

**PG HRD – 201**

**PAPER NAME: ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR (PAPER V)  
SEMESTER II**

**By**

**Prof. (Dr.) Priyadarshini Narain,  
Director, Institute of Psychological Research and Service  
Patna University**

**Contact No-9835264936, E-mail-priyadarshininarayan@gmail.com**

**TOPIC: STRESS AT WORK (ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS), UNIT V**

### **What Is the Stress?**

Stress is a consequence of or a general response to an action or situation that places special physical or psychological demands, or both, on a person. Human beings can tolerate certain levels of stress. They also have unique ability to move, change or modify their relationships with the stress situations.

### **Stress at Work**

#### **Introduction**

It is not hidden but an obvious fact that stresses (employees) is one of the major challenges in front of the employees today. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. They have touched almost all professions, starting from an architect to a doctor, or a teacher to a sales executive. Employees are subjected to a greater degree of stress while they try to enhance their human competencies in order to have an edge in the highly competing global scenario. With change comes stress, inevitably. Professional stress or job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations. Stress in the workplace is becoming a major concern for employers, managers and government agencies. One's emotions are contagious, and stress has an impact on the quality of your interactions with others. The better we are at managing our own stress, the more we'll positively affect those around us, and the less other people's stress will negatively affect us.

## The Effects of Stress in a Job

Research in organizational behaviour has shown that an individual could suffer from significant health complications - backaches, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances, anxiety and depression amongst others - if subjected to stress over a long time. Behavioural changes in the form of excessive tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption, nervous disorders, heart diseases, diabetes, obesity etc are also related to stress. Job dissatisfaction is known to lead to job stress, which in turn reduces the productivity (Madeline, 1983).

Over the years, a lot of research has been carried out in the realm of work place stress and it has been emphatically proven that intense or prolonged stress leads to a negative impact on one's mental and physical well being. (Health & Safety Executive, 2001; Cooper et al, 2001). Even though a fair degree of stress may be felt in all occupations, some work places have been known to experience more stress compared to others.

**Classification of Stress:** Stress can be experienced in these three key ways: *Physically, Psychologically & emotionally.*

*Physically* through lowering of immune system functioning and the experience of physical symptoms, *Psychologically & emotionally* through negative behaviour, poor relationships at work or in your personal life, as well as poor lifestyle choices.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (America) identified the following categories of stressors as representing the primary sources of stress for employees: (1) excessive overload and pace, (2) rigid or otherwise undesirable work schedules, (3) role stressors (conflicts and ambiguity), (4) concerns about career security, (5) poor interrelationship at work, and (6) unpleasant job conditions.

### Signs and symptoms of excessive job and workplace stress

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
- Apathy, loss of interest in work
- Problems sleeping
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Stomach problems
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of sex drive
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

### Common causes of excessive workplace stress

- Fear of being laid off
- More overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels – all the time!

**Reasons of Stress:** An individual faces stress mainly because of four reasons:

- *Personal factor*, which includes Emotional conflicts (Lack of freedom to express, Lack of attention and Lack of confidence), Responsibilities, Lack of support, Time management, and Communication problems, Attitude.
- *Social factors*, which includes Rigid social norms and customs, Managing the social relations, Acceptance by others, lack of positive attitude by colleagues, lack of support from others, and lack of Positive environment.
- *Organizational factors*, which includes workload, role conflicts, uncertainty, relation at work, career prospects, organizational climate, lack of cooperation, promotion, training, counseling and appraisal.
- *Professional factors* which includes lack of Communication abilities, lack of confidence, lack of positive attitude / interaction, interface of private life with professional life, spirit of teamwork.

## **The Cause**

It is not an easy task to manage stress at workplace without shearing the root causes as-

- Fear of being Laid-Off
- Management styles Career concerns (job ambiguity)
- More overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels – all the time
- Random interruptions
- Mistrust, unfairness, and office politics
- No appreciation
- Lack of control
- Gender biasness, nepotism ...
- Unimportant and meaningless tasks
- Workplace Bullying or harassment
- Distant, unreachable supervisors

## **Signs and Symptoms**

- Feeling anxious, irritable or depressed
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Apathy , loss of interest in work
- Problem sleeping
- Social withdrawal
- Stomach problems
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Tips for reducing Job stress

There are a variety of steps you can take to reduce both your overall stress levels and the stress you find on the job and in the workplace. These include:

- **Taking responsibility** for improving your physical and emotional well-being.
  - **Avoiding pitfalls** by identifying knee jerk habits and negative attitudes that add to the stress you experience at work.
  - **Learning better communication skills** to ease and improve your relationships with management and co-workers.
- 
- WLB
  - Plan regular breaks
  - Don't over commit yourself, resist perfectionism
  - Be willing to compromise
  - Delegate responsibility
  - Prioritize tasks
  - Create a balanced schedule
  - Do not try to control the uncontrollable
  - Connect with others at work
  - Talk it over with someone
  - Look for humor in the situation

<i>Stress management techniques</i>	<i>Description</i>
Undertake a stress audit	Organisation decides to take a peep into mental cum physical health status of its employees. Questionnaires and interviews are used to collect data on various stressors, coping techniques and outcomes.

Use scientific inputs	Spread awareness and information about effective dealing with stress, both inside and outside the organisation.
Check with the company doctor	The medical officer can conduct stress management programmes.
Spread the message	The importance of regular work habits, leisure, diet, exercise and practicing personal relaxation should be emphasized.

Employees with low job satisfaction often are poorly paid with few job promotion prospects. Company managers often fail to acknowledge their staff for their hard work which may lead to depression for the employee. If an employer recognises their employees work more and offer more promotion prospects, even an increase in an employee's salary would help relieve stress in the office. Staff recognition is the key to every company, staff work better if their work is praised as they believe that they are a valued member of the company. Recognition may be verbal, where an employer simply praises their work verbally, or a promotion for the employee. Even staff events show that the manager cares about his staff, rather than the usual Christmas party more events out of work should be organised. If more recognition was shown to staff at Terra Firma then employee stress would be lowered and employees would perform better at work.

Redesigning jobs can also help, for example if employees take more breaks from the computer monitor to reduce headaches and eye strain, even performing other jobs away from the computer monitor every so often will minimise these health risks. Companies can also employ a stress councillor to help relieve stress from the employees, as this would not only benefit the employee health, but employees may perform better in their jobs, leading to better productivity and more profits for the company. If all or some of these suggestions were practised in Terra Firma then the company would certainly benefit, leading to a smooth running company, with fewer problems and low stress levels.

\*\*\*\*\*