

Impact of Occupational Stress on Human Element: An Overview of Public Sector

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Abstract—Today modern day organizations have become highly competitive and aim for profitability coupled with productivity. Employees in turn have to enhance competencies through a greater degree of stress amidst competitive global surroundings. Stress is prevailing on the part of the employees as the systems, procedures and work culture. Stress at workplace is the most inevitable phenomenon with ever-increasing grasp at every organizational activity. The objective of the study is to explore and examine the prominent domains and sub domains that may be considered in line with employee stress at workplace viz. Domain A : Stress & Task, Domain B: Stress & Job Role, Domain C: Stress & Interpersonal Demands, Domain D: Stress & Physical Demands. The paper eventually aims towards developing a scale for finding conclusive remarks in certain identifiable areas within the sphere of employee stress in the public hemisphere. A Scale in the nomenclature 'OCU-STR' has been developed and administered in the Labour Department and across four Group A to Group D category employee groups. The study projects that in the arena of occupational stress there has been prominent mark of Stress & Interpersonal Demands among Group C and Group D categories of employees at the work field. It has also been witnessed that the barometer of employee involvement at work arena is influenced by stress and physical demands of employee at all levels. The usefulness of the study is that it focuses considerable light on the impact of stress in the public work sphere.

The Predominance of Stress for 21st Century Organisations

Present day fostering growing and prospering organizations thrive on human factor- the most essential and crucial element for any organizational excellence. At the crux it is human element at times engulfed with multifarious constraints at the organizational platform in the day to day operations. It can be coined that such constraints in the form of physical and psychological effects on person, create hindrances on work activity at the organizational hemisphere. Popularly termed as stress, has become the core word any organizational function as the very origin of stress lies within every juncture of organizational layer. Amidst ever-changing, turbulent and complex business environment the prominence and existence of stress within the work force is matter of concern in the days to come. Stress occurs in the workplace when an employee

perceives a situation to be too strenuous to handle, and therefore threatening to his or her well-being. The differing viewpoints suggest different ways to prevent stress at work. Different individual characteristics, like personality and coping skills, can be very important predictors of whether certain job conditions will result in stress. In other words, what is stressful for one person may not be a problem for someone else. Prominently it can be witnessed that Job stress can result from interactions between the worker, long work hours, the conditions of the work, and an employee's status in the organization. Economic factors that workforce are facing in the 21st century, such as company layoffs in response to economic conditions have a keen connectivity to accelerate stress levels at occupational platform.

The Content & Context of Stress at Workplace

Hindrances and bottlenecks in organisational performances is the most evitable characteristics of stress at occupational arena. Work-related stress manifested in psychological and physiological form is typically caused by demands and pressure from either within or outside of the workplace. Work field stress has its origin from uncertainty of the job, inconsistent or difficult expectations, interpersonal issues and simultaneously physical demands induces an employee to lead a stressful working phase time and again. According to the Department of Labour, there has been an upward trend in hours worked among employed women, an increase in work weeks of greater than forty hours by men, and a considerable increase in combined working hours among working couples, particularly couples with young children. A person's status in the workplace can also affect levels of stress. Stress in the workplace has the potential to affect employees of all categories, and managers as well as other kinds of workers are vulnerable to work overload.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the current paper is to identify and define a set of select domains and items within in tune with Employee Stress at occupation in Labour Department of Government of West Bengal.

Labour Department

The department is chiefly concerned with the administration of the enactments and to promote harmonious industrial relations. Labour department is devoted to the cause of the toiling masses comprising the underprivileged, deprived and poor inhabitants of the state. The department seeks to provide safety, security, security and improved conditions of service at workplace, social security for the worker and family, legal remedies in exigencies in situations like retrenchment, strikes, closure of establishment, lockouts, industrial disputes through terminal benefits and employee development schemes. It also provides employment opportunities for the unemployed population and ensures employment facilities for job seekers.

Related Literature

Correlation with Stress and Human Competencies

The literature on stress management often focus on the physical manifestations of stress of workforce and the challenges for HR to best use of its human capital in order to have an edge in the present day highly competing global scenario. The yardstick through which stress can be managed rests on the domain of some vital ways and means viz. conducting a simple, regular stress audit, formulating explicit stress management standards in the organization, recognizing the employees who abide by the expected standards which in turn help an organization to control absence, staff turnover and induces productivity. A popular proverb says that 'a fit worker is productive worker'. The exhaustion generated through Bad stress results in forgetfulness, irritability, lower productivity, postponed deadlines and reduced personal accomplishment. The sources of bad stress can be identified in terms of long working hours, repetitive and distasteful tasks, isolations, job hazards, poor public image of organization, lack of job security, conflicting demands.

Linking Occupational Stress and Turnover Intention

Employee turnover is the process of making employees yield oriented in their organizations. Employees' voluntary turnover has adverse impacts on organisational effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. Less quality of work life, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational culture, burnout, long shifts, work family conflicts, age, marital status, tenure, education have been identified as the prominent variables inducing occupational stress and influencing turnover intention. Occupational stress occurs when there is an imbalance between demands of the work place and the worker's ability to cope. The indicators of occupations stress affecting turnover matrix can be identified in terms of burdensome tasks, excessive workload, conflict with other colleagues, difficult working conditions, occupational health and safety hazards, insufficient salary, lack of control over work, too much responsibility with minimum authority, poor social support, inadequate opportunities for advancement, inefficient management styles are the array of occupational stressors at work place.

