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## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: SOURCE, CONSEQUENCES AND THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT

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Majority of people all over the world, seem to be experiencing moderate to high degree of psychological stress in various spheres of their lives. Consistently increasing rate of psychosomatic and psychological disorders and feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction with life in general reflect the high stress being experienced by the people in the present day world. The basic reason is the tremendously changed physical and socio-cultural environment of the contemporary societies which has modern life more diversely demanding complicated, mechanical and depending as well as running every aspect of life by the clock to clock.

Stress conceived as a stimulus which has been used to describe environment situations or conditions characterized as new, intense, rapidly changing, demanding, sudden or unexpended (Beehar & Bhagat, 1985, Mclean, 1979) Stressful stimuli can also include stimulus deficit, absence of expected stimulation, highly persistent stimulation, fatigue or boredom.

Stress at work, resulting from increasing complexities of work and its divergent demand, has become a prominent and pervading features of the organizational psychology. Some stress researchers have emphasized the role of job situation in their definition of job situation in their definition of job occupational stress. Caplan Cob and French (1975) have according by defined occupational stress as "any characteristic of job environment which poses a threat to the individual", copper and Marshall (1975) have expressed that "by occupational stress is meant negative environment factors or stressors associated with a particular job". Occupational stress is based on the assumptions that people vary in their needs, expectations and abilities just as jobs vary in their needs, expectations and incentives.

### Sources of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress initially arises from constituent factors of job and its psyche - physical environment. In fact, personal characteristics of the employee and his cognitive appraisal of the job factors in the framework of his capacity and resources determine the extent of stress the world experiences from a job factor or situation.

#### Individual Characteristics

Personality characteristics of the employees are one of the most prominent factors which interfere with their job behavior. Employees responses to work demands and pressures are largely influenced by their personality characteristics and such as believes and values, aspiration, and expectancy, need structure, attribution locus of control, personality traits, coping skills, cognitive patterns etc.

An important personal characteristics which influence the experience of stress is "sense of control".

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Personal traits of employees ~~play a significant role~~ in determining the severity of job stress experienced by them. ~~Thought, personality characteristics~~ and traits are generally not the source of stress, ~~they mediate the strains~~. High anxiety also is a frequent source as well as promoter of stress.

### **Job Role**

job role is a major source of satisfaction as well as frustration for the employees. Certain characteristics or inadequacies of job role have been noted as prominent source of occupational stress. Kahn and his associates (1964) have extensively investigated from two major characteristics of organizational role, i. e, role ambiguity and role conflict. Role over load and role under load have also been noted as occupational stress.

### **Job Characteristics and Attributes**

Characteristics of job are a very common source of employee's satisfaction, frustrations and stress. Task complexity and difficulty, quantitative and qualitative demands of job, and employee's controllability over task are the frequent source of occupational stress. Another characteristic of the job is its attributes, which refer the extent of opportunity it provides to satisfy various needs of the employees, such as autonomy, Social interaction, power, use of Knowledge and abilities etc. If the job locks enrichment and provide little opportunity to satisfy these needs they become stress full to their incumbents.

### **Interpersonal Relations at work**

The quality of interpersonal relationship at work plays a dominant role in determining employee's job behavior and job stress. It has been consistently linked to job stress Payne (1980) reported that at least three types of interpersonal relationships have been studied, i.e, relationship with co-workers, relationship within work ground, and relationship with supervisors or superiors. Another potentially stress full relationship within the work place is observed in interaction with customers or climate.

### **Organizational Structure and Climate**

Lack of effective consultation, restriction on behavior, poor communication, no sense of belonging and little or no participation in decision making in organization also became factors of stress.

### **Extra Organizational Sources**

Family problems, conflict of personal belief with that of company, conflict of company with family demands, marriage patterns and relocation and mobility. They all are sources of occupational stress.

### **Consequences Of Occupational Stress**

Stress has been generally denoted as an undesirable and a negative force causing disruption in psychological and physiological homeostasis of the focal person. Majority of stress gives rise to negative emotional experiences causing significant deterioration in individual's adjustment, behavioral effectiveness and health.

### **Physiological Symptom**

Health and medical sciences have concluded that stress could create changes in metabolism, increased heart and breathing rates, increased blood pressure and bring on headaches and induce heart attacks.

### **Behavioral symptom**

Behaviorally related symptoms of stress include change in productivity, absenteeism and turnover as well as changes in eating, increase smoking or consumption of alcohol and sleep disorders.

### **Psychological Effect**

- a. Job dissatisfaction
- b. Boredom, anxiety, depression, irritation
- c. Low occupational and self esteem.
- d. Alienation from organization
- e. Tension and low satisfaction with life
- f. Sexual maladjustment

### **Behavioral and Social Effect**

1. Strikes
2. Early retirement
3. Burnout
4. High rates of smoking
5. Use of drugs or alcohol on the job
6. Absenteeism
7. Disrupted performance of social roles
8. Accidents

### **Therapeutic Treatment**

A number of techniques have been developed and are being used for the treatment of stress - disorders. Progressive relaxation, yoga, meditation, hypno- suggestion therapy, music for management of stress and treatment.

#### **Self Persuasion**

The process of self persuasion centers on a statement about the functional relation between events and is generally expressed in terms of a belief concerning the causal relations among these events. Clients are persuaded through rational means, that the manner in which they previously evaluated the significance of a particular situation.

#### **Attention Diversion**

Self talking can also divert one's attention which would prevent him from focusing upon external stimuli that could lead to anxiety responses or making negative and self defeating evaluation which is them selves could cause anxiety. Attention diversion strategy has been effectively used in the coping with pain.

#### **Cognitive Behavior**

This behavior is the process involved statements can direct to other talk, inferences and attributions. People who practice a self instructional approach in handling a stressful situation would perform better and experience decreased anxiety.

## Music Therapy

Maranto (1993) has extensively discussed the use of music in the management of stress and strains. Music is integral to our daily life. Complexity of musical stimuli and the individual differences in response of music on stress management, but responses to music are multidimensional which occurs at physiological and cognitive levels. Thaut (1989) concluded that physiological responses to music are the product of individual's unique physiological and psychological makeup.

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