



WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND STRESS REDUCTION – A STUDY

Pintu Mahakul¹

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Berhampur University,
Bhanja Bihar, Berhampur-760007, Odisha, India.

Satyanarayan Pathi²

² Professor, Department of Business Administration, Berhampur University, Bhanja Bihar,
Berhampur-760007, Odisha, India.

ABSTRACT

Employees very often report about their anxiety and dissatisfaction due to stress in workplace. Growing rate of modern lifestyle has brought up lots of changes at present. Heavy demands of new inventions have brought up demands of production and due to these many industries are growing. These industries are giving rise to employment. Earning levels are increasing time to time. But still unhappiness is seen among many people. Along with evolutionary changes stress is gradually growing in life. Workplaces are not at all free from stress. Few employees report that they remain in high stress during their whole working periods. For many this is one unsolved problem. Rising stress does not benefit organizations in any way. Stressed employees do not able to perform well and do not become able to take proper decision. Stress hampers working abilities of employees. So, we look forward for solution to handle stress. But no such satisfactory way we get to reduce stress in day to day life. Only the way we get is workplace spirituality. Modern management in today's world looks forward for practice of spirituality to balance workforce and to bring mental stabilities in workplaces. This study focuses on workplace spirituality to handle stress very smoothly and improve efficiency among employees both physically and mentally. Going very deep to this study this is confirm that stress is a real trouble in organizational or personal life. Spirituality encounters mind and filters the unnecessary worries with improvement of strength and stability. Spirituality enhances right action and right decision. Proposed Spiritual Optic Funnel (SOF) confirms that filtration of mind or personality is necessary in the funnel of spirituality in workplace to eliminate stress time to time. Workplace spirituality smoothly handles stress and brings mental sharpness that holds knowledge and skills. Hope this study will be beneficial for many employees, managers, researchers and people in stress reduction and managing life in workplace.

KEYWORDS: Employees, stress, spirituality, attitudes and skills

INTRODUCTION

“Krooragrahah peedeetaanaam bhaktaanam abhaya pradham

Sri Narasamiham mahaveeram namaami runamuktye”

In this famous verse (Runa Vimochana Shri Nrusimha Stothram) a devotee sings and appeals, “This offering is for greatly courageous Lord Sri Narasimha who gives protection to his devotees, confers fearlessness from sufferings inflicted by cruel planets, I pray to relief me of my debts.” Stress has many folds to appear in human life. And spirituality is the gateway to counter stress in day to day life. Devotion is the sign of spiritual persons. The word *peedeetam* in this verse refers to the severe suffering giving rise to the state of both mental and physical illness. A person with high stress remains in fearful condition. A person with debt does not feel free and does not able to enjoy joy in his life properly. While a person falls in trap of stress spends his life and time in uncertainty and dilemmas do not leave his way. Such a person with devotion searches for solution and prays his beloved deity or Lord to whom he considers as principal authority of life. This verse indicates that stress remains in mind and body due to confusions. While a person starts working he faces many obstacles. Lacking of skills and lacking of confidence put him in dilemma and worries. The person searches way to get recovery from such obstacles. That is why his mind surrenders before his lord and appeals to remove his *peedaa* i.e. pain he gaits and he is considered as *peedeetam*. A person has always trust that Lord saves his from danger and removes pain. The trust is very spiritual in nature. Lord guides inner spirit. Due to rising vibrations of trust confidence rises and a person gets ready to face obstacles frequently. Confidence on self again gives efficiency and courage in life to face situations or obstacles generated due to debt. This verse clearly indicates that runa (debt) and peedaa (pain) are two common stressors that a man faces. Pain man gets from various indecencies. A man gets pain from conflicts, sorrowful acts, diseases, separation from own belongings, forceful work, due to heavy workload which he does not want to do etc. That is why a person remains in fear of pain and debt. Stress he gets from this fear is unsolved. At the same time he tries to convey through his mental processing to his Lord by prayers. This verse is part of such appealing where a person prays to redeem him from debt and pain both and expresses his devotion with due honour to the Lord. This is his spiritual act which knowingly or unknowingly he adopts and gets hope to get relief from stress. Such an act shows us path for such a study where we look forward to realize the importance of spirituality in daily life.

