

BLOCK 3
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
FUNCTIONS



UNIT 9 EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT*

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9.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to

- discuss the management of employee turnover and retention;
- explain strategies to reduce employee turnover and enhance employee retention;
- describe the concept of employee engagement; and
- explain ways to promote employee engagement.

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Yamini (the intern from IGNOU placed at A2Z company was looking for Ms. Sheela (HR manager of A2Z company). When she was Ms. Sheela, she seemed to be in a hurry. Yamini needed some signatures from Ms. Sheela so she approached her.

Yamini: *Maam, Good morning, I needed some signatures from you on some of my forms.*

Ms. Sheela: *Oh sure Yamini but I am a bit busy today as Mr. Batra will be here any time.*

Yamini: *Ok maam. But why is Mr. Batra coming here today. He left the organisation right.*

Ms. Sheela: *Yes Yamini, he is coming for his Exit Interview.*

Yamini (confused): *But maam interview is taken when before the job. Is Mr. Batra joining again.*

Ms. Sheela (with a smile): *No dear, exit interviews are carried out to understand why an employee has left the job. It is crucial to understand these aspects so that measures can be taken to retain the employees.*

Yamini: *Oh ok. Thanks maam. I will wait till you finish with the exit interview.*

Understanding why employees leave an organisation is crucial as if the reasons are related to the organisational dimension then suitable measures need to be taken as otherwise there could be high turnover which can have an impact on the organisation, its functioning and its production and profitability.

An organization invests heavily on time and finances to train its employees to make the best of available resources and attain success. In long term employee grows with growth of organization and consistency in performance of employees lead the organization towards success. On the contrary when employee quits everything goes for toss. Organisations invest a lot of money, time and productive hours of senior executive on employee's training. Employees quit because of misperception of role and structure, misinterpretation of messages and instruction, non acceptance of norm or somebody's misbehaviour, or cultural difference. When an employee unduly leaves organization it is termed as employee turnover. By clearly defining the role and investing in employee, giving them ample space to grow, minimising rude behavior or conflict and creating a positive ambience organization can retain their precious human resources.

In past two decades employable individuals enjoyed variety of job options and organisations faced high frequency of employee turnover because of expansion in industries and entrepreneurial initiative. It is very important for

an organization to ensure longer tenure of productive employees with high performance rate to maintain stability and enhance growth rate in competitive scenario. Employee engagement has evolved as key to such barrier. Employee engagement provides margin and scope to such employees. It is the psychological contract an employee commits to the organization. An engaged employee understands the purpose and fitment with organization. Engaged workforce leads to success with experience and beat the competitors with passion. Employee engagement is instrumental to make successful retention plan. Both employee engagement and retention are significant aspect of employee management.

In this unit, there are three significant terms that we are focusing on, employee turnover, employee retention and employee engagement. All these three terms are related to each other. In the subsections that will follow, we will discuss these three concepts and also look at the ways in which employee engagement can be promoted so as to reduce employee turnover and increase employee retention.

9.2 CONCEPTS AND MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND RETENTION

Two significant terms in that we need to discuss in the context of managing human resources are turnover and retention. In the present section of this unit, we will focus on the meaning of these terms and how these can be managed. The focus of this subsection as you will notice is on employee retention as when measures are taken to retain employees, the turnover in terms of voluntary turnover (employee leaving the organisation for personal reasons) will decrease.

9.2.1 Employee Turnover

Employee turnover is defined as ratio of employees who leaves the organization, either by choice or as norms, within a time frame. It is irrelevant if the employee has resigned or retired; in either case a vacuum is created in the organization and it slows down productivity. To be able to frame a strategy to retain such employees it is necessary to understand reasons and proportion of turnover.

Employee turnover can be segmented in four categories voluntary, involuntary, desirable and undesirable.

- **Voluntary turnover:** Employee resigns from the post on various grounds of illness, relocation, or taking up new job elsewhere.
- **Involuntary turnover:** Employee gets retired on completion of term or is terminated on different grounds of indiscipline or very high absenteeism.
- **Desirable turnover:** Replacing underproductive employees with new talent and skill.

- **Undesirable turnover:** Losing skilled and productive employees.

Before taking steps to employee retention, organization should ascertain the rate, cause, and effect of employee turnover on productivity, and cost to sustaining employee. In such case it becomes important to calculate employee turnover rate. It can be calculated implying the formula

$$1) \text{ Employee turnover rate} = \frac{\text{Employee who left}}{\text{Average number of employee}} \times 100$$
$$2) \text{ Average number of employee} = \frac{\text{number of employees in the beginning of period} + \text{number of employees in the end of period}}{2}$$

Employee turnover can be attributed to several causes, both personal and professional. At personal level low remuneration, less scope to growth, work life imbalance, and work overload contributes majorly. At organizational level ambiguity of role, bullying, mismatch of goals, feeling of undervalued, and frequent restructuring are major contributor to employee turnover. According to

Some of the reasons why employees leave can be lack of satisfaction at work, better prospects or alternatives, negative experiences at workplace, inadequate relationship with immediate supervisor and colleagues, lack of role clarity, inadequate job design, lack of team cohesiveness and so on.

Philips (1990), employee turnover has more hidden effects than visible one. Invisible effects count for attachment or detachment of existing employees with employees who left or the one who joined as replacement. Time and energy invested in the process of acquisition and training accounts for intangible loss. Evident effect employee turnover is seen on productivity, lost sales and profitability. Although employee turnover accounts more for loss and very less for anything positive, it is not bad always.

Keeping in mind the negative effect of employee turnover on the organisation, it is important to understand why the employees are leaving the organisation. This is also the reason why an exit interview is often conducted by human resource managers with the employees who are leaving the organisation. Such interviews mainly look at the reasons why the employee has left the organisation. Whether it is for better prospects, or due to organisational aspects like inadequate communication, structure, high work pressure and so on. Employee turnover in an organisation can be understood by carrying out an analysis of human resource administration data related to resignations, requests for references as well as the date related to retirements and superannuations, dismissals, redundancies and so on. Measuring job satisfaction and work motivation of the employees can also help in predicting employee turnover and measures can be taken to enhance these. Once the

reasons for employee turnover are identified, then suitable measures to retain employees can be taken.

9.2.2 Employee Retention

Employee retention is typically the number of employees any organization keeps within the same specified time frame. Employee retention is to strategically ensure that employees do not leave. The first step in the process is to figure out why the employee would leave. Some reason could be:

- **Remuneration:** When employee perceives the remuneration as unfair, and lower than expectation, or lower in comparison to competitors, they quit.
- **Recruitment errors:** When employer fails to attract the right candidate and positions are filled in hurry, employee quit to find a better fitting profession.
- **Personal attributes:** Employee quit for personal reasons, they get bored, they relocate, they do not fit in the culture, and sometimes they quit because they distrust the leadership and lack confidence in management.
- **Mismatched expectations:** Employees quit when they differ in goals and orientation with organization. Sometimes conflict is with the job assigned and not organizational goal, other times it is just a mismatch of expectation related to compensation and benefits.
- **Scope to grow:** Employees in small organization majorly quit because of narrower scope to grow. Such employees are ambitious and high on achievement orientation. Depending on type of organization 80% – 90 % of employee retention rate is considered good, implying that employee turnover can be good too.

9.2.2.1 Parameters to Assess Pros and Cons of Employee Retention

Following are the parameters to assess pros and cons of employee retention.

- **Cost and benefits:** it is true that retention scheme is beneficial to avoid costs involved in recruitment of new employee. It would prove to be more expensive if vested in retaining underperformers.
- **Longevity:** Retention scheme is preferred tool to have experienced employees for longer time, but it would cause lot of harm if longer association results in groupism or social loafing.
- **Culture:** Retention is good to transpire organizational values through generations. It would be dangerous to retain bad employee because unethical practice is propagated through same means of communication.
- **Loyalty:** Retention is good when employee is constructive, positive and loyal. They work in favour of organizational growth. Retaining a destructive employee would result in losing business, data, harmony and positivity in organization.

- **Productivity and performance:** Retention of interested employee would make them perform better where as disinterested employee would promote gossiping and underperformance affecting organizational goals.
- **Workflow and quality:** Employees holding key positions should be tried to retain for longest possible tenure to ensure swift workflow of good quality. Peripheral employees can be relieved if the cost of retaining is more than return to organization. Such employees create hurdle in workflow.
- **Boundaries:** When an employee reaches the optimum performance in organization and deserves more in turn, it is preferable to allow him leave and not burdening the organizational in financial terms. It is advisable to verify all the options and counter verify the performance to avoid losing an efficient employee or retaining someone at higher price who deserved less.

9.2.2.2 Factors Affecting Employee Retention

Employee retention is of paramount importance to the organization in terms of intellectual property. According to Zineldin (2000) retention is an obligation to continue to do business or exchange with a particular company on ongoing basis. Human resource is storage of all possible ideas and data to individual capacity which contributes in growth of the organisations; Leakage of information and absquatulation would cause constant threat to organizational secrets. Quoting Logan (2000) six factors primarily responsible for success or failure of employee retention scheme are:

- 1) **Organizational culture:** It is found that some organisations put high value on team work and security, individual respect, and loyalty. Such organisations retain their employees for long term. On the other hand some organisations put more emphasize on personal initiative and job performance. Such organisations witness high rate of employee turnover.
- 2) **Communication:** Practicing open communications in organization keep the employees informed on policy matters. Two way communications serves better in employee retention by assuring them that their opinion is valued. Autocratic organization with closed communication channel stir up distrust and fails in employee retention.
- 3) **Strategy:** Those organisations which strategically place itself high in the market succeeds in retaining employees better than organization with no strategic plan and growth. Success of organization, employee, and employee retention program are interdependent. A well planned strategy ensures growth of organization and longevity of employees.
- 4) **Pay and benefits:** Fair pay and competitive benefits strongly influences employee retention in any organization. Subsidized meal, paid company holidays and covered health plan are some of the preferred benefit package that promises greater success of employee retention plan.

- 5) **Flexible work schedule:** It is all about how much control an employee exercises over his time. It reduces the time and role conflict and undue stress of work. It has positive impact on employee retention as it reduces employee withdrawal syndrome and urge to look for other job openings. Flexible work schedules allows employee to adjust their work schedule and thus motivate them to stay longer by improving their happiness quotient.
- 6) **Career development system:** Existing workforce looks forward to career progression irrespective of their current role and status. Organizational structure with well defined career path is a definite promise to retain its workforce for long time ahead. Learning organisations keep adding to organizational goals and train their employees accordingly to fit in new role. Career progression is must for employees to remain associated with the organization in long run.

