"STRESS MANAGEMENT: IT'S ROLE FOR EMOTION CONTROL AND EMOTIONAL RUMINATION"

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ABSTRACT

In everyday life, we are subjected to a wide range of pressures. We also have a wide range of resources and strategies for coping with pressure. Sometimes we will cope well and will not feel that the pressure is having any adverse effect upon us. At other times we will have difficulty in dealing with the situation and that is when we may use the term "stress".

There has been an increasing belief that the experience of stress necessarily has undesirable consequences for health. It has become a common assumption, if not a "cultural truism", that it is associated with the impairment of health. Despite this, the evidence is that the experience of stress does not necessarily have pathological sequelae. Many of the person's responses to that experience, both psychological and physiological, are comfortably within the body's normal homeostatic limits and, while taxing the psychophysiological mechanisms involved, need not cause any lasting disturbance or damage. However, it is also obvious that the negative emotional experiences which are associated with the experience of stress detract both from the general quality of life and from the person's sense of well-being. Thus the experience of stress, while necessarily reducing that sense of well-being, does not inevitably contribute to the development of the physical or psychological disorder

Over the past three decades, there has been a growing belief in all sectors of employment that the stress at work has undesirable consequences for the health and safety of individuals and for the health of their organizations. This belief has been reflected both in public and media interest and in increasing concern voiced by the trade unions, professional and scientific bodies.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Truism, Pathological Sequelae,*

INTRODUCTION

Industries in Pune

The fortes of Pune's industrial sector are its engineering and automobile industries. The industrial output of the Pune region include products like pharmaceuticals, electrical appliances, electronic instruments, diesel engines, electric fans, machine tools, air compressors, chemicals, dye-stuff, sugar machinery, scooters, cars, trucks, tempos, trailers, paper, paper boards, cables, rubber goods, glass, plastics, TV sets etc. In the small-scale sector, in addition to the traditional lines of manufacture, such as brass and copperware, furniture, toys, handloom, hosiery, leather articles, dyeing and printing, a

number of units produce chemicals, soap, pharmaceuticals, electrical equipment's, sports goods, stationery goods, printing, engineering, scientific instruments, electronic equipment machine tools etc. Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation is a well known industrial belt in Asia, prominently known as an industrial city due to companies like Telco (Now Tata Motors), Bajaj Auto Ltd., Premier, Bajaj Tempo Ltd., Daimler Chrysler India Pvt Ltd (formerly Known as Mercedes Benz), Sandvik Asia, Forbes Marshall, etc. Industrialization of this city started way back in 1954 when Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd. first came into existence. In 2006-07 according to Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, the total number of industries is 6213.

The Classification is as under: - (source: http://www.pcmcindia.in/industry.asp)

Large Scale Industries - 56

Medium Scale Industries - 632

Small Scale Industries – 5525 (of which 2800 are in MIDC)

Since the beginning of humankind, stress has been with us. Every generation, since then, had suffered stressing experiences caused by many factors that change with the time. The stress that our ancestors suffered for taking care of themselves from dangers like wild animals is not the same we experience for getting late to the job. But the results are very similar: the mind and the body experience an increase in their activity. This in not bad, the real problem comes when the danger or stressing moment ends and we still experience that state of warning, in our minds and bodies. In other words, we can say there are two kinds of stress:

- A good stress: necessary when we face any kind of danger

- A bad stress: when the danger has ended and our mind is still in alert state

The consequences of stress are many: from headaches to mental illnesses.

Some situations in life are stress-provoking, but it is our thoughts about situations that determine whether they are a problem for us. How we perceive a stress-provoking event and how we react to it determines its impact on our health. We may be motivated and invigorated by the events in our lives, or we may see some as "stressful" and respond in a manner that may have a negative effect on our physical, mental and social well-being. If we always respond in a negative way our health and happiness may suffer. By understanding ourselves and our reactions to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively.

