

STRESS MANAGEMENT IN WOMEN EMPLOYEES OF EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

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Abstract: Women occupy an important position in the working community of the organizations. Especially Educational institutions attract a number of women employees rather than men owing to its nobility and reputation in the Indian society. Whatever is the position occupied by them in their organizations, the Indian women also have to take care of their family at the same time? Unfortunately, the Indian socio-cultural conditions force them to perform multiple tasks. This is leading to a lot of stress and finally resulting in many physical and psychological illnesses. Hence, there is a need to address this evil effectively. The present study helps the individual women employees and also the organizations taken for the study to identify the stressors and remove them for better productivity and helps them in increasing the morale and job satisfaction levels of women employees.

Keywords: Educational Institutions, Organizational factors, Personal factors, Stress, Stress Management

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become a part of life for the present day employees. Be it due to the expanded job requirements, modern life style or increased working hours almost all the employees are suffering from stress. Stress is defined in **Merriam Webster Dictionary** as "A physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily tension and may be a factor in disease causation or a state resulting from a stress; especially one of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium"(Araxia Mankyan, Elisa Almo, 2011).

JOB STRESS

Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. These conditions may lead to poor work performance or even create many physical and psychological health problems. Job stress is also associated with various biological reactions that may lead ultimately to compromised health, such as cardiovascular disease. Stress is a prevalent and costly problem in today's workplace. About one-third of workers report high levels of stress. Some of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Majority of employees believe the current day employee has more on-the-job stress than their previous generation employees.

SOURCES OF STRESS

There are many sources and initiators or causes of stress. Broad categories of sources stress are

The Environment – the environment can bombard people with intense and competing demands to adjust. Examples of environmental stressors include weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing, and crime.

Organizational Factors: The work place is a source of stress for many of the employees. The organizational culture, practices of the management, compensations terms and conditions, and other organizational factors contribute to the stress experienced by the employees.

Social Factors– People can experience multiple stressors arising from the demands of the different social roles we occupy, such as parent, spouse, caregiver, and employee. Job related stress is a part of social stress. Some examples of social stressors include deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, divorce, and co-parenting.

Physiological Factors – Situations and circumstances affecting our body can be experienced as physiological stressors. Examples of physiological stressors include rapid growth of adolescence, menopause, illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.

Personality and emotions – Our brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful, or pleasant. Some situations in life are stress provoking, but it is our thoughts that determine whether they are a problem for us.

EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE WELL BEING OF PEOPLE

Symptoms of stress fall into three general, but interrelated, categories—physical, psychological and emotional. The following are the most commonly complained situations of stress

- Headaches including migraines
- Strain and fatigue
- Gastrointestinal problems (Ulcers, Acid Indigestion, Bowel upsets)

- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Heart problems, such as palpitations
- Inability to focus or lack of concentration and interest
- Sleep disturbances
- Sweating palms/shaking hands
- Anxiety and nervousness
- Fertility problems

Even when a person doesn't realize it, stress can cause or contribute to serious physical and psychological disorders. It increases hormones such as adrenaline and cortico sterone, which affect metabolism, immune reactions, and other stress responses can lead to increases in heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, and physical demands on internal organs.

Behavioral changes are also expressions of stress. They may include any of the following:

- Irritability and anger
- Disruptive eating patterns
- Rude Behavior
- Sorting to dangerous coping habits like smoking, alcoholism and drug usage

Stress Management : Stress management is the need of the hour. However hard we try to go beyond a stress situation, life seems to find new ways of stressing us out 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.

Strategies for Managing Stress

Organizational strategies for managing stress are Encouraging more of organizational communication with the employees so that there is no role ambiguity/conflict. Effective communication can also change employee views. Managers can use better signs and symbols which are not misinterpreted by the employees; Encourage employees' participation in decision-making. This will reduce role stress; Grant the employees greater independence, meaningful and timely feedback, and greater responsibility; The organizational goals should be realistic, stimulating and particular. The employees must be given feedback on how well they are heading towards these goals; Encourage decentralization; Have a fair and just distribution of incentives and salary structure; Promote job rotation and job enrichment; Create a just and safe working environment; Have effective hiring and orientation procedure; Appreciate the employees on accomplishing and over-exceeding their targets; Individual strategies for managing stress are The employees should make a "to-do" list daily, prioritize the acts in the list and plan the acts accordingly. Take regular breaks during work to relax you. By effective time management, the employees can achieve their targets timely and can meet work pressures and, thus, avoid stress; Do hard work. Strive to achieve your goals but do not do it to the harm of family, health, or peer; indulge in physical exercises. It helps in effective blood circulation, keeps you fit, diverts mind from work pressures; encourage a healthy lifestyle. Take a regular sleep, have plenty of water, have healthy eating habits. Promote relaxation techniques such as yoga, listening music and meditation; the employees should have optimistic approach about their work.

They should avoid connections with negative approach employees; the employees should have emotional intelligence at workplace. They should have self-awareness, self-confidence and self-control at workplace; the employees should build social support. They should have close connections with trustworthy peer who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. This social network will help the employees to overcome stress; Employee counseling is a very good strategy to overcome employee stress. Through counseling, employees can become aware of their strengths and how to develop those strengths; their weaknesses and how to eliminate them; and they can develop strategies for changing their behaviour. Employees are also given career counseling which helps in reducing their ambiguities with regard to career; Find a fun way to release stress, such as, cracking jokes, playing tennis, golf, etc. and Do not remain preoccupied with yourself. Turn your focus outwards. Help others. This will release some stress.