9.2.2.3 Role of Motivation in Employee Retention

Regardless of size and type, in past three decades all organisations are struggling to keep their employees for longer duration. Although each of them design a retention plan suiting to their requirement and available resource, nevertheless a plan based on identifying, analyzing and implementing scientific principles of a sound theory would bear more fruitful results. Five major aspects of motivation to be considered in any employee retention program are compensation, growth, support, relationship and environment. Motivational theorists agree unanimously on fact that motivation is desire and ability to act towards attainment of certain goal. It is most often based upon need theory, expectancy theory, and equity theory of motivation. A brief description of each theory follows:

- **The need theories of motivation** propose that human needs differ in kind and strength depending on time and situation. Maslow's hierarchy need theory believed in five levels of need, namely physiological, physical, and social, esteem and self actualization. It states that retention and motivation schemes should be designed with purpose to meet unsatisfied desire of employee. McClelland's need theory believes that human are driven by sense of achievement than any other rewards. It advocates designing retention plan based on three needs achievement, power and affiliation.
- **Expectancy theory of motivation** argues that human behaves in certain manner, with expectancy of certain event/reward to follow. Incorporation of positive outcomes in lieu of association and loyalty in retention plan would result in longer tenure.
- **Equity theory of motivation** holds it important that return on contribution should be proportionate to input and, comparable and fair with others. While designing retention plan it should reflect fair and equitable means of reward.

9.2.3 Misconceptions related to Employee Turnover and Retention

While it is believed that voluntary turnover of employees is bad or negative occurrences; it is not true for all the organization in every situation. On several occasions organization need not panic over resignations rather retention of certain employees beyond an extent proves to be harmful than any benefit to the organization. David G Allen (2010) argues that some level of employee turnover is probably necessary to keep the organization vibrant and gives an opportunity to restructure the workplace. Five most pervasive misconception regarding employee turnover and retention are:

- 1) **All retentions are good and all turnovers are bad:** human resource has its own strength and flaws; everyone can not fit the same size. At some places retention is bad where an underperformer occupies a post and some youth with more talent remains unemployed. Employee turnover is good when the vacant space is filled by someone more qualified.
- 2) **Increase in pay can buy loyalty:** All employees do not leave for money, similarly those who remains associated with organization in name of salary hike may not be giving their hundred percent towards organizational goal. Spending more than what they deserve in effort to keep the employee will increase financial burden and induce discontentment in others.
- 3) **Success of retention plan is decided by number:** No two organisations can be compared on their success rate of retention scheme by counting numbers or ratio of employees who stayed back. In Some organisations human resources keep shrinking when they move towards automation.
- 4) **Confident performers cannot be retained:** This is believed by majority that is someone who has knowledge and skill to perform better decides to call quit and join others for better compensation they cannot be stopped. It is found that most of the employee turnover occurs because of cultural misfit or poor interpersonal relationship and communication. It is not impossible to retain such hardworking achiever provided retention plan suits his requirement and resolves the disagreement.
- 5) **Human resource manager is responsible to retain people:** Employee retention is game of influence and involvement. Human resource manager can design schemes to keep the employee engaged and involved in his profile; but it is the immediate superior who exercises maximum influence on the employee to make him stay longer.

The most unattended myth regarding employee turnover and retention is the belief that it is not related to recruitment. It can never be the case that somebody who is total misfit gets selected; similarly whosoever gets selected cannot be a perfect fit from the beginning. Thus employee retention is largely about making adjustments, training, and continuous

assessment of employee's performance and organisation's reward system.

Box 9.1 Difference between Employee Turnover and Employee Retention

Employee turnover and employee retention are both related to each other. To differentiate between employee turnover and employee retention, that we will discuss in the next sub-section. Employee turnover can be explained as a leaving of the organisation by an employee on voluntary or involuntary basis (Holiday, 2021). Employee retention on the other hand can be explained as the rate at which employees remain with the organisation as well as the measures and strategies used by the organisation to retain the employees. Employee turnover mainly focuses on the movement of the employee, whereas the employee retention includes measurement of the stability of the employees. Employee turnover includes both voluntary and involuntary turnover. Employee retention often excludes involuntary turnover.

The two terms are very much related and the human resource manager needs to focus on both and develop suitable strategies to reduce employee turnover and increase employee retention.

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is employee turnover?

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9.3 STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER AND ENSURE EMPLOYEE RETENTION

When an organization makes effort to retain employees, they feel valued. A simple strategy is to recognise the tiniest effort an employee has put in organizational growth other than routine task, it does not matter if the output is very small. Most often strategies for developing employee retention plan are of expanding benefits. Adopt the following “As” to make a generic retention plan applicable to all employees.

- 1) **Acquire right candidate:** The right hire proves beneficial for the organization at multiple levels. Better fit promises better inclination towards learning and work load sharing. They are better trained and prove to be long term investment. Recruitment, selection and placement are three key functions of human resource management

that can help in ensuring employee retention as adequate pool of suitable applicants need to be generated with effective recruitment, right candidates need to be selected based on the selection process and the selected employees need to be adequately placed in order to ensure that employees are retained.

- 2) **Accommodate diverse workforce:** Employ individual from diverse background and characteristics as age, gender, nationality, race, religion, political views, culture etc. Workplace diversity also reaps tangible benefits as increased creativity and innovation, other than creating a vibrant culture of its own.
- 3) **Affirm teamwork:** Assign work in groups. Allow team to brainstorm and come up with new methodologies. It is easy and cheaper means to reward a team, without threatening equality. When a team performs under supervision, it minimises the occurrence of conflict and results can be astonishingly effective.
- 4) **Assist in financial stability:** Employees who lack financial acumen are relieved to great extent when aided by expert in organization. They get more space to be creative and committed in their field of expertise.
- 5) **Adequate training and development opportunities:** The employees need to be provided with adequate training and development opportunities so that they are able to enhance their skills and knowledge. This will not only help employees feel valued but the organisation will also benefit from upgradation of skills and knowledge of its employees.
- 6) **Aided mentorship:** Mentoring programs are meant to identify opportunities and train employees accordingly. Corporate mentoring promotes cohesiveness amongst employees, encourages knowledge sharing, and develops leadership quality. It prepares employee for future role and also induces optimism in them.
- 7) **Appraise change:** It is advisable that organization allows space and autonomy to employees in inevitable process of transformation from the beginning phase of planning. Inviting feedback and suggestions from employee boosts their morale and reduces resistance.
- 8) **Appreciate work life balance:** It is very important for an individual employee to maintain balance between professional commitment and personal affairs. It is equally important to understand that work life balance does not mean equal time given to both aspects; rather it signifies the presence of individual at right place at the time of need.
- 9) **Attentive concern:** When organization acquire diverse workforce, essential services provided to them also gets diversified. A child care

centre and a gymnasium become equally important as subsidised cafeteria when number of females and youth increases in workforce.

10) Appealing wellness programs: Sponsored wellness program addressing employees' health hazards and life style management earn loyal and committed employees.

11) Agreeable assessment: Assess employees across all parameters without lacking empathy before considering in retention plan. An individual employee may fail to meet performance standards owing to many temporary and emotional constraints, which eventually fades and individual performance rise up to expected level after sometime.

An effective employee retention plan undergoes a process of thorough reflection. It is observed that opportunities to use skills and ideas, compensation for effort, transparent communication, interpersonal relationship, job security and job stress are major contributor and largely follow the same order in proportion to make contribution in employee's job satisfaction. To begin with retention, an organization should first categorically identify dissatisfied employees and reason behind their dissatisfaction. Those identified employees and their job profile should be audited on terms of required skill, productivity and profitability to ascertain if retaining those employees will prove to be beneficial to the organization. A smaller chunk of identified employees should be allowed to leave, who would prove to burden either for their high package or low performance. Rests of the employees are assigned to specific group based on their specific need. Implement the best suited segment of generic retention plan on specified group with specific needs. Satiated needs of employee are promising factor in retaining them for longer term. Further orient employees towards retention scheme which is designed and executed for their benefit. It is important that the employee acknowledge the gap which existed before retention scheme was proposed and the benefits reaped after completion of retention process. Retention program intending to prepare employee for higher risk and responsibility or diversified role ensures they receive training before being put on actual role. Once the employee gets acceptance in new role and prolongs commitment to organization for certain period of time, retention plans are considered successful. It does not stop there instead it moves on to next phase and efforts are put to retain employee in new role. The retention cycle, to visualise it as cyclic process.

Since organizational goals and employee's needs are dynamic in nature, employee turnover and retention will remain cyclic process. Annual appraisal will be followed by annual employee turnover and implementation of retention scheme. Retention like acquisition is an annual process; with an implication of reducing acquisition expenditure and improving longevity, where employees remain engaged with their individual role, tasks and organizational goal.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List any two strategies to reduce employee turnover and ensure employee retention.

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9.4 CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The term “employee engagement” was coined and defined by William Kahn (1990) as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. According to him employee feel psychological meaningfulness when they feel worthwhile, useful and valuable for the organization. According to Kahn (1990) Employee engagement is heightened physical, cognitive and emotional involvement with organization. Relationships and organizational environment plays key role in determining employee engagement that assists in holding workforce longer, and develop facilitating leaders.

Bohlander and Snell (2013, page 151), described employee engagement as “a situation in which workers are enthusiastic and immersed in their work to the degree that it improves the performance of their companies”.

Employee engagement is all about delighting employees to keep them involved in their roles and business with positivity. According to Aswathappa (2015, page 371), “the employee is engaged if he/ she is willing to go above and beyond what would typically be expected in his/ her role”. The four main elements of employee engagement include pride, commitment, praise and satisfaction.

The attributes related to an engaged employee (Aswathappa, 2015) are discussed as follows:

- 1) **Employee attachment:** This denotes the bond that the employee develops with the organisation and the extent to which the employee is able to relate and identify with the job and the goals.
- 2) **Passion:** This denotes the commitment towards the job and organisation that is displayed by the employee.
- 3) **Personal belief:** This denotes the belief that the employee has about how important the employee is for the organisation.