Many books and articles by authors of repute were reviewed. According to various authors (quoted in detail in the thesis), the basic sources of stress are

- *Physical*--adolescence, illness, aging, accidents, poor nutrition, too little sleep

- *Mental*--how we think about ourselves and the world

- *Social*--money, job, disagreements, demands, losses, family problems

- *Environment*--Weather, noise, traffic

- *Emotional*--fears and anxieties

- *Chemical*--treated drugs, pesticides, pollution, nicotine, excess caffeine

  Three stages of the stress reaction are

- Alarm

- Resistance

- Exhaustion

An Introduction to Stress

In everyday life, we are subjected to a wide range of pressures. We also have a wide range of resources and strategies for coping with pressure. Sometimes we will cope well and will not feel that the pressure is having any adverse effect upon us. At other times we will have difficulty in dealing with the situation and that is when we may use the term "stress". I has come across some models on stress developed by researchers of which few are given below
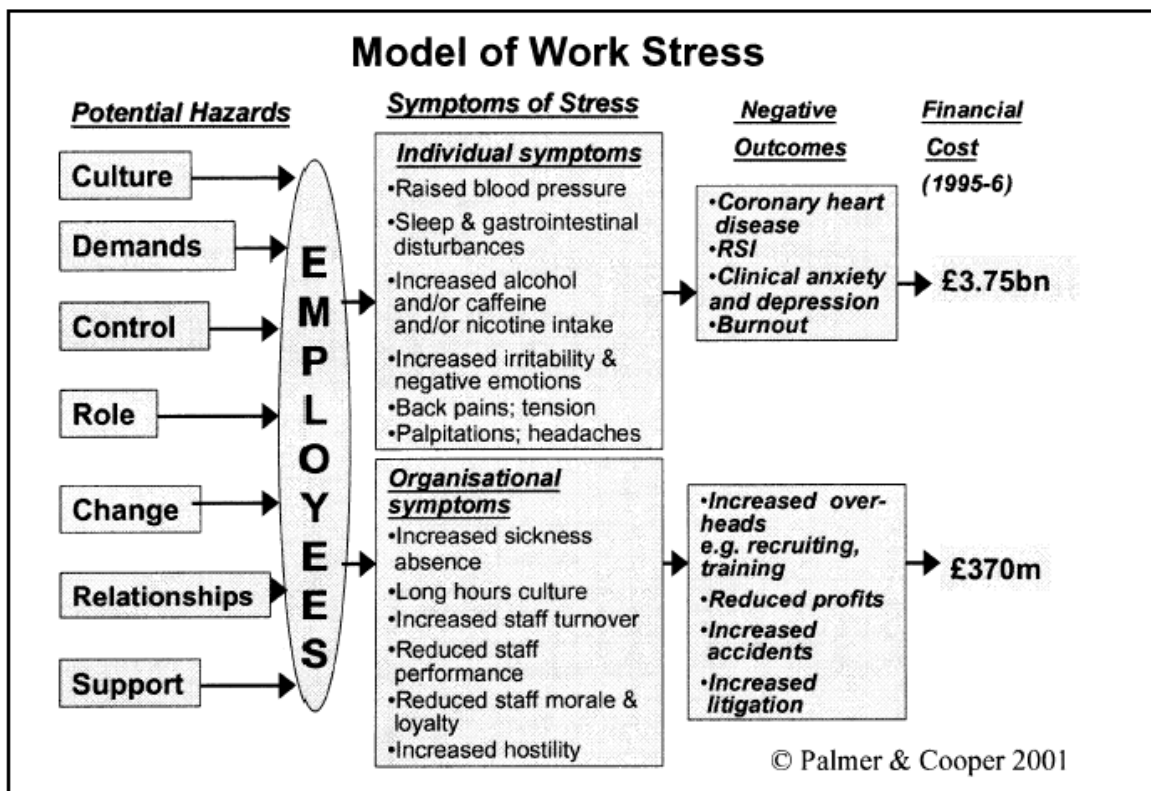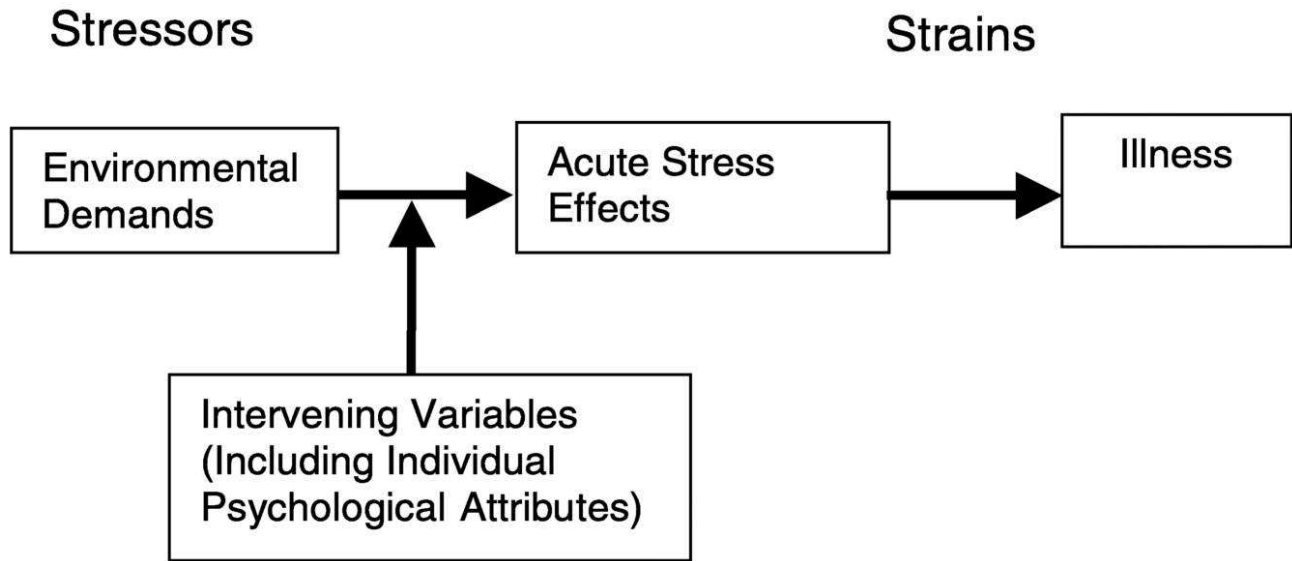

