REDUCING MENTAL STRESS AT WORKPLACE IS A PANACEA TO IMPROVE WORK EFFICIENCY AND OVERALL MOTIVATION

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ABSTRACT

“All work and No Play makes jack a dull boy”, is a very famous proverb that holds true to this day. The notion “Work is Worship” is now an old school thought and the HR needs to think out of their whiplashing techniques to keep their employees motivated. Stress is a primary deterrent that reduces the efficiency amongst employees and creates a huge gap between time spent at the work place vs. time utilized for work. The stress levels have gone beyond a reasonable threshold and organizations will have to finally open their mind-set about the mental status and calibre of their employees.

Stress at workplace not only affects the work life of the individual but also have an adverse effect on their social wellbeing and family members. Unrealistic achievement targets, fear of bad appraisal, efficiency measured in number of hours spent at work and huge workload can lead to interpersonal conflicts and have an impact on their children’s mental health through disrupted parenting.

Positive Stress may be necessary at times to give an adrenaline rush to employees but pushing it beyond a certain point can backfire badly leading to loss of work efficiency through low spiritedness and loss of work days due to more sick days and reduced immunity.

This paper provides practical advice on how to deal with work stress. This research paper is a complete survey of what people are going through at workplaces and how they tackle with their stress life at workplaces and homes. This research aims to strategize how an employer and an employee should reach common grounds and eliminate stress from workplaces.

Keywords: Deterrent, Stress, Workplace, Efficiency, Employee etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

The ever increasing competition amongst organisations and employees to sustain through cutting overhead costs and increasing work pressure has led to immense stress in the day to day life. According to Professor Richard S Lazarus (1966), “Stress occurs when an individual perceives that the demands of an external situation are beyond his/her control. The reports of the American Institute of stress say around 40% of people found their job extremely stressful. Almost one fourth i.e. 25% people find their jobs as a primary source of stress in their lives. About Seventy-five Percent of employees believe that workers currently experience continued increase in their work related stress levels than about a generation ago.

Stress not only affect the wellbeing of the employees but have a major impact on the organizations. According to a survey from Colonial Life, more than 20% of employees spend more than 5 hours each week thinking about their worries and stressor which further adds to their miseries. The Mental Health Foundation claims 12 million adults consult their GP each year due to mental illness, much of it stress related; one in six of the population experiences anxiety (MHF, 2014).

Along with growing stress in the new age period, technology had a differential impact on the employees especially of the old age or the ones who are less skilled with technology and require more time and training to learn new technologies.
There are even cases where employees are unable to identify that the main cause behind their tremendous anxiety levels is due to pressure caused by keeping pace with modern techniques that work demands and force them to spend more time to get the work done that leads to decrease in work efficiency and increased stress. Along with the physical impact, stress causes causes adverse effect on the mental wellbeing.

In the time of heavy workload, job insecurity, deadlines, poor salary, lack of career development, it gets arduous for the employees to deal with their jobs. To reduce the burden of the stress, some of the tactics that an individual can follow are yoga or meditation for half an hour in the busy schedule, movie or an outing once in a week or a nature walk for the refreshment, friendly conversation with the loved ones. Stress management is something that all the employees must know. Stress Management is the ability of the individual to manage the perceived pressure they face in day to day basis. There can be different ways of working on the stress management but if an individual lack it, stress start gets compiling one on the other. Even the organization can do little to deal with the stress of the employees, a weekly session to listen to the problems of their employees, a weekly or a monthly session on the stress management skills.

Even a decent talk with your boss, colleagues, friends or family can do wonders to ease stress. A book is said to be a best friend. It depends on the book you choose, a motivational book on self-literature, or books on business skills can be a source of motivation and encourage you to work smart and excel in your life and job.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research was done on working employees in different organisations and their causes of stress at workplaces, their symptoms- both on the physical and the mental wellbeing, the ways to deal with the stress at workplaces, stress management skills of the individuals. In 2018, Abhijeet Rawal & Saneha Mathre focused in their study to know the reason of the stress among lecturer and the technique of dealing with stress at workplace. They also focused on impact of attitude & behaviour on their productivity in their organisation. This research is conducted on the basis of secondary data and grounded theory. The research study by Sharron SK leung emphasised on mental health and behavioural attitude changes on secondary school teachers and how they cope up with stress management. (Ravindra Kumar) has emphasised in his study that a free socio-political environment be created for our teachers so that they can perform efficiently in a good working environment. He concluded in his study that organisation should create good administration policy for their employees. (Gibbons) he has done comparative study between Ireland and England teachers who are facing stress due to heavy workload. The study revealed that in Ireland 70% of teachers and 57.5% teachers in England are stressed out due to heavy workloads. Kthryn et all pointed out people from different fields like academics, banking, IT, defence, engineering, army, private sectors, etc who were asked to share their experiences in their respective workplaces. The study reveals that 88.1% out of 100% feels that the stress has direct impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of the employees. The study reveals the most notable symptoms of the stress filled life are anxiety attacks, insomnia, short temper, lack of confidence, lack of appetite and lack of concentration. The lack of proper management and healthy environment poses a big challenge for the employees to overcome. Smruti Rekha Sahoo indicates that most people believe that stress at workplaces are more common now than the old days. Some of the reasons found by the responders are more responsibilities, more deliverables and more measurable than there were ever before. People today are very ambitious and competitive and inadvertently indulge into a rat race to get ahead in their lives. This gradually lets the stress seep in and take over the individual and one starts losing control over itself. The changing environment creates distress when the challenge is perceived as a threat to the employee and his/her wellbeing.