- 4) **Strong willingness:** Employee will display a strong willingness to recommend and portray the organisation as a positive place to work.
- 5) **Employee Commitment:** The amount and degree of time and effort that the employee spends on the job or work related activities.
- 6) **Work relationship:** The positive relationship that exists within the organisation. An engaged employee will have positive relationship with other employees in the organisation.

Employee engagement decreases employee turnover and fosters employee retention by ensuring recognition and rewards. When an employee is assured of being recognised and rewarded by empowered status, longevity is seldom compromised. It aids in success of employee retention plan in following ways:

- It reminds employee why they are here. Emotional association with the organization strengthens solidarity amongst members; hence retention gives better results in challenging times.
- Employees prefer to stay where they are heard. As association with the organization grows chronologically mutual understanding and communication goes better, hence making the bond stronger.
- Engaged employee relates to organization empathetically. Empathy plays role in both orders. An empathetic organization will have empathetic employees who tend to consider each others' challenge and hence contributes largely in retention.
- Engaged employee builds trust in new joiner that this is a good place to work and hence contribute in retention of new workforce as well. Senior employees play influential role in retention of fresher proving themselves a committed role model.
- High employee engagement leads to high optimism, high satisfaction and longer tenure with high scope of innovation and commitment. Since higher degree of involvement presents an opportunity to reinvent the organization at many levels, it buys time from the employee and ensures longer stay.

9.4.1 Categories of Employee Engagement

All of us are well aware of the fact that individual employee differ in their need, understanding and expectation from the organization. Employee engagement is proven strategy to increase employee retention but it is equally important to have a fair assessment of employee's stake on engagement. There are four categories of employee engagement:

- **Engaged employee:** They take initiative. They have the talent and skill to lead, influence and motivate. They stay longer and can retain others.

- **Not engaged employee:** They perform at average level and remain inconsistent. They are reluctant to put anything extra beyond their routine role.
- **Actively disengaged employee:** They are disruptive, may not be doing so in open, but create unrest by spreading gossips, delaying tasks, and social loafing.
- **Neither engaged nor disengaged employee:** Such employees are often bitter and exhausted. They withdraw from the results of their behavior or ignorance.

9.4.2 Models of Employee Engagement

Further various engagement models are mentioned in brief to help you design a successful employee retention plan and reap better benefit of employee engagement

- 1) **Schmidt's model:** The model was proposed by Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes, presented in workplace research report published in academic journal of applied psychology year 2002. It concludes that clear indication of important issues by employees, managers influence to provide employees with increased opportunity, and employees satisfaction, will determine employee engagement.
- 2) **IES model:** The model was proposed by Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday, presented in survey report conducted for Institute of employment studies in UK, in year 2004. It insists that an individual employee's perception of their own involvement and their value to the organization will determine levels of engagement.
- 3) **Penna's model:** The "Hierarchy of Engagement" model was proposed by Penna during workplace research, published online in year 2007. The model draws comparison and similarity with Maslow's "Need hierarchy theory of motivation" It denotes engagement in five levels starting from pay and benefits leading to learning and development at second stage, promotion opportunities being at third level, followed by leadership and trust at fourth level, finally reaching to meaningfulness at final stage of engagement.
- 4) **Hewitt's model:** The model was proposed by Aon Hewitt and published in Global Employee Engagement Report in year 2013. It has three elements Say, Stay and Strive, where engagement is determined by positive talk by employees, their desire to stay back and grow in the organization.
- 5) **Zinger's model:** The model was proposed by David Zinger based on his extensive experience of consultation and published in year 2009. It highlights twelve key factors to attain employee engagement namely achieving results, crafting strategies, enliven roles, excel at work, get

connected, be authentic, live recognition, fully engage, identify with organization, serve customer, develop personally, and attain happiness.

Check Your Progress III

1) What is employee engagement?

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9.5 WAYS TO PROMOTE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

As the concept of employee engagement is clear, let us focus on the ways to promote employee engagement. While discussing the ways to promote employee engagement, we also need to remember that the strategies that we discussed reducing employee turnover and enhancing employee engagement can also be applied in this context. Various ways to promote employee engagement are discussed as follows:

- **Positive and high performance organisational culture:** High performance organizational cultures are positive and supportive. It promotes proactive instinct and competitiveness in employees. They feel connected and involved where organizational culture has healthy norms, defined and documented to be followed. Organizational culture has to be tested and verified from time to time to ensure involvement of employee engagement and retention. It is advisable that organization conduct survey amongst employees from time to time to ensure adherence and invite feedback. It takes time to cultivate supportive and innovative organizational culture. To keep pace with the outer world and also employees' need organization requires changing policies periodically, introducing technology and organising training programmes. It is very important that employees are prepared mentally for the change and efforts are made to help them become skilled and compete. Culture that radically changes without prior ultimatum collapses soon. Such organisations are also hard hit by employee turnover. Positive culture values employees and their efforts. Where workplace culture shows high concern for employees' difficulty, it teaches employees to stand together with firmness against any challenges. Like all other things organizational culture is also complex in nature and bad influences will drive away good employees. Work culture can never go stagnant, but it is to be drawn in smooth pattern than allowing dynamic shift. An erratic change in culture makes it difficult for employees to engage in depth and promotes frequent change in behavior and surroundings. It would send

indirect messages of instability to Employee and cause threat to retention.

- **Organisational communication and channel and process:** Employee engagement is mutually affected by organizational communication channel and process. A low degree of engagement negatively affects employee satisfaction and creates interpersonal conflicts and hurdles. Organisations offering developmental opportunities to employees will have aspiring and achieving employees with high quality involvement. Such organization propagate positive environment with high happiness score. Thus ensuring effective organisational communication would be key in promoting employee engagement.
- **Empowering managers and employees:** Employee engagement can also be increased by empowering managers by giving them more autonomy and empowering workers by training them in new skills. It is important that senior level management is given scope to participate in policy making or a sponsored vacation to erase burnout effect, to remain engaged. Practicing employee engagement strategy is far better than commitment theories of work which primarily insists upon compulsion and goals. It is more than offering handsome salary, making them work or retaining productive employees. It is about keeping the employee emotionally committed to organization and its goal. Three major factors defining degree of employee engagement is meaningful association, safety, and availability of the employee.
- **Effective leadership:** Leaders, the immediate supervisors and superiors, can play an important role in engaging employees. They can not only play a role in mentoring and coaching the employees but they also provide performance related feedback that can guide the employees and promote employee engagement.
- **Cultivating a sense of meaningfulness amongst the employees:** Meaningfulness is created in terms of their work; how much are they able to contribute and being asked for the same. Achievers, relationship oriented, challenged employees feel more connected with team and absorbed in their work. Positive regard and mutual belongingness, compassion towards peers and others, restores sense of meaningfulness in employees.
- **Cultivating a sense of psychological safety:** Psychological safety involves group dynamics marked by unconscious alliance and collusion of members. An employee in organization is expected to remain alert of their mannerism, public image and relationship to maintain a respectable cordial environment. However disclosing one's self should not threaten the employee to suffer dent in self image, status or career. Affirming identity and trust allow employees to look at other from their perspective, and empathetically acknowledge the same creates the sense of safety and sustain integrity of organizational environment.

- **Promoting availability amongst the employees:** Availability in terms of employee engagement means the availability of emotional energy in an employee to engage personally with organizational goals and environment. Emotionally overwhelmed employee tends to depersonalise self and cut off from surroundings to protect self from further exposure to emotional hurt. Employees holding key positions such group leader or manager stand prone to burnout in process of constant dealing of emotional stress of self and others. Such employees are driven by compassion satisfaction orientation at workplace.
- **Opportunities for career development:** It is also important to provide the employees with opportunities for career development. This can also be done by providing adequate opportunities related to training and development that can help employees develop and enhance their knowledge and skills.
- **Dealing effectively with employee grievances:** Often employees could be unhappy with certain aspects in an organisation. It could be related to the facilities available or certain people in the organisation. Whatever be the issue, it is important that any grievances of the employees are addressed and dealt with effectively.
- **Promoting positive health and mental health amongst the employees:** This again could be an important strategy in promoting employee engagement as a healthy employee would be in a better position to contribute to the organisation as well as work effectively. Programmes in order to enhance health and mental health of the employees can be regularly organised. Services like employee counselling can also be provided to help employees deal with their issues and problems.
- **Family involvement programmes:** Programmes that promote involvement of the family members of the employees can also be organised. There could be get-togethers, picnics and other family oriented welfare programmes. This will again have a positive impact on the employees as well as his./ her family members. It is to be remembered that any employee has personal life and work life that are equally important and an organisation also needs to focus on these dimensions.

Thus, as was discussed in the present sub-section, there are various strategies that can be implemented to ensure enhance employee engagement. And many of these strategies also focus on making the employee feel valued, important to the organisation and that the organisation cares for him/ her. Thus based on this and keeping in mind that a happy, satisfied and effective employee will contribute multifold to the organisation, employee engagement strategies can be developed and implemented.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State any one strategy for promoting employee engagement.

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9.6 LET US SUM UP

In the present unit, we mainly focused on three significant terms, employee turnover, employee retention and employee engagement. Firstly we discussed about the concept and management of employee turnover and employee retention. Employee turnover is defined as ratio of employees who leaves the organization, either by choice or as norms, within a time frame. Employee retention is typically the number of employees any organization keeps within the same specified time frame. Parameters to assess pros and cons of employee retention were also discussed besides factors affecting employee retention and role of motivation in employee retention. Misconceptions related to employee turnover and retention were also discussed. The unit further described the strategies to reduce employee turnover and enhance employee retention. The concept of employee engagement was also focused on in the present unit. Bohlander and Snell (2013, page 151), described employee engagement as “a situation in which workers are enthusiastic and immersed in their work to the degree that it improves the performance of their companies”. Lastly, the unit covered, ways to promote employee engagement.

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9.8 KEY WORDS

Employee engagement: Bohlander and Snell (2013, page 151), described employee engagement as “ a situation in which workers are enthusiastic and immersed in their work to the degree that it improves the performance of their companies”.

Employee retention: Employee retention is typically the number of employees any organization keeps within the same specified time frame.

Employee turnover: Employee turnover is defined as ratio of employees who leaves the organization, either by choice or as norms, within a time frame.

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is employee turnover?