Figure 1: Model of Work Stress

Stressors   Strains

Figure 2: Generic Psychosocial Stress Model. from Sauter and Swanson (1996:6)

In reality, any situation that puts us under pressure is technically "stressful". Stress is not necessarily unpleasant or harmful. When we are able to cope satisfactorily with the stress and find it to be positive in its effect, we tend to use other words - such as "stimulation" or "challenge". For the purpose of this introduction, we will use the term "stress" to mean the reaction we have to those pressures, which are harmful, unpleasant or disabling.

In this regard, a simple but accurate definition of stress is: "Stress occurs when the pressures upon us exceed our resources to cope with those pressures." It follows, therefore, that we can attempt to tackle stress either by reducing the pressures or by increasing our coping resources - or, indeed, a combination of both strategies.

In Indian context, the problem of stress is mostly treated as an individual problem, whenever we work in an organization the remuneration we receive is treated as enough to tackle with all problems arising out of our lifestyles. We as a manager generally do not accept that stress exists with us and it also creates many temporary and permanent problems for us. Companies also many times spend money on recreation or luxury holidays or in some cases meditation camps or for yoga classes. In both, the cases above us as an individual or as an organization do not accept and understand that stress exists at work. The researcher strongly feels that if an attempt is made to really understand the route cause of stress at work then there can be more pinpointed solutions made available. For example, if my stress is because of interpersonal relations the yoga session is not going to help but the learning of interpersonal skills may be more effective. In many European countries, industries pay compensation for the stress. They realize that the stress and the impact of stress on a human being are important. They have means to major stress and then compensate. India in the process of becoming superpower must understand and handle this issue of stress and reduce the impact of stress on human beings. This will help increase in belongingness and also the productivity of persons.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To study the occupational stress and stress management in industries.

- To understand the existing managerial stress and its impact

- To identify the common causes of stress within in industries.

- To understand the strategies adopted by the Managers to cope up with stress.

- To understand the role played by the organization in reducing managerial stress

Hypotheses

- Managers having a longer length of service in the same organization are able to manage stress.

- Managers feel stressed irrespective of their age group.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- A researcher had made efforts to gather data from the executives / managers working in large scale companies in Pimpri – Chinchwad Industrial belt. The HR/ HRD department was contacted and the questionnaires were given to the managers / executives through / in consultation with the Personal/ HRD department.

- Out of the fifty-four organizations listed as large scale organizations as listed on MCCIA/ PCMC in 2003-04 the researcher had contacted 35 companies with a request that the respondents to the questionnaire would be identified by the organization and the questionnaire be filled by managers, executives, a senior executive of the organization. Out of 35 companies contacted 23 companies returned completed questionnaires and the total number of filled up questionnaire received was 117 (one hundred seventeen).

- Taking into consideration the practicability the researcher had used non-probability sampling procedure because they satisfactorily meet the sampling objectives. The researcher had limited objective and the nature of the research was exploratory.