Result of study says that some of the strategies such as yoga/meditation, exercise, movies, nature walk, friendly conversation applied for stress management helps. in reducing stress to the great extent.

Some of the main causes of stress at workplaces are:

- Long working hours
- Lack of stress management skills
- Lack of recognition
- Office politics and conflicts
- Lack of work-friendly environment
- Excessive interruption
- Unhealthy relationship with the boss and the colleagues
• Tension of personal problems

Objectives

• To find the level of stress among the employees
• To recognize the main causes of stress at workplaces
• To identify the physical and psychological symptoms caused due to the stress at workplaces
• To understand the role of organization in dealing with the stressful employees
• To study remedial measures that need to be taken to tackle stress both by the employees and the organizations.

III. METHODOLOGY

After deciding to conduct the research study, the first step was taken to decide the various sectors from where the data is supposed to be collected.

Survey- 200 employees were approached for their responses regarding stress at workplaces out of which 150 of the employees expressed that they were experiencing stress in their work life. So the sample size of the study is 150.

The data collection was done through Google forms. The respondents were provided with structured questionnaire and their responses were duly recorded in google forms, after which a thorough study and interpretation was done.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The figure 1.1 represents that out of 200 respondents, 150 respondents agreed that they experience stress at their workplace and 44 respondents agreed that they don’t face any kind of stress in their job. Out of 150 positive respondents, 73% are men and the remaining 27% are women. So, the proceeding survey has been conducted on the respondents who experience stress at workplace.
The figure 1.2 represents the level of job stress faced by employees. More than one fourth respondents i.e. 66 respondents feel moderate stress at work place while other levels of stress also observed in the study. Thirty-six respondents feel severe stress level at workplace. Whereas Twenty-Four Respondents feel Mild and Extreme stress level respectively.

The figure 1.3 represents direct impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of the employees. Out of the total positive respondents, 88.1% agreed that the stress has direct impact on the physical and mental wellbeing while 11.9% do not agree with the above statement.
The figure 1.4 represents symptoms witnessed due to the high stress level at workplace. Out of 200 respondents 92 respondents faced anxiety attacks which is very dangerous for overall health. On the other side many respondents faced different symptoms likewise: 25 respondents faced Insomnia, 11 respondents faced lack of appetite, 21 respondents faced lack of confidence, 24 respondents faced short temper and 27 respondents faced nervousness. At last the graph focused on a person health is affecting due to stress and different symptoms they are facing which is not good at all.

Table: 1.5 Difficulty faced in the job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty faced</th>
<th>Percentage of the respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too much of workload</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor time management</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor working environment</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>office politics and conflicts</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excessive interruption</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 1.5 represents percentage of respondents facing difficulties in their job due to stress. About 26.1% of the respondents feel that even after working in the same organization for a long period, they still feel the lack of recognition. About 25.4% agree that they get excessive interruption during their working hours. Some other factors like office politics and conflicts (13.5%), poor working environment (9.4%), poor time management (16.7%) and increased workload (8.6%) add more misery during the working hours.

Table: 1.6 rating the factors causing stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors causing stress in percentage</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor salary</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boring work</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deadlines</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of career development</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table 1.6 represents factors which are increasing stress and this table also reveals the preferences of the factors. Preference 1 is highly impacted factor and factor five is the lowest impact factor. More than one third percent (35.8) respondents feel that they are highly overburdened. In another factor one third or 33 percent respondents feel that they poor salary act as a motivation damper at work while 24.8 percent respondents feel that their work is boring. In another factor 32.4 % respondents faced difficulties to match deadlines. At last, Few other factors like Lack of Career development, No support from management and Feeling Powerless is 12.4 %, 13.3% & 14.3 % respectively.

Table No. 1.7: Employees suffering from the health problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health problems in %</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>occasionally</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Blood pressure</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly sleep</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>31.56</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor concentration</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the present data, it can be concluded that the stress at workplace affects more on mental health issues like headache, fatigue, disturbed sleep and poor concentration. 37% of the respondents say that they occasionally feel lack of concentration in their work. About 28.4 % of the respondents occasionally feel depression and 33% of them occasionally feel fatigue. About 33.3% of the respondents occasionally or sometimes get headache.

IV. SUGGESTIONS

Employees are the core responsibility of an organization. The problems of the employees should also be the problem of the organization. Few little steps can motivate employees. Organisation should provide Social and moral support, should listen to the employee, Friendly environment, stress free leisure activities, outings, discussion regarding issues faced, more fun and adventure activities, provide refreshments, more field functionaries, enough freedom to operate, reduce work time, create pleasant workplace, optimise work timings, No politics, Proper organization Structure and equal opportunity for growth to every employee. Along with the organization and the boss, it’s also the employee’s responsibility to cooperate with the management and give their 100%. The role of the employers is to make a work-friendly environment.

V. CONCLUSION

The Study describes core demands that the employees expect from the organization for social and moral support, create a stress free environment, accept delays and flaws to some extent and assure career promotion, proper hikes and staff management. This study also believes in employee’s contribution to make the organization work-friendly and stress-free. Research suggests that if both, employees and the organization start working with proper coordination and dedication, then they may succeed in making a stress-free working environment. This survey study answered the research problems and respondents are aware that the stress can impact both their physical and psychological health. Most of the employees have the idea to tackle their stress at workplace. They agree with the concept of working together i.e the organization and the employees, both have to give their 100% to make the work-friendly environment. There are various factors that lead to stress as mentioned above. Employees have to be very careful in dealing with the stress at the right time so that it doesn’t affect them physically.
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