Objectives

The study is undertaken with the following objectives

- To study the causes of stress among women employees.
- To analyze the level of stress on women employees.
- To study the effects of stress on the health status of employees.
- To analyze the importance of interventional strategies at organizational level to manage stress among women employees
- To study the role of stress in maintaining interpersonal relationship.

Every employee wants the luxurious life, high income, promotion etc. So there will be lots of burden on them to achieve work related targets. This will increase the stress among the employees. Every organization has strong competition with each other hence wants greater productivity with proper utilization of resource, high sale and high profit. The purpose behind the study is to find out the key factors responsible for creating the level of stress. In addition to this the researcher also wants to study the cause of stress and propose remedies to control stress among employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature regarding stress levels among Social Work graduates suggested that, when left unaddressed, stress can manifest in more serious symptoms beyond low morale. Of particular concern was data from a recent study, which suggests that 34% of Social Work students reported high levels of depressive symptoms, 12% had a history of suicidal ideation, and 4% reported having recent thoughts about suicide (**Horner KL, 1996**)

Carver et al (2010) discusses student's levels of stress in correlation to their locus of control. They found that students with very high levels of severe stress associate their stress levels to chance, where as students with mild or moderate stress levels do not associate too much of their stress to chance.

Beyond the boundaries of the work environment, socio-economic and demographic changes to the workforce have blurred the lines between work and personal stress. Over the past few decades these changes have included an increase in the number of women in the workforce, a rising divorce rate and subsequent single parent households and a rise in the number of working mothers in both full and part-time employment (**Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000**).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe occupational stress as the taxation of a person's adaptive resources because of job demands. Stress can therefore be understood as the period of adaptation when an imbalance between job demands and the response ability of the worker occurs. If the imbalance continues to be unrelieved, the long term effects would eventually lead to burnout being experienced by the person.

Greenglass, Burke & Konarski (1998) stated that an individual's burnout levels depend not only on stressful events in the work environment, but also on the availability of coping resources.

Wisniewski and Gargiulo (1997) have found that stress is potentially manageable through systems of social support in the work place by administrative management, superiors and colleagues.

Research Design: The study was of explanatory in nature. The sample size is 50. It was collected from the employees of various educational institutions in Hyderabad. Data was collected through self-structured questionnaire. Various Books, web sites, journals and other print material etc were used as a source of secondary data. MS-Excel was used to list and store the data. Percentage Analysis method was used to analyze and interpret results and achieves research objectives.

Findings: Most of the employees apprehend with the fact that lack quality in their work puts stress on them. It is found that maximum number of employees in educational institutions also is in stress. 56% employees feel that they are overloaded with work. 44% employees feel tensed due to their non-compliance with the target of work or non-completion of the task on time. 38% employees accepted that they will obey the order of their boss by sacrificing their important domestic function. It indicates fear and stress among employees, especially women employees. 24% employees feel stressed due to their family related problems and multi tasking at domestic and work fronts. Majority of the employees accepted that there is conflict among the roles at work and home. Only 48% employees felt that strategies used by management to manage stress of employees are effective. 50% employees use YOGA or other ways to relieve them from stress. Majority of the women employees felt that there should be consideration at work place and domestic arena also to cope effectively with stress. In spite of stress, majority of the employees balance in their social life.

Suggestions: As most of the women employees feel that they feel stress at work, educational institutions should take positive steps to make their women employees free from stress so that they can work with optimum efficiency and effectiveness. Women employees should be dealt with dignity and given an opportunity to prove their effectiveness equally with their male counterparts. Guidance and counseling, quality consciousness awareness programs, psychological support can be provided to women. The concept of five day week working can be implemented in educational institutions also so that the employees can give more time to themselves and their family and discharge other social responsibilities. This indirectly reduces the stress on the students of the educational institutions also. Educational institutions may arrange YOGA camps, meditation camps, stress busting programs for the teachers as well as the students. The working environment should be made clean and safer. There should be proper work division in all departments. There should be friendly environment from colleagues and management.

Limitations of Study: The time period for carrying out the research was short as a result of which many facts have been left unexplored. Lack of time and other resources as it was not possible to conduct survey at large level. 50 women employees only responded positively. The study is limited to the employees of selected educational institutions of Hyderabad of Telangana State and therefore the findings of the study cannot be extended to other areas. During collection of the data many employees were unwilling to fill the questionnaire due to lack of time. Respondents were having a feeling of wastage of time for them. Convenient sampling has been used in the study and it has its own limitations. Personal bias of the respondents might have crept in while answering a few questions. Results of the study may not be generalized.

Scope for Further research: Area of present study can be increased from district level to state level, national level, as well as international level; Sample size can be increased; Other demographic details can be added in the future research and Various other

statistical tests can be used for comprehensive analysis and findings. The study can also be extended to all categories of employees working in the educational institutions as well women employees working with other categories of institutions or organizations.

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