- In the process of collecting the primary data, the researcher had informally interviewed managerial persons in the organization i.e. HR department and tried to understand the approach of HR department towards Stress and Managers. In four companies researcher was able to discuss with top official i.e. General Manager and obtain his views on the problem of stress faced by their managerial employees.

- Tool for data collection was questionnaire. A questionnaire was designed and pilot testing was carried out. The final format of the questionnaire contained section A that was related to stress at work wherein it had 31 statements which the respondents were to respond by selecting the given options; the options were on a four-point scale lowest being never and highest being always. Section B had 34 statements which were related to physical and mental stress which the respondents were to respond by selecting the given options; the options were on three-point scale lowest being not true and highest being very true. Section C had 25 statements which were related to coping with stress which the respondents were to respond by selecting the given options; the options were on four point scale lowest being never and highest being always.

- Hypotheses were tested using statistical tools.

Primary & Secondary Data Collection

- Primary data was collected through questionnaire method by distributing and collecting data from executives and managers of various large scale companies in Pimpri- Chinchwad Industrial Area. The questionnaires were distributed in the large scale organizations and then collected back after being filled up by managers.

- The secondary data was collected from various articles published in the journals, magazines, research papers published in research journals and also by the institutions like International Stress Management Association (ISMA), IIM (Ahmedabad), and other national & international institutions who work on stress, few websites are also found to be publishing literature and results of surveys conducted on the stress problem. The reports of international labor organization (ILO) Government & non-government organizations on stress.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

- In the course of attempting to answer the research questions, it emerged from the responses of the interviewees that stress was prevalent.

- The researcher observed that the organizations do not make any systematic/ scientific efforts to understand the reasons of stress for their managers. The solutions which are found taking into consideration the stress are general. The root cause of stress needs to be identified to find the solution.

- Managers also avoid showing / expressing / accepting that they are having stress; they just want their top management to see how they work for long hours and on holidays for getting better package or post. Awareness about the effect of stress on individual and on the organization must be made known to the top Managers of the organization.

Table 1: Designation wise Respondents

Designation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AM	52	44.4	44.4	44.4
	M	6	5.1	5.1	49.6
	SM	13	11.1	11.1	60.7
	AGM	6	5.1	5.1	65.8
	DGM	26	22.2	22.2	88.0
	GM	14	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	117	100.0	100.0	

