

INADVERTENCE TO WORK STRESS: COST TO EMPLOYERS FOR EMPLOYEES OF NORTH EASTERN REGION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

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Abstract: Human beings have to undergo adjustments and adapt to a lot of changes in the environment where we live. Any situation that requires a behavioural adjustment is a source of stress [1]. There are numerous causes of stress in the environment. These causes are dependent on the environment where individuals live in for which they differ from firm to firm and some are industry specific. Organisations play a major role in reducing the stress level as employees are a member to the company. But it is seen that instead of stress relieving programs included in the company's strategy, employees are stressed despite all programs. This paper attempts to find out the cost borne in managing the stress by the firm and its inattentiveness to employee's stress level. It is based on data collected through telephonic interview method and extensive study from internet, conducted across different areas in Assam, North East. The study further attempts to put forward suggestions towards the area of research.

Keywords: stress, cost, inadvertence and employers view.

Introduction: Every individual has a different reaction to stress for which the responses to stress cannot be termed specific. Stress can be defined in various ways, but its effects cannot be exaggerated. The effects of stress have a wide range such as psychological, behavioural and physical. "No one's life is free of stress. Regardless of how sensible, intelligent, or privileged we are, we will be challenged at times by frustrations, losses, changes, and conflicts. Stress is as inescapable as death. The trick, of course, is to cope as effectively as possible and not worry too much about the rest" [2].

Organizational stress though remedied still continues to be a problem in many firms worldwide. It is the reactive response of those individuals to whom tasks are beyond their ability in the workplace. These stresses of the employees are unavoidable due to the demands of the working environment, family, financial survival and standard of living. This research focuses on organizational stress related cost borne by employers. The cost here is what employers suffer in managing stress.

The Human Resources departments (HRD) have to view the employees as asset to the company and thus hold the responsibility of solving employee's stress related issues. Updating employee data and seeing to the welfare of employees are the role of the HRD. Thus HR planning is crucial be it public or private. Only being employee concern is not possible for the HRD. It plays a dual role. The HRD has to look after the work extracted from the employees they hire for company benefit. This is where the clash of time appears and results to stress for both company and employees. This study examined organizational stress and its related costs to employers. Organizational stress was defined as the response from individuals when presented with tasks beyond their ability at. The cost to employers is that which they incur in

managing stress and the presence of stress itself. But in Assam employees are still devoid of such stress programs resulting cost to employers. This paper is an attempt to find out the reason for such inadvertence to work stress.

Objectives: The objectives of the study are as follows

1. To identify the cost incurred by the employers
2. To identify the employer's ways of managing employee's work stress

Methodology: Primary and secondary data were applied for the study. Primary data collection was done by interview with different company personnel. Personal visits to organizations were made to see the stress management strategies applied and its cost borne by employers. Secondary data collection was done by the use of internet and company review report. Sample of 40 respondents was taken and the area of study was Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Nogaon, Tezpur and Silchar.

Analysis: An analysis is carried to understand the current firm's position in relation to cost bearing as a result of stress. As per the first objective;

1. Low productivity is being regarded by 53 percent of the total respondents as a cause of high stress and cost borne by firm in managing stress. Failure to meet deadlines and targets by the employees are a great concern here.
2. Employee's absence and presence in the company is being regarded by 26 percent of the total respondents as a cost borne by employers in managing stress. The stress management programs, incentive benefits and stress remedial activities are provided to each individual. But many employees are not able to provide satisfactory output to firm.
3. Replacement cost is being regarded by 21 percent of the total respondents as a cost borne by employers in managing stress. Hiring new

employees, transferring inefficient employees and training the existing ones causes a lot of unwanted As per the second objective;

1. Recreational breaks are being regarded by 78 percent of the total respondents as the employer's ways of managing employee's work stress.
2. Extended review meetings are being regarded by 19 percent of the total respondents as the employer's ways of managing employee's work stress.
3. Health cost is being regarded by 3 percent of the total respondents as the employer's ways of managing employee's work stress.

Findings: The findings of the study are as follows;-

1. Employers provide recreational breaks to each employee, but fatigue carry due to the pressure from management above. This gives birth to non attentiveness to the hard work of the employees and completion of the task at the cost of anything matters. This nature of work pressurizes the employees and they result in low productivity in firm's concern. Thus the company bears a loss of time, money and efficiency in spite of giving recreational breaks in managing employee's stress.
2. The nature of work in the organization differs from firm to firm. Thus the stress level, job nature and work pattern too have a lot of difference. An extended review meeting and tension to reach the work place on time tends to increase more stress to these employees. This lack of commitment to work by many employees is being paid by the company bearing delay in work and cost inefficiency [3].
3. Advertisements, recruiting, training and interviewing costs are a lot. These methods are to reduce stress level of employees by transferring them to home towns, financial increment and so on but company cost in bearing such are very extensive.
4. Health cost is though helpful in medical claims, but not all the employees receive it.

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Recommendation: A few recommendations on the basis of the study to enable employers reduce stress in the workplace and they are:

1. Particular attention should be paid to the sales and marketing departments which were identified with the highest level of stress. Since they play a crucial role in the success of a company, management can allow running shifts. This will boost the performance of the departments.
2. Mode of transport to the workplace was found stressful. To reduce this, companies can employ the use of cab services or other rented public transport in conveying their employees to and from work. The remedy to use public transport provided by the company as a means of getting to work will therefore reduce stress to some extent. Absenteeism will be lowered and presenters will be attentive and committed not being tired of journey.
3. Work overload was found stressful among the employees. Thus, employees should be given realistic goals and targets by the firm. Job design and descriptions, tasks and targets of employees should be outlined clearly.
4. Different attributes of work like strength of manual work, discrimination, conflicts at work, job insecurity have a tremendous negative impact on psychological well-being and mental health. Therefore, attention should be paid in workspace design to reduce mental stress for proper health [4].

Conclusion: Stress is inevitable, but if taken care at the right time with proper method, then it can be easily reduced if not omitted. Stress is becoming increasingly recognized as a phenomenon that has a negative effect on a growing number of people in the workplace [5] Therefore the human resource development departments should develop and finely established to be able to efficiently and effectively deal with work stress. This would help the firm to channel their financial resources to other departments, save cost and work for the betterment of the company.

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