Psychotherapists these days analyse and say that for handling and controlling normal and chronic stress, improvement of daily functions by prayers and practice of morality are essential. They clearly mention to have practice of spirituality at home and office. Improvement of activities in life brings prosperity and a person feels better to work. If we carefully observe a person’s situations and factor then we notice that stress brings many symptoms in his appearances. The offer is followed by the word *namaami* in this verse that indicates the noble and honest surrender of the devotee with due respect. He gets relief from all bondages doing so. Lord is the great warrior to remove obstacles of life and this trust a devotee always has within himself. Employees while work in workplace they face many obstacles due to unfavourable conditions in surrounding environment. Awakening of self and having trust on Lord bring spiritual power within an employee and life becomes spontaneously favourable to face critical situations at office. This verse clearly clarifies the importance of spirituality in workplace and importance of prayer in life.

Martin Rutte (1996), states that there is always fear in workplace about losing a job with having to do more with less but spirituality becomes the point of emergence for an employee to desire that there should be more work than survival in workplace. In a spiritual workplace productivity is achieved through nourishment of expression of self and the spirit. Due to fine touch by spiritual mind every duty becomes an art and an employee feels the work, its essence and happiness. Vera Peiffer (2001), states that increasing pressure of modern day living leads to great numbers of mental and physical problems. To ensure good health and well being of mind it is very essential to deal stress in positive way and positivity dwells in mind by listening to inner conscience of own spirit. Making such statements Peiffer directly supports practice of spirituality in workplace. Kent Rhodes, EDD (2006) states that there is influence of spirituality in life and work of an individual and spiritual development brings assistance among employees for better understanding. To know self is very much important and to understand life and work with respect to environment is also important. Nancy R. Smith (2006), defines workplace spirituality as a movement of specific spiritual traits which results job behaviours, changes understanding of environment with issues of ethics, corporate and social responsibility. This responsibility is well understood while inner conscience is awaked and life is well nourished with spiritual values. Lake Lambert III (2009), states that creativity, community, autonomy and holistic concern become new employee

benefits for the productivity of new knowledge class and spirituality becomes the partner of knowledge work. Skills acquired by such knowledge become beneficial at workplaces for employees. T. Winters Moor states that workplace spirituality is a growing concern and this has importance with respect to individual differences. Workplace related topics are affected by individual differences. Without the address of spirituality personality becomes incomplete. Terry Looker and Olga Gregson (2011), state that learning the basic principles of managing stress is essential at present by controlling mind with values and conscience to be less depressed and anxious in life. Stress is a serious trouble and beating stress quickly needs special mental techniques. Christian Nordqvist (2015), states that stress is the feeling that we get when we remain under pressure. Stressors are the things which an individual responds in surrounding environment. Dr. Kis Chandiramani (2016), states that to de-stress life a person has to express his emotion faster to needy run in right direction. Positive emotions give rise to positive thoughts and take a person to perform right actions. Generally when we are overloaded we get more pressures and we do not easily become able to cope. Psychology today defines that stress is simply a reaction to stimulus that disturbs physical and mental equilibrium of an individual. This seems that stress remains in life. We need to counter this to minimize.

OBJECTIVES

- ✧ To know about features of workplace where stress exists and how does stress affect working capacities of employees
- ✧ To know about relationships of life and work with workplace and surrounding environment
- ✧ To know about dangers of stress through workplace assessment and bring out solution for this
- ✧ To know about practice of workplace spirituality that strengthens inner potentials of employees
- ✧ To reduce stress by practice of spirituality and develop a theoretical model for filtering ambiguities of mind

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many think about life to maintain well and leave peacefully with unlimited happiness. But at present everywhere there is fear that acquires place among employees and common people. This fear is to face stress and handle this. Authors argue that this is not a problem of this age only. From ancient period also stress is witnessed among rulers, employees and people. Managing stress does not become easier to many. But still people look forward to have generation of ideas and counter stress in