Employee turnover is defined as ratio of employees who leaves the organization, either by choice or as norms, within a time frame.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List any two strategies to reduce employee turnover and ensure employee retention.

Two strategies to reduce employee turnover and ensure employee retention are:

- Accommodate diverse workforce
- Affirm teamwork

Check Your Progress III

- 1) What is employee engagement?

According to Aswathappa (2015, page 371), “the employee is engaged if he/ she is willing to go above and beyond what would typically be expected in his/ her role”. The four main elements of employee engagement include pride, commitment, praise and satisfaction.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State any one strategy for promoting employee engagement.

Employee engagement can be promoted by having positive and high performance organisational culture

9.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe the concept of employee turnover.
- 2) Explain employee retention with a focus on parameters to assess pros and cons of employee retention.
- 3) Describe factors affecting employee retention.
- 4) Explain the misconceptions related to employee turnover and retention.
- 5) Explain the strategies to reduce employee turnover and enhance employee retention.
- 6) Explain the concept of employee engagement.
- 7) Describe ways to promote employee engagement.

9.11 ACTIVITY

Identify an individual who has voluntarily left his/ her job recently and find out the reasons why he/ she left the job. Some of the questions that could help you collect the information are as follows:

- 1) Since when are you working with the organisation that you recently left?
- 1) What was your job position in this organisation?
- 2) What is your overall work experience (in years/ months) and what was your work experience (in years/ months) in this organisation?
- 3) Why did you initially take up the job in this organisation?
- 4) What were the reason(s) that you left the job?

You can ask other related questions in this context as well. Do ensure that you take informed consent of the individual and maintain confidentiality.

To understand more about interview method and thematic analysis of interview responses, you can refer to unit 3 of course BPCC110: Applied Social Psychology that will be available on egyankosh.

UNIT 10 CAREER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT *

Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Concepts of Career Management and Development
- 10.3 Stages and Process of Career Development
- 10.4 Psychological Contract
- 10.5 Employee and Employer Role in Career Management
- 10.6 Lets us Sum Up
- 10.7 References
- 10.8 Key Words
- 10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 10.10 Unit end Questions

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- discuss the concepts of career management and development;
- explain the stages and process of career development;
- describe psychological contract; and
- explain the employee and employers role in career management

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In A2Z company, it was a time for the interns from various institutions to interact with some of the senior employees in the company. All the interns including Yamini were very excited. They were going to interact with the employees who had a long relationship with A2Z company, some having worked for as long as 20 years. Yamini wondered what motivated them to stay in this organisation for so long and this was the point on which her questions to the senior employees would be based she thought. As the programme started, all the interns started interacting with the senior employees. Yamini also approached Mr. Dattaram. Mr. Dattaram had worked with A2Z since its inception and was one of the senior most employees having completed 25 years of services. He was recently felicitated by the CEO of A2Z for his services and contribution to the development of the company. Mr. Duttaram joined as a shop floor worker and was now a manager. Let us look at the conversation between Yamini and Mr. Duttaram.

* Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar, faculty, Discipline of Psychology, IGNOU, Delhi

Yamini: Hello Sir, it is really nice to have interacting with you.

Mr. Duttaram (with smile): Hello Yamini. Hope your internship is proceeding well.

Yamini: Yes Sir, I am learning a lot.

Yamini: Sir, I wanted to know about your journey in the organisation.

Mr. Duttaram: Well, it has been an interesting journey. I joined this company as a worker in the manufacturing unit and now as I am going to retire in a few months, I will do as a manager of the manufacturing unit. It is quite a progress right.

Yamini: It is commendable Sir. But how did you achieve this?

Mr. Duttaram: I would say it was partly due to my zeal to learn and also due to the encouragement and opportunity provided me to learn by the organisation. I still remember the day when our supervisor informed us that we could work and pursue our studies and I took the opportunity. With the help of the HR department, some of us were able to enrol for graduation programme from IGNOU and later I also completed by MBA through distance mode from IGNOU.

Yamini: Wow Sir, I am also a learner of IGNOU.

Mr. Duttaram (was very pleased): Wow that great. I worked hard and also studies hard and was promoted to this position. Post retirement I want to pursue my Ph. D as well and may be help and guide other workers to do better in their careers.

Yamini: Thanks a lot Sir for sharing your experience.

Ms. Duttaram: All the best Yamini.

Yamini then interacted with Ms. Sheela.

Ms. Sheela: So Yamini, how was your interaction.

Yamini: It was great maam. Duttaram sir has worked so hard.

Ms. Sheela: Absolutely and also at A2Z, we have a very good focus on employee career management and development programmes in our organisation that not only help the employees grow but it also contributes to the overall development of the organisation. And as the employees feel valued, they also have organisational citizenship and high work motivation and job satisfaction.

Yamini: Yes maam. I now fully understand how this aspect of Human Resource development is important in any organisation.

From the above, I hope the relevance of career management and development is clear. In the present unit, we will focus on these concepts of career

management and development and explain the stages and process of Career Development. The term psychological contract will also be discussed and lastly we will focus in the employee and employers role in career management.

10.2 CONCEPTS OF CAREER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Two important aspects of human resource development are career management and career development. But before we discuss the terms, we also need to understand what a career is.

10.2.1 Career

Career as a term can be explained as an job or occupational position that an employee hold over a period of time. Dessler, (2015, page 327) described career as “the occupational position that a person holds over the years”.

DeNisi et al (2014, page 197) defined career as “the set of experience and activities in which a person engages related to his/ her job and livelihood over the course of a working life”. The definition by Denisi et. al. point at various aspects of career including:

- Certain jobs carried out by the individual.
- Work activities and job related responsibilities in these varied jobs carried out by the individual.
- Between the jobs movements and transitions.
- Assessment of the various career components of the employees
- Satisfaction experienced by the individual while performing the jobs.

Aswathappa (2015) explained career as an individuals course of action or progress in an organisation or a profession. According to him, a career will go through the following five stages:

- 1) The individual enters in an organisation and the process of career planning that is self directed will start.
- 2) The individual will move forwards in the work area.
- 3) The next stage can be termed as mid career stage, where some employees secure higher position while others are hoping to secure higher positions in the organisation.
- 4) Individuals are now well settled in their work area and plan from life post retirement.
- 5) The carer ends in the organisation. The individuals could also be rehired at this stage or could lead the retired life.

Over the period of time, how people perceive career has changed. Earlier, it was seen as an upward movement from one job to another often in a single

organisation or a very few organisations. The employees were more job or employer oriented.

Earlier the stages in career included exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. Exploration is denoted by attempts by an individual to identify jobs based his. her interest. During the stage of establishment, the individual is able to create a role for himself/ herself that is meaningful and significant. And during maintenance stage, the individuals is able to achieve a level in an organisation and his/ her talents and capabilities are optimised. During the last stage that is disengagement, the individual's priorities will change as he/ she pulls away from his/ her work in the organisation.

But with increased competition, globalisation, recession, mergers and acquisitions, outsourcings etc, a lot has changed and thought employee seek to move upwards from one job to another, they are also reinventing themselves (Dessler, 2015). Further, the individuals now entering the job market are not necessarily job and employer oriented but look for work-life balance. Thus, what they seek from their careers has changed to a greater extent. And though, the stages of career discussed earlier still hold true to some extent, it is also felt that the focus on needs to be on career age (the duration that the individual has been on a job) rather than career stage (DeNisi, 2014). Also as the individual is involved in multiple careers there could be multiple explorations. Thus, there is exploration, trial, establishment and again exploration.

The human resource managers in any organisation need to be sensitive to these changes and they need to accordingly plan their career management and development programme.

10.2.2 Career Management

Career management can be explained as involving steps that are required in order to achieve the career plans of the employees and the focus in this context is on what the organisation can do to encourage career development of the employee. In this context we also need to discuss about career planning involves various activities that are planned by employee with help and guidance from a counsellors and others. An assessment is also carried out of the skills and abilities of the employees so as to help him/ her to chalk a career plan that is realistic. Aswathappa (2015, page 298) defined career management as "the process of enabling employees to better understand and develop their skills and interests and use them for the benefit of the organisation and self". Dessler (2015) described career management as a process that involves helping the employee to understand their career related skills and interests in a better ways and develop these skills and interests in an effective manner.

Thus, as can be seen in the above definitions, the focus is on helping the employees develop an understanding about their skills and potentialities so as

to help them develop them further for the benefit of themselves and the organisation.

10.2.2.1 The Models of Career Management

In this context we can also discuss about the models of career development (Aswathappa, 2015):

- **Supported self development:** The primary responsibility related to the career lies with the employee.
- **Corporate career management:** The employees' career related aspects and responsibilities are taken by organisation.
- **Career partnership:** This denotes an equal responsibility regarding the employee career taken by the employee and the organisation.

10.2.2.2 The Process of Career Management

Let us also discuss the process of career management

Step 1 Strategy for career management: In this a strategy to manage the career are finalised. This will also depend on which model of career management is followed. Policies in the organisation also need to be focused on whether lateral entries are permitted, policies relate to promotion and so on. The opportunities for talented individuals in the organisation also need to be considered. It is also important to look at the systems and processes in organisation related to knowledge sharing and development. The focus also needs to be on whether the career management initiative is flexible or fixed. The nature of career progression whether long term or short term also need to be focused on.

Step 2 Assessment: Assessment denotes assessment carried out by the organisation as well as the self assessment carried out by the employee. Assessments are carried out in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the employee.

Step 3 Planning: Based on the above steps, the planning now needs to be carried out about type of career, career path sought by the employee. The career goals also need to be identified.

Step 4 Development: This involves enhancement of skills and potentialities so as to prepare for future job related activities and opportunities.

Step 5 Evaluation: The career management interventions are now to be evaluated. Though there could be issues about from whose perspective (employee or organisation) it needs to be evaluated.

10.2.3 Career Development

Career development can be explained as a continuous process that is denoted by progression of an employee through various stages, that are unique in

terms of themes, activities and issues. Dessler (2015, page 327) explained career development as “ the lifelong series of activities that contribute to a person’s career exploration, establishment, success and fulfilment”. According to Aswathappa,(2015), career development can be termed as an approach of an organisation that is formal in nature and that includes that based on the need emerging in the organisation, qualified and experienced employees are available.

