate symptoms, diagnose causes, and offer treatment. This model generally takes a curative approach, using medication to alleviate symptoms such as high blood pressure. Another large group of programmes aims to reduce individual vulnerability to stress. These programmes help individuals to identify and control stress by teaching meditation, relaxation, developing positive attitude, improving exercise and diet.

Without a wider consideration of the organizational factors, focusing on individuals is insufficient in dealing with work related health problems (Cox, 1997). In accordance with social norms emphasizing individualism, the clinical approach focuses on individuals. However, since stress often stems from employment trends, companies, too must labor to alleviate stress. Cautious hiring and retention can avert problems; other helpful strategies include identifying employee concerns, restructuring jobs and intervening in employee relations.

Organizations can also alleviate work stress by providing appraisal, informational, instrumental and emotional support (Cohen 1990; Dewe and Guest, 1990). Appraisal involves expressing respect, support, and encouragement to employees. Emotional support offers a sense of trust and care by allowing employees to discuss problems and solutions, while information and instrumental support include advice and referrals. The worksite health promotion programmes are recommended for effective management of stress related behaviours and prevention of violence (Stouffer and Varnes, 1998).

Comparing to other industries employees feel more stressed at IT companies for the completion of their targets. Due to this particular reason IT companies has been chosen for the study.

Coping with Stress
Individuals and organizations cannot remain in a continuous state of stress. Some actions become necessary. Coping with stress involves an adaptive response to stress so as to eliminate or reduce the stress producing factors. Some common methods of managing stress are given below:

Action points
Managers should
- Identify sources of stress and their effects.
- Adopt a de-stressing routine like going for a solitary walk at the end of the day.
- Spend time with family, friends.
- Make time for vacations.
- Practice relaxation methods like deep breathing, meditation, and yoga.
- Sleep for at least 6-8 hours.
- Plan, prioritize, and delegate work
- Try to maintain a work-life balance.

Managers should not
- Ignore symptoms like frequent headaches, coughs and colds.
- Take on too many responsibilities or demands that are outside your capabilities.
- Use drugs, tobacco, alcohol to handle stress.
- Use self-medication.
- Wait for deadlines to approach.
- Set unrealistic goals.

References
1. David Fontana "Handling stress at work: London DLA Business and Law Training, II Tech, 1999, pg.no.5
2. Hans Selye, The stress of life, New York, - McGraw Hill Book Company, 1936. pg.no.12
3. Gupta. C.V (2006), *"Human Resource Management"* Sultan Chand and Sons, New Delhi. pp.no.33.2-33.24
4. Fred Luthans," Stress*, Causes, Consequences and Coping Strategies"* – Organizational behavior, by M.C. Gras, Edition-4, pp.No.138-140.
5. Michael Morrison - 2001 Vernon Coleman, *"Stress Management Techniques"* IBH Publishers Pvt, Ltd., Bombay-400 026. pp.63-67
6. Vera Periffer *"Stress Management"* – Published by Thorsons – Harper Colins publishers, London – 2001. pp.73-80.