daily life. Every creature who has taken birth can never escape from working. A man at least for his daily livelihood and arrangement of food has to work for earnings. This law of life for survival attaches a man in to workplace. Association of a person in such a scenario determines his relationship with workplace and workforce. His work gets various influences from surrounding environments and other persons. Ideas and skills vary from person to person. Very often these do not match at all. Matchmaking of ideas brings obstacles in such case. A person or employee faces troubles due to unfavourable condition generated from diverse ideas. This also gives rise to confusion in mind and conflicts. Many silently get fear or remain in anxiety due to conflicts in mind and as well as conflicts in workplaces. Physically good appearing employees also remain in mental illness and this illness lasts for long. This illness provokes them for haphazard performances and no satisfactory decision making. Dilemmas remain within minds of many and stress silently attacks them time to time. R. Morgan Griffin reports in WebMD about thought provoking health related problems that occur due to stress and this special report is reviewed by Joseph Goldberg (MD) with the statement that stress itself makes a man sick. Basing on studies Griffin reports that stress increases risk of obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, depression, gastrointestinal problems and asthma. Medical researchers report that employee with stress has risk of high blood pressure. This gives rise to heart problem. Stress increases the secretion of hormone like cortisol that increases the deposit of amount of fat in abdomen. This leads to obesity. Stress increases bad behaviours of a person and unhealthy eating and drinking habits. Rates of depression and anxiety are related to level of stress. This stress also brings premature aging. Study finds that 63 % of higher premature deaths occur due to health effects of high stress level. Stressors are not always external factors. Many times we notice that stress is generated in self also. When desires are not fulfilled, when command is not obeyed by other, when thoughts acquire irritation and mind becomes heavy and clumsy due to negative thoughts a person gets frequent stress. Level of stress depends on perceptions of a person towards other matters or persons. Many authors argue that organizations should provide stress free environment for working employees. Organizations should identify stress among employees and take action to reduce it. Stress not only increases pressures of management but also increases problems and reduces production. Workplace severely affects mental health, concentration, learning and training and development. For personal and organizational well being

stress management is very necessary as authors say. Every individual employee should take opportunity to manage himself by tackling problem and taking care of own body. Dealing of emotion basing on spirituality becomes important to perceive this world from a new corner. Power of mental exercise done by practice of spirituality improves efficiency to deal emotional affairs and decision making. While an employee has relationship with another and if tension comes by differences out of communication then employee should find way to complete his responsibility as soon as possible. Spirituality has wider range to give benefit to the employees and this signifies life's status in workplace with enhancement of skills.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Advancement of science and technology has given us many new inventions. Through these we lead an advanced life at present. But still we notice that there is no real happiness in life. Many complain that they are lacking of time and not getting sufficient time to take care of their personal belongings. Whether this is home or is office, no where a person gets mental freshness. Everywhere conflicts and confusions are seen and a person remains in depression. An employee remains in anxiety taking his job and job related problems. At the same time he remains in anxiety related to the issues of family members and children. Totally life has come to busy mood of stress. Level of stress frequently grows and an employee searches for the way to get relief from this. But very often he does not become able to escape from stress. Handling stress these days is a big issue and we search for definite solution. Workplace spirituality keeps a person in alert state. Practice of spirituality increases patience of a person to face obstacles in life. That is why workplace spirituality becomes the way to counter stress enriching employees with inner values and morality.

SYMPTOMS OF HIGH STRESSED WORKPLACE

Memory problems of employees – Many employees show emotional imbalances in workplace due to high stress and frequently they forget important things at time and remember later or do not remember at all during important working hours.

Poor decision makings – Very often employees or authorities do not able to take proper decision at right time and such qualities bring problems for workplace loss in business. Poor decision making is seen among employees due to stress and its level of high.

Unnecessary worries among employees – Many employees remain in worries which they should not have during working hours. Due to job related problems or conflicts they think hours and hours. Such thinking brings stress and they remain in worries.

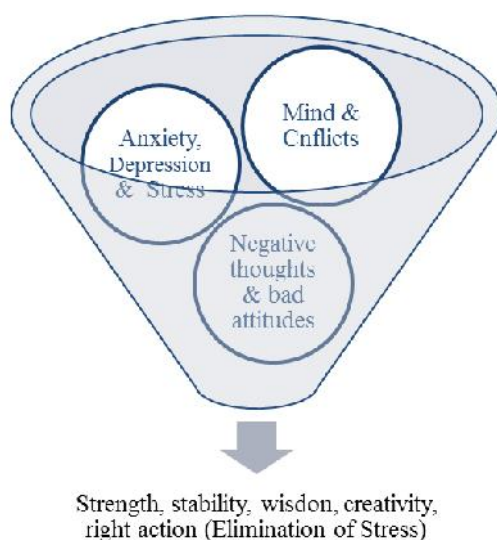
Irritation and agitation in workplace – Having stress employees do not properly work and show irritation among themselves. Sometimes they unite and agitate against organization. Sometimes for small things also agitate among each other breaking working unity.

