

# Stressors and the causes of stress



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

According to the labour force survey and the NIOSH report 40 of employee reported for stressful work environment Stress. org, 2000. Stress has become an unwanted but an integral part of jobs among all organisations. Increased stress level of employees is caused by growing competition. The financial crisis and recession of 2008, made organisations, to look into efficient use of resources and cost cutting, thus going through restructuring, downsizing and mergers. This results in an unhinged employee-employer relationship causing high stress among employees; it is also observed that stress affects job performance, employee's loyalty towards the organisation and company's ability to grow (Manzoor, Awan, and Mariam, 2012). Uncertainty and insecurity create fear of doing wrong and being dismissed in people. They may work for hour but their work would not productive and be more prone to mistakes (Losyk, 2006). Stress and work problems can lead employees to alcoholism and drug abuse; can also cause health problems like hypertension and cardiovascular problems. (Imtiaz and Ahmad, 2009). Hence, it is very important for organisations to be concerned about stress and burnout at work; and how they can use HR practices to reduce negative effects of stress. The report would reflects on the causes and effects of stress, and techniques of managing stress; and how beneficial it would be for the Schwartz Group to start stress management programmes for employees.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF STRESS**

Stress can be categorised into “ eustress” and “ distress”.

“ Eustress” is an encouraging stress. Eustress is caused by unceasing accomplishment and greater expectancy from oneself. This is developed by

meeting threatening circumstances with the sense of exigency and need for existence. (Dhanapal et al, 2011).

“ Distress” is an undesirable stress. It can be related to work intensification which caused due to failures and negative environment at workplace. Intensification is the effort by an employee put into their jobs. Work intensification is usually perceived to have negative outcomes to an employee. (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010)

<http://unlockingyourlife.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/human-function-curve.jpg>

(Dhanapal et al, 2011).

## **STRESSORS: THE CAUSES OF STRESS**

The causes of stress are called stressors. These are surrounding conditions that have a physical and psychological demand on an individual. Stressors can be present in work setting or in the other life activities. Following are the main type of work related stressors

### **Role related stressors**

It takes into consideration that there are various roles in the organisation that effects individual work experience and reaction. There three types of role related stressors. (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984)

Role conflict is the incongruity between job expectations related to an individual's role. This a result of inter-role conflict and when individual are supervised by more than one head. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

Role ambiguity lack of clarity in terms of work to be done from one's role in the organisation. It causes to low job perception and leads to stress in situations like working in a joint venture. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

Work intensification one of the major stressors causing distress. It refers to the work pressure associated to working extra hour and working more intensively than normal. (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010)

### **Interpersonal stressor**

The stress generated in individual by working in teams and employees being forced to interact with co-workers. Bad superiors, office politics, sexual harassment, workplace violence and bullying are part of interpersonal conflict. Employee experiencing these offensive, intimidating, or humiliating behaviour that degrades and ridicules another individual at work generally have symptoms of distress generating fear and anxiety. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

### **Organisational and physical environment environmental stressors**

The alteration of psychological contract, reducing job security, restructuring and downsizing may create high level of stress among the employee. Physical stressors in the workplace environment can be loud noise, poor lighting and safety hazards. These physical stressor can take a toll on the employee as they need to take extra efforts to concentrate on task at hand. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

## **CONSEQUENCES OF DISTRESS**

Stressor after a certain point start to show negative impact on employees, it has effects on the physiological, psychological and behavioural aspects of an individuals.

### **Physiological consequences**

Stress affecting the body of an individual. People experiencing stress often complain about headaches, muscle pain and back problems. These ailments are attributing to muscle contraction, when stress takes toll on a person. Prolonged stress may lead to cardiovascular problem such as strokes, heart attacks and high blood pressure in individuals. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

### **Psychological consequences**

Stress affects individual psychologically, individual show moodiness, depression, emotional fatigue and can be related to job burnout. Mcshane & VON Glinow, (2009), p. 211 defines burnout is “ the process of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment resulting from prolonged exposure to stress.” Burnouts are predominantly caused by role related and interpersonal stressors. Emotional exhaustion, cynicism and reduced personal efficacy are symptoms of burnouts. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

### **Behavioural Consequences**

When stress start showing signs of distress, there is fall in job performance and workplace accidents are common. High stress levels have symptoms of memory loss, impair people of making effective judgment and act

appropriately. Employees who are stressed tend to remain absent, as it makes people sick and absenteeism is a coping mechanism by refraining from going into stressful environment. The basic instinct to cope with stress is through fight or flight. Remaining absent is a form of flight as one temporarily withdraws from the tense circumstances so that there is a break to revitalise the body and mind. Companies may attempt to reduce absenteeism, by applying stringent rules and helps employees to avoid exhaustion. Sometimes, workplace stressors escalate this conflict in the employees into more dangerous levels of hostility at work and seldom are the causes of workplace violence. Employees behave aggressively, when they treated unethically, and frustration level escalate beyond personal control. (Mcshane & VON Glinow, 2009)

## **MANAGING STRESS**

It has been discussed that there are various type of stressors present in an organisation, and the harmful effect of these stressors has Physiological, Psychological and Behavioural consequences on an employee. Hence, it is important for organisation to evaluate and help employee manage stress, and effectively reduce the influence of stressors over an employee.

### **Time management training**

Employee are under a lot of stress for completing work on time, time management is very important to divide work between the span of time given to complete work. This helps to priorities work based on urgency, deal with distractions, getting things done by overcoming procrastination and individual should learn to say no to task and does not need immediate attention. (Losyk, 2006)

## **Revision of job description**

Job description can often be ambiguous, pointless, and impractical.

Organization should revise the work allocated to work and making it precise and allow personnel to share the overload. Get employees in process of redesigning of their jobs. There should be rotations of jobs between groups which dull, monotonous and uninteresting. (Losyk, 2006)

## **Respites**

Organization should encourage employee to take break, pull out from work to breath fresh air. Organization should encourage them to meals away from their desk as it is unhealthy and cause burnout. Organization should embrace flexible working hour, by permitting employees complete task from home. (Losyk, 2006)

## **Violence/harassment policy**

Prolonged exposure under stress, increase the chance of individuals get involved in quarrels, anger, rage and violent conduct. Hence, it is very important for organization to have a zero-tolerance policy against any act of rudeness, aggression, threats, harassment or violence; to send a message to the employees that organization is committed in providing a safe and secure working environment. Under this policy all employees are obligated to report any instance which may escalate into an act violence. (Losyk, 2006)

## **CONCLUSION**

The report emphasis about various stressors present in an organisation, and how these stressors after certain time start showing negative symptoms on an individual, the stress changes Physiological, Psychological and

Behavioural pattern of an individual, and make him get involved in actions which stable individual would regret to do. Hence, it is very important for organisation to intervene and minimise the impact of stressors on their employee, by having a stress management programme for employee, for having them to cope with stress effectively. This would increase the productivity of the employee, and this in turn would result in higher profits for the company.