The spectrum of career development can range from the career planning that is employee centered to career development that is mutually managed by the employee and the employer to career management that is organisation centered. Thus, the career development activities can range from workbooks that are self directed, workshops on career planning by the organisation, seminars on careers in the organisation, career discussions between the immediate superior and the employee, developmental assessment centres, maintaining talent inventory in the organisation to succession planning in the organisation (Werner and DeSimone, 2012).

10.2.3.1 Career Development Initiatives

Various initiatives can be taken by the organisation in order to promote career development amongst the employees. Some of these initiatives are discussed as follows:

- **Workshops on career planning:** Planning is an important aspect in any activity and in order to promote career development career planning is prerequisite. Though, employee need to be provided with help about how they can plan their career. Workshops thus can be organised on career planning to help employees with assessment of their skills and potentialities and identify career objectives and goals.
- **Career related counselling:** Counselling services also need to be provided to the employees so as to help them make correct decisions. A conducive environment can be created for the employees in order to take suitable decisions.
- **Mentoring:** Providing suitable mentoring will also go a long way in helping employees develop their careers. New joiners or junior employees can receive guidance, support and help from senior employees.
- **Provision for sabbaticals:** Sabbaticals are paid leaves provided to the employees so that they can upgrade their knowledge or rejuvenate themselves (Aswathappa, 2015).
- **Personal development plans:** In this the employees will note their personal development plans in which development needs and action plans are included.

- **Career workbook:** These workbooks include exercises and questions that help employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, identify career related opportunities and identify steps in achieving the career goals. These workbooks could be tailor made and mostly includes the career related policy of the organisation, career options available and so on.
- **Career networking:** Career networking has been defined by Bohlander and Snell (2013) as the process denoted by establishment of networks or relationships, that are mutually beneficial, with other business-individuals that could include customers and clients. The networking can be with family members and family friends, teachers, friends and alumni of your educational institution, former colleagues and superiors and so on.

Career development is often based on performance appraisal and training and development which is also a significant function of human resource development also plays a significant role in career development of the employee.

Career management and development are significant for both the employees and the organisation. As on one the employee will feel valued, will be able to achieve his/ her potential and thus is satisfied with his/ her job and is also motivated. A satisfied and motivated employee will be in better positive to contribute effectively to the organisation thus leading to increase in organisational productivity and profitability.

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Define career.

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10.3 STAGES AND PROCESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The stages of career development (Werner and DeSimone, 2012) are discussed as follows:

Stage 1 Exploration: The very first stage of career development, that is exploration is denoted by identification of skills and interest. During this stage the individual seeks a fit between his/ her own self and a job. The employee will be involved in activities like learning, following guidelines

and so on. The age of the employee during this stage could be less than 30 and the work experience on the job could be around two years. He/ she would be engaged in playing a role of an apprentice in the context of relationship with other employees, During this stage the individual also engages in self exploration.

Stage 2 Establishment: The second stage in career development is that of establishment. This stage is characterised by advancement and growth in the career. The job related challenges are faced by the employee and he/ she also develops competence or expertise in certain areas of work. The employee may also have a feeling of security. His. her lifestyle may also improve, The employee may now engage in decision making. The age of the employee during this stage could be between 30-45 and the years of experience could range between two to 10 years. In the context of relationship with other employees, the employee could be seen as a colleague rather than an apprentice.

Stage 3 Maintenance: the next stage is that of maintenance and during this stage the employee will be accomplished and may involve in enhancing and upgrading his/ her skills. he/ she could be involve in policy making activities in the organisation as well as in training the employees, especially, the new joiners. The role here that the employee will play would be that of a mentor. the age of the employee during this stage could be between 45 to 60 and the employee could have work experience of more than 10 years.

Stage 4 Disengagement: The last stage of career development is disengagement and as the name suggests, here the employee could engage in planning his/ her retirement. He/ she will gradually disengage with the work and the focus could be on his/ her personal life. The role played by the employee in relation to other employees would be that of a sponsor. the age of the employee at this stage could be above 61 years and the work experience would be more than ten years.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List the stages in career development.

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10.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

The term psychological contract was proposed by Dennis Rousseau in 1989 (Stevenson, M, 2018). Psychological contracts can be explained as agreement between the employee and employer, that is unwritten (Dessler, 2015). This mainly includes the mutual expectations that the employee and employer has from each other. It can also be described as the beliefs that the employee and employer hold about the mutual obligations that they have towards each other. Bohlander and Snell (2013, page 532) described psychological contract as “expectations of fair exchange of employment obligations between an employee and employer”. Thus, if the employer expects the employee to work with dedication and sincerity, the employee would expect the employer to provide suitable incentives and necessary facilities.

Psychological contract can also be explained as the set of expectations that the employee and employer have from each other. In the context of the employee, the expectations are regarding what will be his/ her contribution to the organisation and on part of the organisation, it is about expectations held by the organisation about what it will provide to the employee in return (DeNisi et al, 2013).

To understand psychological contracts better, let us consider the following point (Towler, 2020)s:

- Psychological contract is unwritten.
- Psychological contracts are a part and parcel of dynamics at workplace.
- They are mainly based expectations and are reciprocal in nature.
- The psychological contract forms during the pre- employment stage when the candidate develops expectations as he/ she appears for the job interview. Though, as the candidate is selected and becomes part of the organisation, the employer will have clear idea about the organisation.
- Immediate superiors of the employee play an important role in this regard and have a significant impact on psychological contract.
- Performance appraisal carried out in an organisation could lead to modification of psychological contract.
- The fairness with which an organisation and leaders in the organisation deal with varied issues can also have an impact on psychological contract.
- Breaches in psychological contract can have detrimental effects.

Psychological contract relies to a great extent on communication and a lack of communication between the employer and the employee can have a negative impact in this regard. Also it is important that the expectations that the employee and employer have towards each other are managed well and no wrong perceptions are displayed. For example, if the employer is not

considering an employee for promotion, wrong indication that the employee could be considered for that particular promotion should be avoided. Similar if an employee is not able to achieve a performance target due certain personal reasons, the same is not perceived by the employer as a weakness of the employee.

Psychological contracts are mainly based on social exchange and the norms related to reciprocity. Social exchange denotes that when one party or person does something for the other, the other part or person will return the favour and this is seen as an obligation. And norms of reciprocity denotes that when one party or person behaves in such a way that it is beneficial for the other party, the other party also needs to reciprocate. Though, the psychological contracting is unwritten and as such the nature and time of benefits and favours may not be specified. But, there is some kind of bond of trust where it is expected that the favour will be returned in future.

Psychological contracts can be of two types:

- **Transactional contracts:** In this the exchange is extrinsic and economic and it is static and observable for certain period of time. For example, an employee could be hired for a certain period of time. The contract in this regard is tangible and is for a specific period of time.
- **Relational contracts:** In this type of contract, the the employer hires the employee with a perspective that the employee will remain with the organisation for a considerable period of time. The content of exchange better the employer and the employee is dynamic in nature and could be tangible or intangible. The resources are ambiguous and are not specified.

There can be an issue when there is a breach in the contract and that can have an impact on the relationship between the employer and the employee. if the contract is breached by the employer, the employee will experience emotions such as anger and sadness and also dimply feeling of betrayal and his/ her work commitment may also decrease. Breach of psychological contract by the employer can also lead to low work motivation and decreased job satisfaction. To avoid any breach of psychological contract on part of the employee, the immediate supervisors can have regular and open communication with the employee and make the employee aware about the psychological contract and need to respect the same.

Psychological contracting is relevant in the context of career management development as there could a psychological contract between the employee and the organisation regarding the expectations related to career management and career development. On one hand the employees will have expectations regarding the opportunities for career growth in the organisation and in turn the organisation is aware that when an employee find his/ her job meaningful and feels valued, he/ she will contribute greatly to the overall development of the organisation.

Check Your Progress III

1) What is psychological contract?

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10.5 EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER ROLE IN CAREER MANAGEMENT

As has been discussed above, both employee and employer will play an important role in career management of the employee.

The basic responsibility of his/ her career management lies with the employee. Thus, the employee not only needs to be aware of his/ her strengths and weaknesses but also needs to be aware of the opportunities and threats. Self awareness is crucial in this context and measures need to be taken by the employee in this direction. The employee needs to work on identifying his/ her strengths, weaknesses, skills, abilities, potentialities, values, interests and so on. Further, the employee also needs to focus on the following:

- The career opportunities available.
- Enhancing one's skills and potentialities.
- Making use of the developmental opportunities in the organisation.
- Take charge and responsibility of one's own career development.
- Work on establishing one's own career goal and plans and create realistic career plans.
- Seek help and support as and when required in this regard.
- Harness and upgrade one's skills and knowledge.
- Keep track of the growth trends and future developments in the organisation that could open opportunities for career development.

For the employers to play a crucial role in employee's career management, the employee has to be on the job for a while so that the organisation knows that the right candidate was selected for the job. Once the employee seems to have settled in the job then his/ her career management process can start.

The organisation, the human resource management department and the managers, all play an important role in the career management of the employees. This is also relevant because an employee who recognises his her

potentialities and is able to realise them will serve as an asset to the organisation.

Some of the ways in which the employer can contribute to the career management of the employee is discussed as follows:

- The immediate superiors can play a role in carrying on appraisals that are career oriented in which the employees can be appraised for his/ her performance but also matched with a career path based on his/ her strengths.
- Regular job rotations can also help the employees develop a better understanding about which job he/ she is best suited for and find interesting.
- Career ladder or career path that provides information about possible career opportunities in the organisation can be published. This also needs to specify the required educational qualification and experience.
- The basic responsibility of his/ her career management lies with the employee. Thus, the employee not only needs to be aware of his/ her strengths and weaknesses but also needs to be aware of the opportunities and threats.
- The employers also need to encourage and facilitate employees in direction of career development.
- Immediate superiors and managers can act as career advocates and provide relevant career related information to the employees. The resources available and the future growth of the organisation can also be discussed with employees. They need to engage in career discussions with the employees.
- The human resource management department in the organisation will also play a crucial role in organising various workshops related to career planning, career management and career development. They can also organise various orientation, training and development programmes so as to provide a conducive environment for the employee to develop.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State one way in which the employer can contribute to the career management of the employee.

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10.6 LETS US SUM UP

To sum up, in the present unit we focused on career management and career development. In the very first section of the unit we discussed about the concept of career, career management and career development. The models and process of career management was also discussed. Under career development various career development initiatives were highlighted. The unit also discussed about various stages of career development including exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. The term psychological contracting was also explained. Lastly the unit discussed the role of employee and employer in career development of the employee.

