EFFECT OF STRESS ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE AND APPROACHES TO STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Over a million of people are affected by stress which results into serious health hazards and decrease in the productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of the employees. It is important to tackle the stress at the right time so that it does not affect the individual professionally as well as personally. Many individuals are able to tackle the stress by being optimistic in the most trying situations but some are not good at managing things in the crisis situations which affects the working relations as well as the working environment at large. Situations that are uncontrollable and unpredictable are most likely to cause stress in individuals. Meeting the time deadlines, job insecurity, wok-life imbalance, poor working conditions, superior- subordinate conflicts, workplace politics etc are some of the events that cause anxiety and stress among the employees. Thus, it becomes important on the part of an individual as well as of the organization to identify the factors causing stress and try to handle them as early as possible so that it will not affect the employees' health and performance. Personal as well as professional well- being directly impacts the stress level of the employee. Employees as well as organizations at large should be aware about the negative impacts of stress so that corrective actions can be taken at the right time. It becomes very crucial for the organization to identify factors which hamper the productivity of the employees. After identification of the problem, some changes should be undertaken to introduce a cooperative work environment. Providing training and development programmes will equip the employees with the ability to solve the problems in a stress free way. Due to increased globalization, markets are developing at a very fast speed and employees find it very difficult to cope with the changes at such a fast pace. Some employees resist changes as they are not flexible in their operation which leads to decrease in the efficiency and effectiveness of employees. Employees should accept the changes with open mindedness and help the other team members to adapt with the changing times and situations.

There should be open communication between the superior and the subordinate so that they both are able to set an achievable target and are able to discuss the problem in order to avoid any conflict and misunderstanding at the workplace. Stress has negative impact on the emotional, intellectual and interpersonal functioning of an individual. Employers as well as employees should try and maintain a cooperative and healthy working environment where they will be able to achieve the individual as well as organizational goals and objectives.

Uncontrolled stress has severe effects on the mind and body of an individual such as headache, high blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety, depression, weak immune system, heart disease etc. Stress also leads to uncontrolled an eating habit which leads to obesity, alcoholism, drug

addiction, and smoking. Thus, it becomes very important to notice the alarming stages of stress in employees. These can be loss of interest in work, decrease in productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, absenteeism, work accidents, conflicts with peers, subordinates and superiors. Identifying these factors and taking corrective measures at the earliest helps in combating stress among employees.

Organization can take the following steps to reduce the stress level of employees:
- Problem Solving: Employees as well as employers should try and find a common solution to a problem in hand. They should create an atmosphere of open communication and feedback where both of them can put their problems in front of each other and try to achieve a common solution that will interest both the parties.

- Time Management: Employees should try and manage their time and set their work and life priorities so that it will not lead to last minute hassles.

- Training : Organizations should promote training and development programmes for the employees so that they are able to understand the negative impact of stress on their professional and personal well being. Training programmes will help them dealing with the stress in an effective manner.

- Open- Communication and Feedback: Organization and management should promote an atmosphere of open communication and feedback where employees will feel comfortable in sharing their problems. Feedback should be provided to the employees in a constructive manner so that they can rectify their mistakes and work for a better results.

- Regular health check-ups: Organization should promote regular health check-ups for the employees so that they are able to consult doctors and get their disease diagnosed and treated at an early stage. Regular health check- ups will help in making an employee aware about his body and mind. He/ she will be able to understand the do's and dont's for a healthy mind and body.

- Career Opportunities: Management of an organization should provide better career opportunities to its employees so that they feel satisfied and motivated to work for the betterment of the organization. Due recognition and promotion should be provided to the employees so that they do not look for other career options which will reduce job turnover and absenteeism in the organization.

- Working Conditions: Organizations should try and create favorable working conditions for its employees where they are able to work efficiently and effectively.

- Extra curricular activities: Management of an organization should promote extra curricular activities for the overall development of mind and body of the employees.

Yoga, meditation, table tennis, swimming, badmintion etc help in keeping the body and mind relaxed and stress free.

Thus, in today's competitive world everyone is dealing with stress because of the increased demand and pressure from the environment. But uncontrolled stress leads to serious health ailments which affects the personal as well as professional life. Stress reduces the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of employees and might lead to work accidents. Thus, it becomes all the more important on the part of an individual as well as the management of the organization to develop strategies and programmes to deal with the stress level of employees. Efforts should be made to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding where employees can share their problems. Training should be provided to the employees so that they can develop an optimistic attitude towards life which will help them in solving their problems in hand. Employees should try and maintain a proper work-life balance so that they are able to meet the expectation of the professional as well as their personal lives. Identifying the stress factors and developing strategies to cope with the stress is the need of the hour for both the employees as well as the organization.

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