Depression and unhappiness among employees – Workplace having high stress carries many employees who suffer in depression. Although many good efforts and opportunities organizations make still they do not become able to make employees happy. Depression never makes happy.

Downfall in organizational production – Workplace which has stress in mass of employees this affects production. While organization faces challenge and meets downfall of production or bad quality of production then this is known that there is stress within this.

SPIRITUAL OPTIC FUNNEL (SOF) FOR STRESS REDUCTION

After going deep to this study this is realized that stress is a big problem these days and this is highly essential to understand the nature of stress. This is associated with various environmental factors or personal factors. These make mind very clumsy. Researchers of this study propose this new model theory and name this as Spiritual Optic Funnel (SOF) to filter various elements of stress. This model represents elements of stress that mind holds. These elements along with mind are now put together in funnel of Spirituality for filtration for elimination of stress. Following four headings explain this model very well.



[Single figure representing Spiritual Optic Funnel (SOF)]

Funnel is Spirituality – To filter and get pure water or oil from impure water or oil we need a filtration funnel. Like to get essence of pure mind we need to filter clumsy and impure mind trapped by daily stress. Putting this clumsy mind inside the funnel of spirituality means to remain in practice of spirituality. This practice awakes self and gives a power for own judgement to know self state of mentality, its illness and the remedy to recover. Now we have to remove impurities of mind out. Mind becomes very heavy and clumsy with various elements of stress.

Elements of stress – Stress attacks mind and captures silently and tries to hold mind. Stress comes through anxiety and brings depression and vice versa. Stress generates negative thoughts and negative thoughts also generate stress. Bad attitudes and behaviours are developed by effect of stress. These elements are rarely witnessed by self and frequently witnessed by other person who comes in contact. Sooner or later a person recognizes while these elements make him clumsy.

Getting extract of pure mind – While mind and entirely mixed or captured elements pass through this spiritual funnel we observe gradual filtration at that time. While extracts come out through the critical path of funnel impure elements of stress remain out in mouth of funnel. Now spirituality filters and separates elements of stress and gives rise to pure solution of spiritual mind state. Only spiritual mind recognizes strength, stability, wisdom, creativity and realizes importance of right action on awakening of self.

Elimination of stress – While self awakes and spirituality exists in hold pure mind state remains in alert form. Creativity shows new direction. Wisdom guides true and inner self. So, a person does not commit wrong action and loves to perform right action in workplace. Strength of mind gives courage to face obstacles and stress does not able to touch him although comes near. Wisdom gives inner happiness and peace. Right actions bring good result and happiness comes along with success.

DISCUSSION

While a person gets pain suddenly searches his way for getting relief. Common sign of mentality awakes and person starts chanting a verse or sings prayer before his beloved Lord to save him from danger. Life falls in stress while there is pain and while a person remains in bondage of debt. Pain a person gets from various sources. But he brings faith within him of spirituality and tries to remove his stress. Employees in organizations face many obstacles and challenges. Stress remains within them and reflection comes in their performances. Stress hampers memories of employees and decision making abilities. This increases their worries in workplace. While there is stress agitation and irritation are seen in workplace. Employees remain in unhappy condition and this gives rise to many troubles. Stress reduces production and its quality in organization. Practice of spirituality becomes very much important to guide life and work in workplace. To obtain pure state of mind and feel the power of inner self a person needs to filter his clumsy mind in funnel of spirituality. Management of spiritual optic funnel gives us clear picture about handling life in path of spirituality and elimination of stress.

CONCLUSION

This study clearly gives us solution and favours for deep practice of spirituality in workplace to handle stress. This study confirms that due to various elements mind becomes clumsy and bears stress. Stress remains within a person or near the mind. But practice of spirituality gives courage to face obstacles and crack down stress. Such a study gives us benefit of understanding workplace and recognizing stressed workplace. Once we recognize we start eliminating this. This study becomes beneficial for employees and managers to know about problems with stress and easily handle this. This helps in better planning, organizing, staffing and decision making. Spiritually guided employees work very attentively and punctually. This definitely improves organizational ethics. Workplace spiritually enhances employees with improved personalities and traits. We get a clear idea about hazards of stress in literature and this helps us in managing life's perspectives with respect to spiritually motivated environment. This study shows direction to understand mental state of an employee in workplace. This brings solution for managers and authorities to handle a stressed employee.

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