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10.8 KEY WORDS

Career: Dessler, (2015, page 327) described career as “the occupational position that a person holds over the years”.

Career development: Dessler (2015, page 327) explained career development as “ the lifelong series of activities that contribute to a person’s career exploration, establishment, success and fulfilment”.

Career management: Career management can be explained as involving steps that are required in order to achieve the career plans of the employees and the focus in this context is on what the organisation can do to encourage career development of the employee.

Psychological contract: Psychological contract can be explained as agreement between the employee and employer, that is unwritten (Dessler, 2015).

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) Define career.

DeNisi et al (2014, page 197) defined career as “the set of experience and activities in which a person engages related to his/ her job and livelihood over the course of a working life”.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List the stages in career development.

The stage sin career development are:

Stage 1: Exploration

Stage 2: Establishment:

Stage 3: Maintenance

Stage 4: Disengagement

Check Your Progress III

- 1) What is psychological contract?

Bohlander and Snell (2013, page 532) described psychological contract as “expectations of fair exchange of employment obligations between an employee and employer”

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State one way in which the employer can contribute to the career management of the employee.

One of the ways in which the employer can contribute to the career management of the employee is regular job rotations can also help the employees develop a better understanding about which job he/ she is best suited for and find interesting.

10.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the concepts of career management and career development.
- 2) Discuss the stages of career development.
- 3) Describe psychological contract.
- 4) Explain the role of employer and employee in employees career development.

UNIT 11 EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND HEALTH *

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Employee Safety and Health
- 11.3 Causes of Accidents
- 11.4 Prevention of Accidents
 - 11.4.1 Ensuring that Unsafe Conditions are Reduced.
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11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- discuss employee safety and health;
- describe causes and prevention of accidents;
- explain workplace hazards and their prevention; and
- discuss ways of promoting occupational safety.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Ms. Sheela (the HR manager of A2Z) company needed help in developing an intervention strategy to promote use of safety devices amongst the workers and she felt that Yamini (the intern from IGNOU) and other interns could also help. So Ms. Sheela had a discussion with all the interns and her HR staff in order to discuss how an effective awareness programme can be organised.

Ms. Sheela: *Good morning everyone*

Interns: *Good morning Maam.*

*Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar, Faculty, Discipline of Psychology, IGNOU, Delhi.

Ms. Sheela: Well, as you are aware safety and health of the employees are very important. And i feel that in order to promote use of safety devices amongst our workers, it is important to have some intervention strategy. So here we are here today to discuss what intervention strategies we could develop to promote the use of safety devices amongst the workers in our organisation.

The interns were full of ideas and one by one they shared their ideas.

Yamini: Maam, we can have an awareness programme about how important it is to use safety devices. We can put posters in the manufacturing area and could also organise a talk by a local celebrity on importance of using safety device at work.

Salim: Maam, I feel that besides knowing the importance of using safety devices, it is also important to know how to use the safety devices, so we can have a workshop on how to use the safety devices in a proper manner.

Mary: Maam, I also want to suggest that we could keep a prize for workers who are particular in using safety devices in appropriate manner and we can have this on monthly basis or in a similar fashion. Or we can also display the photograph of the worker on the notice board.

Charandeep: Maam, I also feel that us interns and may be the staff of HR department can interact with the workers during lunchtime and informally speak to them about how important it is to use safety devices.

Ms. Sheela noted down all the ideas and was very impressed and she knew that her intervention programme to promote the use of safety devices is going to be successful with the help and support of the interns.

As we discussed above, safety and health of the employee is significant for smooth and effective functioning of the organisation. And in this regard various intervention strategies can be applied by the organisation. In the present unit, we will focus on the employee health and safety and will also focus on how to promote it.

11. 2 EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND HEALTH

One of the important functions of human resource management is focusing on employee safety and health. Lack of safety and employees who are not healthy will lead to decrease in productivity. There is also wastage of resources when it comes to accidents and the very life of the employee can be danger. Therefore, utmost care needs to be taken in order to avoid accidents and ensure that employees remain healthy. Thus, the organisation and the human resource department needs to ensure that the employees are provided with conducive and safe work environment. Further, measures also need to be taken that the employees are not exposed to certain toxic, substances or such elements in an organisational setup that could affect their health. For

example, loud noise due to operating machinery could have an impact on the hearing capacity of the employees. Therefore, the employees need to be provided with safety devices like earplugs.

In the context of employee safety and health, we can discuss about safety hazards and health hazards. Safety can be explained in simple terms as absence of accidents or it can also be described as protection that is provided to the workers in order to prevent any accidents and protect them from any dangers. At workplace, depending on the nature of work, the workers are expected to use protective goggles, gloves and so on. In the next sub section of this unit, we will discuss in detail about the causes and prevention of accidents. Safety hazards can be explained as conditions related to the work environment that could lead to employees being harmed. An example of safety hazards could be slippery floor.

Health can be explained not as absence of illness or disease but a state characterised by physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing. Health hazards can be explained as the work environment characteristics that can systematically and gradually have a negative impact on the health of the employees. An example of health hazard could be being exposed to loud sounds leading to hearing related issues.

We also need to remember here that the issues related to the employee safety and health would differ from industry to industry. In an industry that involves use of chemicals, suitable care needs to be taken to avoid accidents due to spilling of the chemical and health hazards due to inhalation of the toxic substances. In an organisation where the employees have to use computers for a long period of time need ensure that employees take suitable breaks in between and suitable exercises could also be suggested to avoid issues due to sitting in a chair for long periods of time. There could be accidents while working on machines in manufacturing industries. Thus, the machines need to have suitable guards and the employees need to use suitable safety devices while using the machinery or while handling toxic materials. Even in offices that have numerous computers or electronic devices, care needs to be taken that the wires are properly fixed and not loose that could lead to tripping and falling leading to injury. Also care needs to be taken for proper electrical connections to about employees exposure to electrical shock.

Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the employees do not remain absent due to health related issues as that can lead to loss of significant work hours. Regular checkups and medical facilities could be made available to ensure that the employees remain healthy. Also in many organisations, employees could experience high levels of stress,. In this regard, suitable stress management programme can be organised for the employees. The focus need to be not only on physical health but mental health as well.

In this regard we can also mention about Practices for Achievement of Total Health (PATH) that was put forth by Granitch et.al (2006) set forth practices

called as the PATH (Practices for Achievement of Total Health). PATH model relates to healthy practices at the workplace and can have a positive impact on the organisation as well as the employee. The following are included in this model:

- **Healthy workplace practices:** Five aspects of healthy workplace practices could be included here, namely, work-life balance, employee growth and development, employee health and safety, recognition and employee involvement.
- **Employee well-being:** Employee wellbeing can be promoted by focusing on the physical, mental and emotional aspects of the employee. Some of the indicators of employee wellbeing include, positive physical and mental health, low levels of stress, high motivation, commitment, motivation and moral. It also includes positive organisational climate.
- **Organisational improvement:** Organisational improvement includes competitive advantage, performance and productivity, absenteeism and turnover, reduced accidents and injury rates, increased cost savings, hiring selectivity, improved service and product quality and better customer service and satisfaction.

Thus, the PATH model can help create a conducive environment in an organisation that can help promote employee safety and health.

Check Your Progress I

1) What is safety?

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11.3 CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS

Let us start our discussion with what are accidents and the causes of accidents.

Accident can be explained as an event that is unexpected and that leads to interruption of the production related activities. According to the Factories Act, 1948: "It is an occurrence in an industrial establishment causing bodily injury to a person who makes him unfit to resume his duties in the next 48 hours". Thus, it can be termed as an event that is not planned or expected and in this event action, reaction on part of an individual or of an object or a substance leads to personal injury.

According to Worker's Compensation Act, 1923 ““a personal injury to an employee which has been caused by an accident or an occupational disease and which arises out of or in the course of employment and which could entitle such employee to compensation”.

In an organisational setup, it is important to identify the causes of accidents as accidents can have detrimental effects on the wellbeing of the employee, interfere with functioning and productivity of the organisation and can also affect the morale and motivation of the employees.

Accidents can be categorised into major and minor accidents. Accidents that lead to employee's death or injured employee being subjected to permanent or prolonged disability can be termed as major accidents. Accidents that lead to minor injuries like cuts and bruises that do not lead the injured employee being disabled can be termed as minor accidents.

Further, the injuries experienced by the employees could be internal or external. In internal injury, there may not be signs of external injury, but the employee may experience fracture of bones or internal haemorrhage and so on. External injury is denoted by signs of injury like cuts and wounds etc. Accident can also be permanent or temporary in nature. When an injury leads to disability of the injured employee, it is permanent. Whereas, when an injured employee is disabled only for a short duration, then it is termed as a temporary accident.

Accidents are not automatic and there could be not one but multiple causes of accidents; In this sub-section, we will look at what are the causes of accidents. The causes of accidents can be categorised into unsafe condition and unsafe acts.

Unsafe conditions: When we talk about unsafe conditions, we mean the work environment that could be unsafe. As we know that many industries use heavy machinery, chemicals, toxic substances and so on in their production. The very production unit of an industry could have such units, machines, wires, tools, raw material and so on that could pose danger to the employees. Thus, unsafe conditions could include equipments and machinery that do not have suitable safety guards, equipments and machinery that are defective, procedures that could be hazardous, inadequate, congested, overloaded storages, lack of proper illumination, lack of adequate ventilation. Accidents can also be as a result of issues related heating or uncomfortable temperature. Humid conditions, unhealthy environment and presence of dust and fumes in the air can also lead to accidents.

There could also be certain danger zones in an organisation, where the possibility of accidents is high. This is similar to some turns on the road that are marked as danger zones due to increased accidents. It is important to identify these danger zones in an organisation.

Accidents in an organisation that can be attributed to unsafe conditions can be:

- accidents related to use of machines to lift and move heavy raw materials and products. like while using forklifts and so on.
- accidents while using machines used to cut or could metals, cut wood (like saw).
- Accidents while using transmission machinery like gears, pullys and so on.
- Accidents while using tools like hammer, screwdrivers etc.
- Accidents related to electrical equipments like electrical cords etc.
- Accidents that could occur while handling chemicals and toxic substance.
- Accidents due to slippery floors or staircase, walkways and ladders.