Stress Management and Workforce Productivity- An Overview

Nowadays productivity management has been identified as the lifeline approach of any development agenda pertaining to business houses. The most prominent phenomenon of stress management study is the effort inducing for improvement in working conditions of the workforce and maintaining a equitable equilibrium between workforce output and workforce stress levels. One of the influential factors affecting workforce productivity is the dominance of stress factor at the workspace. Mental hygiene of the workers, interpersonal relationship, behavioral framework of the managers and the co-workers are some of the key stress stimulating issues of the present day organizations. Studies suggest that mostly there are three interventions for combating stress at work sphere viz. stress management at individual level, stress management at organisational level and stress management belonging to both individual and organisational arena

Research Methodology

The study would be based on secondary literature survey. A scale would be created involving the essential considerations of the paper viz. Task Demanding Stress of employees, Role Demanding Stress of employees, Interpersonal Affairs Demanding Stress of employees, Physical Considerations Demanding Stress of employees. These would be considered as independent variables and notion of Occupational Stress as dependent variables. The creation of the scale, in this paper, would involve identification of items within the scale, using literature review as the essential basis. The structured scale would be research instrument with a clear nomenclature of "Occupational Stress" - OCU-STR scale, towards collection of primary data and feedback for future scope of the study; "OCU" meaning Occupational and "STR" meaning Stress. The Total sample size of total 184 employees of categories A,B, C and D in the Labour Department. There have been 46 respondents on an average of each of the employee categories.

Findings

Objective 1

From the literature explicated in the paper a clear attempt can be made to identify the items underlying the proposed "OCU-STR" scale. The scale may be considered to have four broad domains viz. Domain A: Stress & Task entrusted to employees; Domain B: Stress & Role played by employees; Domain C: Stress & Interpersonal Demand of employees; Domain D: Stress & Physical Demand of employees

Objective 2

The objective is to define the items relating to each domain and to understand the extent of occupation stress of employees on the basis of literature review.

The benchmark of the extent of stress on a Scale of 1 on 5 has been defined as:

1 = Not observed at all; 2 = Less Observed; 3 = Somewhat Observed; 4 = Very much Observed; 5 = Extremely Observed

Extent of Occupational Stress and Itemwise Analysis of each Domain

Domain	Item No.	Description of the Item	Extent of Occupational Stress of employees
Domain A Stress & Task entrusted to employees	A.1	Job Design & Job Description	Somewhat observed
	A.2	Job Specification	Somewhat observed
	A.3	Task Time	Extremely observed
	A.4	Job Activities	Somewhat observed
Domain B Stress & Role played by employees	B.1	Inter Role Conflict	Very much observed
	B.2	Intra Role Conflict	Very much observed
	B.3	Role Expectation	Very much observed
	B.4	Role Ambiguity	Somewhat observed
	B.5	Person-role Conflict	Extremely observed
Domain C Stress & Interpersonal Demands of employees	C.1	Emotional Issues of employees	Extremely observed
	C.2	Poor Leadership Style of Management	Extremely observed
	C.3	Abusive Issues & Harassment	Very much observed
Domain D Stress & Physical Demand of employees	D.1	Strenuous activity of employees	Extremely observed
	D.2	Extreme working conditions	Very much observed
	D.3	Exposure to hazardous activities	Somewhat observed
	D.4	Extensive travel schedule	Extremely observed
	D.5	Adverse working workplace	Very much observed

Employee Category having the extent of stress of the respective Stress Domains

Domain	Employee Category	Extent of Stress
Domain A: Stress & Task entrusted to employees	Group A	Average
Domain B: Stress & Role played by employees	Group B	Average
	Group C	
Domain C: Stress & Interpersonal Demands of employees	Group C	Maximum
	Group D	
Domain D: Stress & Physical Demand of employees	Group A	Minimum
	Group B	Average
	Group D	Average

Summary of the Study

A comprehensive scale to identify and measure the extent of occupational stress has been structured in the name of “Occupational Stress - OCU-STR” scale. Unique responses have been derived in the study showing the extent and level of stress in the four categories of employees.

- Domain A i.e. Stress & Task entrusted to employees can be concluded to have the average extent of stress for Group A category of employees
- Domain B i.e. Stress & Role played by employees can be concluded to have the average extent of stress for Group B and Group C category of employees
- Domain C i.e. Stress & Interpersonal Demands of employees can be concluded to have the maximum extent of stress for Group C and Group D category of employees
- Domain D i.e. Stress & Physical Domain of employees can be concluded to have average extent of stress for Group B and Group D category of employees and minimum extent of stress for Group A category of employees.

Implication and Usefulness of the study

The scope of the government of West Bengal is quite much broad in terms of its functioning and the prevalence and prominence of occupational stress at Labour department, the prime department engaged in the employment opportunities and welfare of the masses is the focal point of study. The usefulness of the study aims to help the authorities and senior managerial officials in the government of West Bengal to understand the core areas where the improvement is necessary in the process of eliminating occupation stress of the employees working in various departments in the West Bengal Government. The implication of the study is that it throws considerable light in the existence of working stress in real life applications in the government of West Bengal. The government as a result can look forward to reframe, restructure, revisit and redesign its HR oriented activities among the employee groups in the public departments that are currently facing stress entangled working environment in practice, in days to come.

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