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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHERS – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievements, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere, whether be within the family, business organization or any other social or economic contest. Right from the time of birth, until the last breath drawn, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. In higher education, teachers are experiencing pressures to increase productivity and efficiency at their work places to meet out the expectations of general public, management as well as from state and central governments, which creates stress among them. It is important to tackle the causes of stress in the workplace as stress at work can lead to problems for the individual, working relationships and the overall environment. Managing stress in the workplace is therefore an essential part of both individual and it is institutional social

responsibility also. The primary objective of present paper is to identify causes that lead to high stress. The secondary objectives are to study the consequences of stress and to suggest some workable interventions to reduce the stress. This research paper is of descriptive and analytical type and based on primary data collected through questionnaires filled by the 60 teachers working in self finance college teachers of Tiruchirappalli district. The findings of the study indicates that most of teachers are having moderate level of stress and work overload & job insecurity are the main causes of occupational stress. It is suggest that the management should come forward and promote various activities for reducing stress level of teachers.

KEYWORDS: Occupational Stress, Self finance College, Teachers stress.

INTRODUCTION :

Stress is everywhere, whether it is in the family, business organization, enterprise, institute or any other social or economic activity. Right from birth till death, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. Thus, when this stress becomes excessive, employees develop various symptoms of stress that harm their performance and even threaten their ability to cope up with their environment. Despite tremendous advancements in science and technology, and remarkable growth of economy and sources of luxury, people all over the world seem to experience stress in various spheres of their lives. Consistently psychosomatic and psychological disorders are increasing; the feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with life in general reflect the stress being experienced by people. However the causes of stress in those societies were episodic in nature, low in severity and frequency. But during the last two decades the span of psychosocial stress has drastically increased. The basic reason was being the changed physical and socio-cultural



environment of the contemporary societies and life style of the people. People's life has become more demanding, complicated, mechanical and dependent running by the clock. Ever increasing needs and aspirations, high competition, pressures of meeting deadlines, uncertainty of future and weak social support system have made the life of people stressful in modern societies.

Occupational stress can be described as the adverse reaction people have due to excessive pressure or other types of demand on them (Health and Safety Executive, 2005) Occupational stress and its effect have been amongst the most popular topics in research literature. This is because many researchers believe that stress is becoming a major contributor to absenteeism, low employee morale, high accident and turnover rates. The cost of these stress consequences has become huge burden on many organizations (Jefri and Al-shammri, 1995, Iqbal and Kokash, 2011). The effects of occupational stress are devastating to both employees and employers (McDonald and Korabik, 1991). High levels of chronic stress can result in job dissatisfaction and aggression, as well as lead to the thickening and hardening of the heart muscles, resulting in cardiovascular disease (Rozanski, Blumenthal and Kaplan, 1999). This occupational stress, thus, leads to burnout.

Stress is created because of workers' under privileged skills that are not matched with the demands of job as it creates job dissatisfaction among the workers state of mind. Otherwise, the expanded dissatisfaction with one's job may show the way to job stress. Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury (United States National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Cincinnati, 1999). It is a physical, mental and emotional wear and tear brought about by incongruence between the requirement of job and capabilities, resources and needs of the employee to cope with job demands (Akinboye et al., 2002). Stress in teaching profession is acknowledged extensively and it was found that their mental health is significantly poorer than that of other high stressed professions (Travers and Cooper, 1991).

STRESSORS OF TEACHERS

Factors which are root cause for the stress is known as stressors. Multiple factors influence the stress among college teachers. Findings of so many research studies pointed out that organizational stressors like over work load, frequent changes in working environment, new innovations, pay amenities, pupils' discipline, work culture, lack of communication, career hurdles, administrative problems, lack of management support and funding policies are some of the causes of stress. Now, let us see the different causes of teachers' stress discovered by various researchers.

FACTORS INFLUENCE

Lack of funding resources and support services i.e. lack of research funding and merit-based distribution of funds to attend conferences and travel for research purposes results in academics feeling demoralized and disillusioned about conducting research. Another potential source of stress identified under this head was decline in staff numbers, due to which there was no longer adequate staff to perform the work required.

Work overload leading to working a high number of unpaid overtime hours. The increase in student numbers has resulted in a dramatic increase in the student-staff ratio, hence in the workload of faculty. With regard to teaching, the increasing number of courses that the faculty is expected to design and teach, coupled with the introduction of new teaching modalities (e.g. web-based), rapid continuous advances in research knowledge, and in some universities the introduction of year round teaching, had substantially increased this workload. Academics also experience an increase in the administrative component of their role, leading to stress.

Poor management practice, meaning thereby, lack of opportunity to contribute to important decisions that would impact upon the faculty members, makes them feel powerless and helpless.

Insufficient recognition and reward, i.e. limited opportunities for promotion and high level of competition within their workplace, leads to stress

Job insecurity, i.e. staff redundancy, contractual status of few which means no certainty if the contract

would be renewed, a cut throat 'look after number one' competitive environment amongst colleagues, due to job insecurity, further contributed to academic stress.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Herbert S. Kindler (1979), in his research article entitled 'The influence of a Meditation-Relaxation technique on Group problem-solving effectiveness' revealed that meditation teams improved more from pretest to posttest than control teams in solving the group problem faster with fewer transactions; also, members of meditation teams felt less tense and showed more effective team work than members of control teams. The results are interpreted as encouragement for organizations to offer meditation-relaxation programs to employees on a voluntary basis.