Besides the above accidents can also be attributed to fatigue that the employees may experience on the job. Workplace climate is also an important aspect and can determine the rate of accidents in an organisation. Work schedule can also be a contributor to rate of accidents in an organisation.

Pressure is yet another aspect as an employee having high pressure to work, is more prone to ne involved in accidents. Further, immediate superiors and leaders in the organisation can also play a role in this regard as they have to imbibe the importance of safety and safety related issues in the organisation as well as enforce safety related norms and rules. A supervisor who is dominating or does not maintain positive relationship with the employees could also create an environment that could lead to high rate of accidents.

High absenteeism, layoffs, a climate of hostility amongst the employees and so on can also lead to accidents.

Unsafe acts: In this context we will discuss about the human error. One of the major causes of accidents could be human error and that also needs to be focused on in order to prevent accidents. Accidents can be result of unsafe acts besides unsafe conditions. This denotes the employee s' behaviour that can be termed as unsafe. Unsafe acts on part of the employee could also be due to accident proneness. Accident proneness can be explained as an individual's tendency to have accidents frequently, which can be attributed to the characteristics posses by that individual that are stable and persistent in nature.

According to Dessler (2015), some of the personality traits that could make an employee prone to accidents includes

- **Entitlement:** The employee may not see a reason why he/ she needs to not speed up or not use a safety device or guard while carrying out the work activity.
- **Impatience:** The employee may always be in a hurry to complete the work activity.
- **Aggressiveness:** The employee may show some aggressiveness while working, like, he/ she may not be as careful while say pouring a chemical and so on.
- **Distractibility:** The employee may appear to be frequently distracted and not concentrating on the work activity. He/ she could be on phone or may indulge in eating or smoking etc while carrying out work activity.

Accidents can also be due to the employee having vision related issues, like low or blurred vision. Age and length of service can also be one of the aspects. Employees having personal issues or going through some difficulties in personal life or being under stress will not be able to focus on thw work activity and can be prone to accidents.

Some of the unsafe acts can also be listed as follows:

- Accidents due to operating machines and equipment without prior permission, without authority or without suitable knowledge about the machines, skill or experience.
- Accidents due to failure to use the safety devices or not using safety devices in adequate manner.
- Accidents due to disposal of hazardous material at workplace
- Accidents due to carrying out work activity at inappropriate speed.
- Accidents due to use of unsafe equipment's or using equipments in an unsafe manner.
- Accidents due to removal of safety devices while carrying out work activity.
- Accidents due to distractions or indulgence in abusing, violent behaviour, da- dreaming at workplace and so on.
- Accidents due to accident proneness or due to certain personality characteristics of the person.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) What is accident proneness?

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11.4 PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS

In the previous section of the unit, we discussed about how unsafe conditions and unsafe acts can cause accidents. In the present section, we will discuss about how accidents can be prevented.

The prevention of accidents can be carried out by focusing on its causes. Thus, prevention strategies can mainly focus on:

- Ensuring that unsafe conditions are reduced.
- Ensuring that unsafe acts are dealt with and reduced.

Let us discuss prevention of accidents keeping in mind these two aspects.

11.4.1 Ensuring that Unsafe Conditions are Reduced

One of the most important aspects of preventing accidents is reducing unsafe conditions. The work environment needs to be safe for the employees to work. Safety engineers can play an important role in this context and they need to design jobs in such a way that the physical risks and hazards are removed. Immediate superiors and managers also play an important role in ensuring a safe environment.

Thus, the organisation needs to play an important role in ensuring that the accidents are prevented and employees' safety is taken care of. Some of the measures taken by the organisation in this regard include:

- Measures related to general housekeeping including having wide aisles, systematic and safe storage of raw material, tools, equipments, products and so on. Ensuring that floor is adequate and not slippery or defective, floors are clean and dry, workstations are well organised. Equipments required during emergencies emerging due to fire etc. are properly located and so on.
- Measures related to handling of the equipment and conveyances include ensuring that brakes are in working conditions, safety guards and warning devices are in place and working, wheels in case of vehicles and conveyances are used are secured in place and inflated properly, the equipments have no loose parts that could cause accidents, the cables, chains, hooks etc. used are not rusted or worn out and they are safely stored when not in use.
- Ladders, handrails, scaffold need to be good condition and measures need to be taken to store them appropriately.
- With regard to use of power tools, adequate space needs to be available for the tools, the point of operation needs to be suitably guarded, safety guards need to be in place, adequate lighting needs to be available, the control switch needs to be accessible, safety devices like goggles and gloves etc. need to be provided to the employees, it should be ensured that employee is not wearing any loose clothing etc. while operating the power tool, that could get caught in the tool.

- With reference to hand tools, they need to be stored properly and also need to be in good condition. Suitable guards and safety devices need to be provided while using them and the tools used need to be correct for the work activity.
- Measures need to be taken to provide suitable safety devices to the employees while welding or spray painting is carried out. Fire extinguishers need to be provided at accessible points and they need to be in working condition.
- There needs to be adequate ventilation and lighting at the workplace.
- The organisation could also carry out a job hazard analysis, which can be explained as an approach that is systematic in nature and used in order to identify and also decrease job hazards so as to prevent accidents. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, US defined job hazard analysis as “focusing on the relationship between the worker, the tasks, the tools and the work environment, and ends by reducing the potential risks to acceptable levels” Dessler (2015, page 544).
- It is also important for the organisation to have relevant policies and norms in place to ensure that employees follow the safety regulation and use the safety devices in proper manner.

11.4.2 Ensuring that Unsafe Acts are Dealt with and Reduced

The organisation might provide the employees with the safest of work environment but if there is an unsafe behaviour on part of the employees accidents cannot be avoided. Thus, it is important to focus on this human dimension of accidents. The need is to focus on the behaviour and develop intervention strategies that can promote safe behaviours and reduce unsafe behaviours at work place. The following measures can be carried out by the organisation in this regard:

- The first and foremost intervention strategy would be to make the employees aware about the safety related issues, the danger zones and so on. Actual case studies of accidents in industrial setup could also be shared with the employees to make them better aware. Posters can also be put up about significance of using safety devices or importance of displaying safe behaviours. Contests and competitions could also be organised to create awareness amongst the employees.
- Awareness also needs to be created about the policies, norms and rules regard safety and safe behaviours in the organisation and repercussions if the same are not followed.
- The next step would be to train the employees to handle the machinery, equipment and tools adequately and appropriately. The employees also need to be trained in using the safety devices provided to them. The significance of displaying safe behaviour also needs to be imparted to the employees.

- Creating a work environment that is conducive to safe behaviours. An environment in which the immediate superiors and managers are supportive and impress the significance of safe behaviours to the employees.
- Selection and placement of the employees can be carried out based on certain relevant tests related to vision, hearing etc. Psychological tests can also be administered to understand the personality factors that can be correlated with manifestation of unsafe behaviours. Tests can also be used to understand the accident proneness of the candidate. The biographical records of the candidates can also be referred to for any incidences of unsafe behaviours or records of accidents.
- The employees need to be motivated to follow the safety guidelines and norms and in this regard besides providing the employees with positive reinforcements, prizes and rewards also can be given to employees who strictly and diligently follow safety rules and regulations.
- Besides motivation, the organisation will also need to work on the attitude towards safety devices or safety behaviours. Strategies need to be developed that focus on cultivating positive attitudes towards use of safety devices and displaying safety behaviours.
- Committee and teams that focus on employee safety and health can be constituted in the organisation.

The immediate supervisor and manager play an important role in promoting safe behaviours amongst employees. The managers need to provide motivation and also positive reinforcements to the employees who follow safety norms and display safe behaviours at workplace. They also need to have an open communication regarding these issues with the employees. The leaders in the organisation also serve as role models to the employees. The human resource manager and the human resource department will also play a significant role in understanding the safety issues as well as developing suitable intervention strategies.

Though, it is to be remembered that employee safety is the responsibility of the whole organisation as well as management, human resource department and that of each and every employee.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) List any one way of ensuring safe working conditions.

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11.5 WORKPLACE HAZARDS AND WAYS TO PREVENT THEM

In the previous sections we have discussed in details about employee health and safety issues. We also covered about accidents and ways to prevent them. Let us now discuss about workplace hazards. We already discussed about accidents. Besides there could be other workplace hazards as well, that will be discussed in this section.

Workplace hazards do not focus only on accidents that could cause due to lack of guard on a machinery or poor wiring and so on, it could also be reasons like substance abuse by the employee or exposure to certain toxic substances on the job. Secondary smoke in a manufacturing unit could also pose as a hazard to health of employees. And exposure to toxic fumes and chemical could lead to various issues like respiratory problems, skin irritation, poisoning and so on.

Besides the hazards related to manufacturing setting like defective tools or machinery, loose wires, lack of shield on machinery, machines with sharp edges and so on, workplace hazards could also be as a result of certain personal aspects related to the employee or due to employee behaviour. These include taking unnecessary risks while carrying out work activity, not using or incorrectly using safety devices, using inappropriate tools and equipment while operating machinery, taking shortcuts and not following proper procedure as prescribed and so on.

We will look at some of the significant factors that could lead to workplace hazards and how to prevent them

- **Stress and burnout :** Stress is also a significant aspect or employee health and safety. Employees could experience stress at workplace and if not managed effectively, it can have an impact on their health and safety. Stress and stress management will be covered in unit 12 of this course, though in the present unit, we will discuss about some of the stressors that employee face at workplace. Stressors are stimuli that cause stress and there are a number of stressors that are experienced by the employees that can lead to an employee experiencing stress. In an organisational set up, occupational or work stress can be experienced due to various factors like role stressors, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, high workload, interpersonal conflict, organisational constraints and perceived control.
- Stress can also be experienced when an individual is not able to balance work and family life. Thus, the organisations need to focus on not only the work life of the employee but personal life as well as the issues faced by the employee in personal life can have repercussions on his/ her work life and vice versa. Employee may also experience stress as a result of emotional labour. Emotional labour can be explained as the affective

demands faced by an employee on the job. When employees on the job may be required to confront certain negative emotions or they are expected to suppress their true emotional state in order to achieve the organisational goal can result in the employee experiencing emotional labour.

