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Stress Management in Information Technology Sector

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Abstract: Stress is a general term which is experienced by the people in their activities. It is the reaction that people take due to excessive pressure or demand. If anyone get stress in their work then it will affects not only their health and well-being but also the productivity of the organization. This study is carried out to reveal the growing problem of work related stress. This paper deals with the global stress level at work, various factors causing workplace stress and its effects on human in a brief manner. It also deals with the various strategies to be adopted by the organizations to cope up with stress.

Keywords: Stress, workplace, strategies, Productivity, Well- being

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a simple word which makes people nervous. It is the reaction of the people during excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. According to the Oxford Dictionary, stress is strain, especially worry and nervous tension. Almost each and every individual is prone to the ever spreading syndrome called stress. But the level of stress is high in the work group especially the employees in the sectors like Information Technology, Manufacturing and Banking. Today, the people at work are exposed to high quantitative and qualitative demands as well as hard competition due to the competitive world. The workplace has also changed dramatically due to globalisation of the economy, use of new information and communications technology, growing increased mental workload. At the same time, workers are reporting an increasing level of health problems. If the stress levels are high then the productivity of the organization will be very low. So it is essential to analyse and solve the stress related problems in the workplace.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress is a part of human life as well as the corporate world. It affects not only the mental health but also the physical work which employees are doing. It will reduce concentration and increase hopelessness in the

work. This results in the productivity and quality of work. So managing stress at work is very essential to the individuals. For this reason, this article is describing the global stress level, its factors and coping up strategies at work in general.

III. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this article is to analyze the global stress level at work and its various factors causing workplace stress. It also aims to suggest some strategies to minimise the stress level of employees at work.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature and based on only secondary data. Various books, journals and websites were referred for this study.

V. ANALYSIS

Various studies on workplace stress are conducted across the world. The researcher here used certain statistics and survey reports for the further analysis. The reports from Regus, Kenexa High Performance Institute, American Psychological Association and other research articles are used for the analysis.

VI. STRESS LEVELS

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in 2009 has documented a report based on workplace stress. It noted that the impact of workplace stress affects the productivity and well being of the employees. Regus also conducted a survey among 11,000 respondents from thirteen countries to insight the global stress level among the to insight the global stress level among the business peoples. The levels of stress are high in the emerging economies and regions in that survey. The statistics of that survey is shown below:

From this table, its clear that China is leading in workplace stress with 85.9 % and Netherlands is having least percentage of workplace stress (47.3%). India occupies seventh place in this survey with 57.1 %. But more than half of the people are having workplace stress. It is a never ending syndrome originating from circumstances in the workplace and will affects the performance of the people and well being of the body too.

The graphical representation of the table is given as follows. In the bar chart, Red colour indicates the country China which is having highest stress level where Green colour indicates the country Netherlands which is having lowest stress level. Global average is represented in Orange colour and our country India is represented in Blue colour.

In 2011, the Kenexa High Performance Institutes took a survey with more than 31,000 workers from 28 countries. This survey was conducted by means of on-line questionnaires about a range of workplace issues, including workplace stress. Findings of this survey as follows.

The above table reveals that the stress levels are high during 2010/2011 in all the six nations. But according to this survey, UK has the highest stress level and India has the lowest rate. And the global stress levels for these six nations are low when compared to the above survey which was conducted among 13 nations by Regus in 2009.

Table 1
The Emerging Economies Survey

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Stress levels in Percentage</i>
China	85.9
Belgium	64.4
Mexico	64.2
South Africa	63.3
Spain	58.2
USA	58.2
India	57.1
France	55.6
Australia	55.4
Canada	51.8
UK Germany	48.2
Netherlands	48.8
Global Average	58.3

Table 2
Countries Year wise Stress Levels in Percentage

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Year wise Stress Levels in Percentage</i>			
	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Brazil	30	20	22	34
China	18	15	10	17
Germany	28	23	25	33
India	12	11	13	17
United Kingdom	25	24	26	35
United States	25	28	25	32
Global	23	20	20	29

Source: 2011/2012 Kenexa high performance institute worktrend report

Chinese and Indian employees generally reported the least amount of stress, with only about 17 percent of workers in both India and China feeling unreasonably stressed in 2011. These levels are nearly half those in the U.S. (32 percent), the UK (35 percent), Brazil (34 percent) and Germany (33 percent).

VII. FACTORS CAUSING STRESS

There are so many reasons for stress. The major factors causing stress to the employees at work are given by the researcher with the help of various articles, magazines and websites. The important factors are,

- Role conflict

- Work overload
- Career concern
- Working conditions
- Organizational change
- Consumer demands
- Technological changes
- Lack of employee participation
- Ineffective communication
- Discrimination in pay structure
- Job insecurity and so on

The American Psychological Association conducted an survey in 2011 regarding the job stress factors. They concluded the top five work stress factors are low salaries, lack of opportunities for growth, too heavy work load, unrealistic job expectations and long working hours.

Common Effects of Stress

On your body: Headache Muscle tension or pain Chest pain Fatigue Change in sex drive Stomach Upset Sleep problems.

On Your Mood : Anxiety Restlessness Lack of motivation Irritability or anger Sadness or depression.

On Your Behaviour : Overeating or under eating Angry outbursts Drug or alcohol abuse Tobacco use Social withdrawal

VIII. EFFECTS OF STRESS

Americans recognise that their stress levels remain high and exceed what they consider to be healthy. So in 2010, American Psychological Association conducted a survey regarding the effects of stress in humans. The various effects are tabulated below. In the above table the various effects of stress on body, mind and behaviour are given. It is clear from the table that stress will affect the physical wellness of human in terms of certain health disorders like headache, chest pain, stomach upset, sleeplessness, fatigue, migraine and cardiac problems. Stress will also change our moods. Gradually behaviour will also change.

Stress is the environmental misfit between the mind and the environment. If an individual is not satisfied with the environment and his reactions, he will get stressed quickly. So the individual will be depressed, will get angry easily, irritable with what had happened and also in the future things, sadness and also lack motivation.

Stress at work is associated with a wide range of adverse impacts on organisations. Workplace stress reduces workplace productivity through increased staff turnover and absenteeism. Other organisational outcomes of workplace stress are higher accident and injury rates.

IX. COPING UP STRATEGIES

Stress management starts with the identification of the reasons or factors for stress in the workplace. The organization should find out the factors causing stress to the employees. This will help them to reduce stress level of the employees.

Managing workplace stress within the organization involves creating a healthy and friendly environment. The environment should be safe. Healthy and secure environment will give the employees a security and happiness. This will reduce half amount of stress among the employees. There should be a clear and effective communication between employer employee. This will reduce the role ambiguity.

Job description and salary structure should be fair. Motivation and team work should be encouraged. The organization should take care of the employees health. It is good to conduct recreational activities to the employees to refresh their minds. The organization should conduct stress audit at equal time interval to measure the stress levels of the employees.

X. CONCLUSION

Coping up strategies are not only for the organizations, it is also applicable to each and every individual personally. If we are stressed we cant manage both professional and personal life in a better way. We will be tensed and it will surely reflect in our work also. We will lack concentration and mind will be worried. Hence the productivity and quality will also affect. So, always be free of mind and feel happy. There should be an optimistic approach in every work. Then the level of stress will be reduced in the individual which will make a greater difference in the workplace also.

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