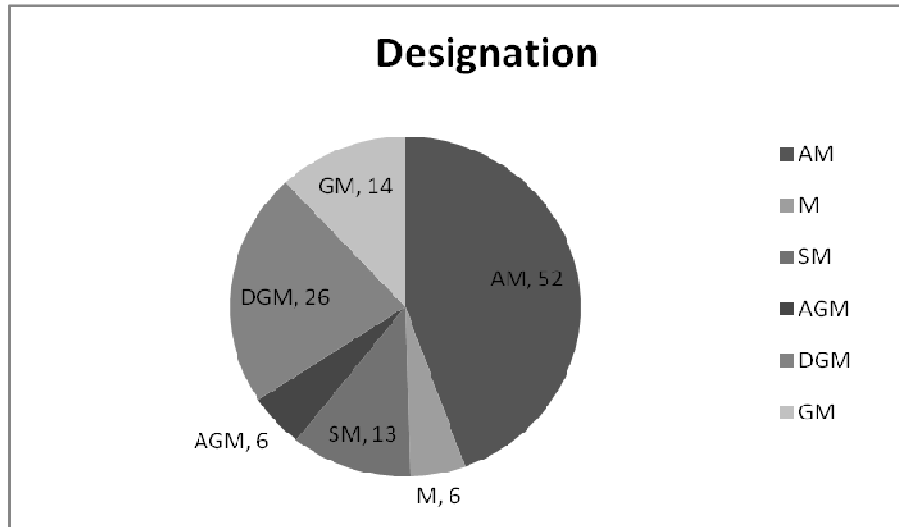44.4 % respondents were from Asst Manager Category, 22 % respondents were from Deputy General Manager Cadre
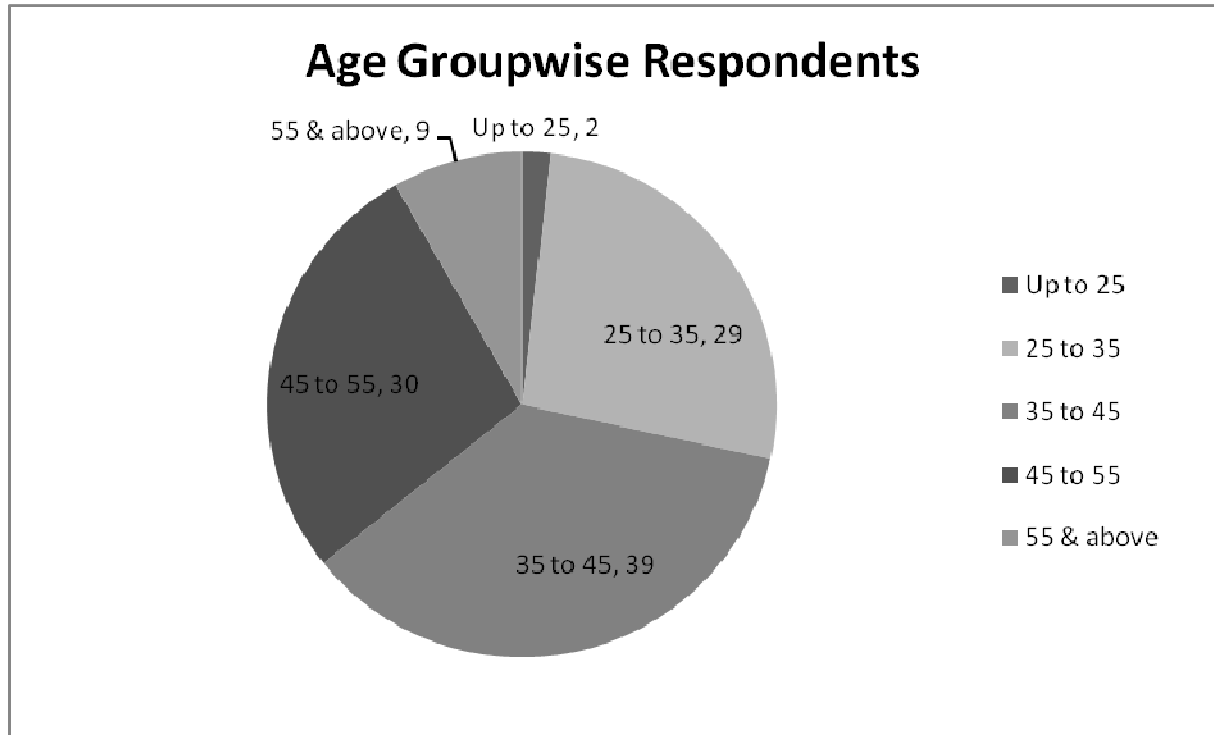
Figure 3: Designation

Table 2: Designation VS Too Much Work to Handle

		Too Much Work to Handle								Total	
		Never		Occasionally		Very Often		Always		No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Designation	AM	11	21.2%	15	28.8%	16	30.8%	10	19.2%	52	100.0%
	M	1	16.7%	2	33.3%	3	50.0%			6	100.0%
	SM	3	23.1%	6	46.2%	1	7.7%	3	23.1%	13	100.0%
	AGM	1	16.7%	2	33.3%	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	6	100.0%
	DGM	5	19.2%	12	46.2%	4	15.4%	5	19.2%	26	100.0%
	GM	4	28.6%	6	42.9%	2	14.3%	2	14.3%	14	100.0%
Total		25	21.4%	43	36.8%	28	23.9%	21	17.9%	117	100.0%

- It can be observed that respondents at higher post occasionally felt stress due to work pressure

- Higher the post higher the work pressure

Table 3: Age Wise Respondents

Age GroupWise Respondents	Number
Up to 25	2
25 to 35	29
35 to 45	39
45 to 55	30
55 & above	9

Figure 4: Age Groupwise Respondents

Table 4: Age Group VS Too Much Work to Handle

		Too Much Work to Handle								Total	
		Never		Occasionally		Very often		Always		No	%
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Age Group	Age upto 25	0	.0%	2	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	2	100.0%
	Age between 25 to 35 yrs	3	10.3%	10	34.5%	10	34.5%	6	20.7%	29	100.0%
	Age Between 35 to 45 yrs	5	12.8%	14	35.9%	13	33.3%	7	17.9%	39	100.0%
	Age between 45 to 55 yrs	11	36.7%	11	36.7%	4	13.3%	4	13.3%	30	100.0%
	Age 55 and above yrs	5	55.6%	4	44.4%	0	.0%	0	.0%	9	100.0%
Total		24	22.0%	41	37.6%	27	24.8%	17	15.6%	109	100.0%

