Stress Management: An Overview

Nilakshi Roy Medhi
Assistant Professor, NERIM Group of Institution, Guwahati-22, India
E-mail: niluroymedhi@gmail.com

Abstract: Stress is the reaction people undergo due to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them. Both positive and negative events in one’s life can be stressful. However, major life changes are the greatest contributors of stress for most people. They place the greatest demand on resources for coping. In other words, stress management is a complex series of reactions both psychological and physical, in response to demanding or threatening reactions. Stress plays a pivotal role to figure out the causes because everyone feels and responds to stress differently. To some, stress is normal and even useful while for some it results into too many problems. Managing stress can help if one needs to work hard or react quickly. The study is mainly undertaken to highlight the concept of stress, positive and negative stress, types of stress, occupational stress and symptoms of stress have been adequately focused.

Keywords: Stress management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress, quite simply, is the way one reacts, physically and emotionally to changes taking place. Stress may be the sense of involvement and concentration one feels when faced with a new and challenging situation as well as a vague sense of anxiety with respect to a particular development with which people are not familiar. Stress has been viewed as independent perspective adopting either a stimulus-based stress as the independent variable or responsive based stress as the dependent variable. The stimulus-based model views stress in response to these agents. Responsive on the other hand may be psychological and/or behavioral theory. It is an intangible phenomenon in terms of dependent variable that is a response to disturbing stimuli.

In other words, some stress can be good, and some can be bad. It is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Moreover, stress is associated with demands and resources. Demands are responsibilities, pressures, obligations, and even uncertainties that individuals face in the workplace. Resources are things within an individual’s control that can be used to resolve the demands.

II. TYPES OF STRESS

Stress can be of three different types:

1) Physical stress :

It indicates a situation that is to be faced physically. Physical stress triggers the body’s fight or flight biochemical mechanism. Once the stressful situation is overcome, the body returns to normal condition. But in some cases, physical stress may make the person physically ill or incapacitated who fails to overcome it. Under certain circumstances, particularly where the threat or challenge was completely unknown and very dreadful, physical threat might also give birth to mental stress.

2) Mental stress :

Mental stress is much more complicated, because it is hard to identify and usually involves complex issues which results in unacceptable behaviors and expectations that are difficult to view objectively. Moreover, one feels mentally stressed when he loses control over his sense and feels vulnerable in any situation. It mainly arises when one feels threatened with respect to his values, physical or financial security, his well being or other key aspects of his life. These are pressures from which one feels there is no escape. To some extent, mental stress may also result from possibilities of change. Regardless of whether the change is positive or negative, major changes in our lives are stressful.

3) Emotional stress :

It is the type of stress one feels when it comes from something that disturbs his sense of attachment to some values beliefs or objects. Emotional stress is very difficult to cope with because it can unsettle the effected person in one or more of the four basic areas, firstly, especially when something threatens our beliefs, values, security or well being; secondly, trying to adjust to change; thirdly, one lose control and feel vulnerable and helpless; lastly, ones’ expectations are not realized.

Whether the stress is a physical, mental or emotional ultimately it affects the stressed person’s health and efficiency.

III. SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

There are several signs and symptoms that you may notice when you are experiencing stress. These signs and symptoms fall into four categories: Feelings, Thoughts, Behavior, and Physiology.

Stress may be experienced in any one or more of the following
In a nutshell it can be said although the term stress has negative connotations, yet it has its positive impact too. Stress can also be either positive or negative.

A. **POSITIVE STRESS**

Stress helps us to concentrate, focus and perform and can often help us reach peak efficiently. Workers in an organization seek to work and give their best when they are under pressure. When the challenge has been met, they take the time to relax and enjoy their achievements. Challenging situation provides scope for development of one’s skill and performance, thus help them to grow.

B. **NEGATIVE STRESS:**

Stress becomes negative for those who do not find the scope for relaxation, as challenge continues to come one after another without any break or providing any scope for preparation to face them. Stress can also be negative if the people on whom the challenge has been thrust are not technically, emotionally and environmentally equipped to face it or too much uncertainty with respect to their well being is attached to the problem.

C. **OCCUPATIONAL STRESS**

Occupational stress is related to one’s activities centering his/her career, economic status, position in the society and finally their earning of livelihood. Occupational stress has always been there since the beginning of large scale production. But now a day occupational stress has become a major industrial concern all over the world. A new organizational reality is emerging on the industrial landscape and it is being shaped by a set of economic, technological and occupational forces that span international boundaries. It has already been noticed that all of the human impacts of change are not negative but it is almost universally true that, whether it is individual or group responding to change is to experience it as a threat, which in turn leads to varying degrees of rigidity on the part of the individual, group or organization.

Most research tends to focus on the five occupational stressors (Valerie J. Sutherland and Cary L. Cooper 1993). These are:

- Stress in the job itself; stressors intrinsic to the job include workload, poor physical conditions, low decision making latitude etc.
- Role based stress; associated with role conflict, role ambiguity and responsibility.
- Relationships with others; interpersonal demands are potential stressors.
- Career development, including under or over promotion and lack of job security.
- Organizational structure and climate, this includes restrictions on behavior and the politics and culture of the organizations as source of stress.

Another important factor that brings about psychological stress is contradiction between job
requirement and family requirement. Large number of employees, both men and women, feel stressed and dissatisfied in occupation only because of the fact that they cannot give much time to their families for proper upbringing of their children or having the pleasure of family life.

But in new organizational set up, with the industries opening globally, the balancing of demand of industries with the mental and physical ability of workers is increasingly becoming difficult. Hence, over the last few decades occupational stress has emerged as one of the important aspects of manpower management both in the developed and the developing countries. The instances of stressed workers committing suicide, losing mental balance and even going to the extent of attacking the employers in and outside the place of work are taking place in different parts of the world.

The human impact of excessive stress from the new organizational reality may become manifest in the increased risk of human illness, both physically and psychologically. Behavioral stress is the third form of human distress of concern to people in occupational work environments and associated with misguided attempts to cope with stress or traumatic stress events. Violence may be manifest either verbally or physically, and a considerable percentage of patients with stress-related problems may have suicidal thoughts, which are not necessarily manifest

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