Vijayadurai and Venkatesh (2012) examined the various factors to stimulate stress level among women teachers in college of Tamilnadu. Survey method was employed to collect the data from respondents and the data were collected with the help of questionnaire. The study revealed that Workplace stress occurs when there are imbalanced demands and perceived pressures of the work environment and an individual ability to cope. It was found that 82 % of respondents always have heavy work load within the organization and there is no significant association between the qualification of the respondents and heavy workload. It also suggested that proper communication, good working environment should be provided for reducing stress.

Kakkar and Ahuja (2013) explored the effect of stress among women lecturers in different colleges so that remedies could be found out to live a stress less life. The study was based on primary data which was collected with the help of a questionnaire for assessing the level of stress and making a comparison between the groups of women lecturers from Government and Private Colleges. It was found that there is no significant difference of stress levels among the women lecturers working in Govt. colleges and Pvt. Colleges. The study suggests that there is need for promoting relaxation programmes for the women lecturers to reduce stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study presented here under includes the description and discussion of research design, sample size, sampling technique, tools and procedures of data collection and methods of analysis. The validity and value of a research depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analyzing them insightfully and methodologically. In the present study, extensive and systematic uses of both primary and secondary data have been made. For collecting primary data, the field survey technique was used in the study area i.e., Tiruchirappalli District. First-hand information and data were collected pertaining to the respondents' socio-economic background, aspects related to the job, symptoms of stress, factors contributing to stress, consequences of stress and the coping strategies followed by them to manage stress.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consequences of the professional stress on the teaching staff of the college effects individually or effects the individuals life by disturbing relations and it may leads toward risk for the reputation of organization in which employees performance poorly or it may effects the working activities of students due to the less efficient teaching motivation of the teachers of college due suffering with stress, their poor teaching methods, unprepared lectures, low application or any other cause which usually harmful for students(Wilson, 2002). Every era in history has been characterized by some debilitating disease. Our society today also has its own characteristic disease, which is 'stress', the one that is not so easy to eliminate. It underlies such diverse conditions as psychosomatic diseases, heart diseases and can be a major contributor to disturbances in one's emotional, social, industrial and family life. It inhibits creativity and personal effectiveness and exhibits itself in a general dissatisfaction, so obvious in our day-to-day lives. Stress has been called the most debilitating medical and social problem of the present century.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Authors have conducted this research to explore several objectives (a) to find out professional stress in self finance college teachers of Tiruchirappalli district (b) to explore causes and ways of minimizing stress among

teachers and (c) to recommend certain measures to control the situation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary data was collected from the arts and science self finance college teachers. The sample of the present investigation constituted of 30 male and 30 female teacher educators by using stratified random sampling method. Primary data have been collected from the respondents by well structured questionnaires. Secondary data for the study were collected from books, journals, research articles and websites.

Data analysis and interpretation

Hypothesis

- o H_1 : There is a significant difference between domicile of the respondents and their level of stress
- o H_2 : There is a significant difference between marital status of the respondents and their level of stress
- o H_3 : There is a significant difference between working experience of the respondents and their level of stress

't' test difference between domicile, marital status, working experience of the respondents and their Level of Stress

Level of Stress	N	Mean	S.D	Statistical Inference
Domicile				
Rural	32	33.28	0.904	T=7.745 P>0.05 Not Significant
Urban	28	32.04	1.011	
Marital status				
Married	26	34.73	1.527	T=21.873 p<0.05 Significant
Unmarried	34	28.47	0.947	
Working Experience				
Below 5yrs	23	29.17	1.714	T=19.917 P<0.05 Significant
Above 5yrs	37	35.02	0.921	

It was inferred from the above table that, there is no significant difference between domicile of the respondents and their level of stress. Hence the calculated value is greater than table value $p>0.05$. So the research hypothesis is rejected and also the table reveals that there is significant difference between marital status, working experience of the respondents and their level of stress, hence the calculate value is less than table value $p<0.05$. So the research hypothesis is accepted.

SUGGESTION

The findings of this research could serve as a useful reference for the government and related organizations such as NCTE, UGC, NCERT, SCERT and various Teachers' Unions formulating the policies and strategies to help the teachers relieve and cope with their work-related health problems. Moreover, with the information of common sources of teacher stress found in this research for reference, the government could be more considerate of the teachers while few education policies or educational reforms. The results of the present research suggest the need for periodical stress management programmes to reduce the stress among teacher educators which in turn will improve their functional skills and lead to effective teaching-learning and better teacher education programme. Finally, this research study is believed to be able to enlighten other researchers to conduct further in-depth studies to investigate the occupation health problems of the teachers.

CONCLUSION

A majority of the employees face severe stress- related ailments and a lot of psychological problems. Since stress in education sector is mostly due to excess of work pressure and work life imbalance the organization should support and encourage taking up roles that help them to balance work and family. The productivity and job satisfaction of the work force are the most decisive factor as far as the success of an organization is concerned. Therefore, stress cannot be considered just as an individual issue because reduced job satisfaction and lower productivity has a direct effect on the institution as a whole. In order to manage stress within the

organization, it is recommended that the organization encourage employee development and embark on training interventions for employees. The more informed the employee, the less stress and the more productive the employee will become. Hence, the management must take several initiatives in helping their employees to overcome its disastrous effect.

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