- For respondents in age group 25 to 45 the work load problem is prominent

- More the age lesser the workload stress problem

- It can be seen that Managers learn managing their workload as the age grows

Data Analysis

- Data analysis revealed that five major reasons for having stress at work are

- Length of hours worked or unsociable working hours

- Insufficient resources to do the job properly

- A lack of supportive interaction

- Lack of communication within the organization

- Many recent changes in working practices

- Managers feel that following five major reasons add to stress because they are the hurdles in their personal development

- Too much work to handle

- Insufficient opportunity for personal development

- Insufficient time to Complete job /Task

- Feeling surrounded by people who aren't "your type"

- Lack of opportunity to use skill or initiative

- The five major reasons managers feel that stress affects them

- Doing several things at a time

- Work life leaves no room for outside interests/ hobbies

- Respondents do not do as many enjoyable things these days

- Respondents choose to keep working even when they feel ill

- They often feel tense and irritated

- Among the respondents, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (variables V_I age of the respondent & Variable V_2) showed there was a relation between age and job satisfaction, workload and opportunity to use the skill.

- There was an association between the length of service (tenure) in the organization and stress.

- The test reveals that there is an association between educational qualification & stress.

- The association was found between age and mental and physical stress of the most important factors affecting mental and physical wellbeing are hypertension, blood pressure & stomach related problems.

- Commonly used coping strategies among the young managers were found to be exercise, time management & healthy diet.

- The educational factor does not have any correlation with the effects of stress on the managers.

- Higher the educational qualification more is the use of thinking through. They try to develop an interest outside work and delegate more to reduce work stress.

  It is revealed that senior managers are more aligned with the organization culture and manage time more sensibly by prioritizing their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings the following recommendations are suggested:-

- Visible measures should be taken as regards health and safety to show a general concern for health and welfare of all employees, with sensible work practices, targets, and training where appropriate to ensure that employees do not feel overwhelmed by what is expected of them.

- It is recommended that the organization should start working with its intention to accept and tackle the problem of stress.

- The HR department should develop and publish a policy document on stress at work

- Top management should formulate measurable and achievable objectives; communication level with managerial staff should be increased during the period of change within the organization.

- The top management should revisit the schedules of work and try to increase the flexibility in timing after due discussion with Managers

- The managers who are sincere but need additional training to upgrade their performance be supported with required training.

- The organization should decide suitable coping strategies in consultation with managers i.e. counseling, social support training, meditation, communication skills, etc.

- Individuals are also required to understand their work and life objectives, necessary training for correct time balance between home and work be given.

- The young managers should communicate more freely when they feel stressed with senior managers.

- The management should encourage the managers to upgrade their educational qualification.

- In addition to the regular health checkup, proper counseling should be undertaken by the management

- The food served in by the canteen be monitored.

- An organization should undertake a stress audit and subsequently direct the resources to reduce the climate or sources of stress.

Suggested Strategy for Combating Work Stress

Two Key Points

- Work stress has multiple causes, and so has to have multiple solutions

- Interventions with the individual Manager alone will not solve the problems of occupational stress. The organizational change also has to occur.

Three Levels of Change

Individual, Small groups & Organizational/Structural

A well-designed stress reduction program may address all three levels. But of the three, the organizational level is by far the most important.

Personal Intervention Strategies: these strategies are designed to help the individual employee cope more effectively with stress. For example diet, exercise, cognitive techniques, assertiveness training, employee assistance programs (EAPs), relaxation training

Small group interventions: These strategies are intended to help managers develop more social support both at work and at home. For example Executive training, family counseling, team building exercise, social gathering, etc.

Structural or organizational change: These strategies are directed towards improving the conditions of work. For example flexible timings, reducing traveling stress, improving career ladders, modifying the use of training and technology, training & development

CONCLUSIONS

- The present study is addressed to understand the stress phenomenon among executives in work organizations with a hope to further the knowledge in this area while overcoming some of the problems that have remained unresolved.

- Employers can help by making the workplace a place with open communication, offering employee assistance program (EAPs), truly listening to employee concerns and offering training events that address actual concerns for growth within the business and for the individual, having realistic expectations for performance.

- Employees can help by having realistic expectations of their own responsibility for growth and development. While employers can make a huge difference in the workplace atmosphere, using stress management strategies do it yourself exercise.

- Workplace stress management is a team effort: employers have a responsibility to offer program that can help employees to learn practical skills, but individuals must actually learn these skills and put them into practice.

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