- Besides the above, various organisational aspects like mergers and acquisitions, technological change in organisation, layoffs and so on can also have an impact on the employees and they could develop stress.
- With regard to burnout, it can be described as related to work stress. It can be explained as a stage of severe distress that could be manifested in terms of frustration, depression and decrease in productivity. According to Dessler (2013, page 556) “burnout as the total depletion of physical and mental resources caused by excessive striving to reach an unrealistic work-related goal. Burnout builds gradually, manifesting itself in symptoms such as irritability, discouragement, exhaustion, cynicism, entrapment, and resentment”.
- Stress can be effectively managed by having programmes to manage stress. There could be Yoga sessions for the employees. Regular sessions on meditation, relaxation, mindfulness can also be provided. Employee counselling services can also be made available to the employees so that they receive suitable help in dealing with stress and other psychological issues faced by them. Measures can be taken to ensure that stress is effectively managed and it doesn't lead to burnout.
- **Depression:** Employees could also experience depression due to varied factors. And this can have a negative impact on overall functioning of the employee and his/ her productivity. Employers need to pay close attention to any symptoms of depression amongst the employees and need to find them suitable help at the right time. It is to be remembered that depression as such can be diagnosed only by a trained professional and the employer and the organisation needs to refer the employee to such a professional so that the depression is diagnosed and treated. Though preventive measures can be used by the organisation to ensure that the employees remain psychologically healthy and awareness programmes in this could also be organised. Immediate supervisors can be trained to identify symptoms of depression and they could also be given training in basic counselling skills.
- Programmes focusing on promoting mental health could be organised for the employees. Awareness programmes focusing on myths and misconceptions about mental health and available services within and outside the organisation could also be carried out.
- **Workplace smoking:** Workplace smoking can also pose as a workplace hazard. Smoking could lead to various health related issues and could also contribute to accidents if the employee indulges in smoking, where

he/ she is not supposed to smoke. Smoking can also have an impact on the health of the other employees in the organisation. To deal with the issue, strict rules and policies could be put in place to ensure that the employees do not smoke when at work.

- **Substance use at the workplace:** A more serious issue could be substance use. According to Buddy T (2019) it is “a pattern of harmful use of any substance for mood-altering purposes. "Substances" can include alcohol and other drugs (illegal or not) as well as some substances that are not drugs at all”. Substance use was earlier referred to as substance abuse. Substance use includes consumption of tobacco, alcohol consumption and addiction, and drug abuse (using psychotic drugs). These could pose serious threats to health of the employee. It could also lead to interpersonal issues and conflicts amongst the employees. An employee indulging in substance use will also display low productivity, will be more prone to be involved in accidents and could also indulge in workplace violence.
- Dealing with substance use at workplace is very important and this can be by having strict norms and rules. Awareness programmes can also be created in this regard especially on the health hazards of substance use. It is also important to ensure that an employee who is displaying substance use receives suitable help and treatment to deal with the issue and recover.
- **Cumulative trauma disorders:** Also termed as repetitive motion injuries. According to Bohlander and Snell, (2013, page 512) “these musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) are related to muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints and spinal discs caused by repeated stress and strain”. Carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow are some common trauma disorders in this context. These can be dealt with by using ergonomics techniques so that the conditions at workplace that cause these disorders can be corrected. Suitable medical help and physiotherapy can be made available to employees to help recover from these disorders.
- **Computer workstation related issues:** Many employees are today dependent on using computers, especially, during COVID19 pandemic. This has led to various issues. Like visual difficulties like blurred vision, soreness in eyes, itchy or burning eyes and so on. Besides there are also muscular pain and aches as a result of continuously sitting in same position. This could lead to pain and aches in back, neck, shoulders and so on. Employees may also experience stress due to continuous work. These can be reduced by taking regular breaks, standing up in between, changing positions, having a comfortable chair, placing the computer in such a way that its screen is four to nine inches below the level of the eye (Bohlander and Snell, 2013) and so on. The employees can also be taught certain short exercises to reduce tension in muscles and provide rest to their eyes.

- **Workplace violence:** Violence at workplace can also pose as an hazard and can have an impact on the employees experiencing and witnessing it. It can not only have dire consequences for the victim of the violence but can instil fear in the mind of other employees, which in turn can have an impact on the overall functioning and productivity of the employees and the organisation. It is very important to ensure a violence free environment to all the employees. Measures in this regard again need to focus on strict norms, rules and policies that do not tolerate violence. Security measures could also be taken to ensure a violence free work place. Supervisors need to be trained in order to identify deal/ report incidences of workplace violence in terms of verbal threats, physical actions and co on .

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State the two forms of emotional labour.

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11.6 PROMOTING OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

In previous sections, to a greater extent we discussed about various ways in which employee safety and health can be promoted. Let us now list various ways of promoting occupational safety.

- **Policies, norms and rules:** First and foremost, it is important to have policies, norms and rules framed in a clear and specific manner regarding the safety and health related behaviours of the employees and also regarding display of violent behaviour on part of the employee at workplace. And any violation in this regard needs to be met with strict action. Thus, the employees need to be made aware of these policies, norms and rules and also the repercussions if these are not followed need s to be informed to the employees. Any new recruit should be made aware of these policies, norms and rules and from time to time all the employees need to be updated with these. The organisation needs to strictly follow the safety and health related norms as stated by the Country and state in which it is functioning.
- **Awareness programmes:** Awareness programmes related to the policies, norms and rule sin place is significant. But besides these awareness also needs to be created about the significance of using safety devices, displaying health behaviours and so on. Awareness programme

need to focus in the intrinsic motivation of the employees to use the devices and take necessary care while at work. Awareness can be created with the help posters, flyers, workshops, talks by significant others and so on.

- **Investigating and recording accidents and health related issues amongst the employees:** It is also important to keep a record of accidents and health related issues faced by the employees. This will help in understanding the causes and preventing them.
- **Promotion of healthy behaviour:** The employees can be encouraged to display health behaviours, exercise daily, have regular checkups, eye checkups, maintain their weight, glucose levels, blood pressure and so on. And organisation can play a role in this by organising free consultations for the employees. During COVID19 pandemic, many organisation got their employees tested for COVID19 on regular basis (RTPCR) and even got their employees vaccinated.
- **Promoting positive mental health:** A positive mental health needs to be promoted amongst the employees and this can be done by having regular Yoga, meditation, mindfulness sessions and so on. Employee counselling services could also be provided. there could be regular workshops on behavioural skills as well as on stress management. Awareness programme can also be organised to make the employees aware about the mental health related issues and help available. The supervisor and employees can be trained in identifying stress and depression related symptoms and also suicidal ideation. The focus thus, needs to be on prevention, providing support and promoting positive mental health.
- **Workplace emergencies:** There could also be workplace emergencies like an employee could get hurt or may develop a health related issue that may need urgent attention. the organisations need to be prepared for such incidences and there needs to be physician in the premises or a plan needs be in place about what is to be done. The employees and supervisors can also be traine din providing first aid to the injured or sick employee. Crisis management teams could be in place in order to deal with such incidences. In case of emergencies like fire or earthquake, tehre needs to be an evacuation plan in place.
- **Security programmes:** A security programme also needs to be in place. The organisations need to focus on mechanical (use of locks, alarms, control systems and so on), natural (related to natural and architectural aspects like number of entrances to the complex) and organisational (having security staff and attendants with clear idea about their duties and what is to be done in emergency, background check of new recruits, training the employees, security related orientation to the employees, and so on) security systems. Threat assessment can also be carried out in terms of access to the reception area, interior security, authorities

involvement, mail handling, evacuation and backup system (Dessler, 2013). Keeping in mind attacks like 26/7, attacks in India in 2008, such security related issues need to be focused on.

11.7 LET US SUM UP

In the present unit we mainly focused on employee safety and health. Health can be explained not as absence of illness or disease but a state characterised by physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing. And safety can be explained in simple terms as absence of accidents or it can also be described as protection that is provided to the workers in order to prevent any accidents and protect them from any dangers. The unit also focused on occupational health. The causes and prevention of accidents was also discussed. The unit also highlighted the workplace hazards and its prevention. Lastly, the unit focused on promoting occupational safety.

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11.9 KEY WORDS

Accident: An accident is defined as any unexpected event that interrupts or interferes with the orderly progress of the production activity.

Accident proneness: Accident proneness can be explained as an individual's tendency to have accidents frequently, which can be attributed to the characteristics possessed by that individual that are stable and persistent in nature.

Health: Health can be explained not as absence of illness or disease but as a state characterised by physical, mental, spiritual and social wellbeing.

Health hazards: Health hazards can be explained as the work environment characteristics that can systematically and gradually have a negative impact on the health of the employees.

Safety: Safety can be explained in simple terms as absence of accidents or it can also be described as protection that is provided to the workers in order to prevent any accidents and protect them from any dangers.

Safety hazards: Safety hazards can be explained as conditions related to the work environment that could lead to employees being harmed. An example of safety hazards could be slippery floor.

11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is safety?

Safety can be explained in simple terms as absence of accidents or it can also be described as protection that is provided to the workers in order to prevent any accidents and protect them from any dangers.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) What is accident proneness?

Accident proneness can be explained as an individual's tendency to have accidents frequently, which can be attributed to the characteristics possessed by that individual that are stable and persistent in nature.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) List any one way of ensuring safe working conditions.
- Measures need to be taken to provide suitable safety devices to the employees while welding or spray painting is carried out. Fire extinguishers need to be provided at accessible points and they need to be in working condition.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) State the two forms of emotional labour

The two forms of emotional labour are:

- employees are forced to confront negative emotions.
- an employee may be forced to suppress his/her true emotional state and promote the goals of the organisation.

11.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain occupational health.
- 1) Describe causes and prevention of accidents.
- 2) Discuss workplace hazards and its prevention.
- 3) Discuss ways of promoting occupational health.

11.12 ACTIVITY

Refer to course BPCC110 (on egyankosh), Block 5, Practical 3, that discusses about Theory of Planned Behaviour. Based on this theory design an intervention strategy to promote use of safety devices like goggles, gloves, masks, earplugs and so on. You can also draw a figure as shown in the practical.

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UNIT 12 EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING AND WELLNESS SERVICES *

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Nature and Scope of Employee Counselling
- 12.3 Approaches in Employee Counselling
- 12.4 Process of Employee Counselling
- 12.5 Stress and stress management
- 12.6 Employee Wellness and Health Promotion Programmes
- 12.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.8 References
- 12.9 Key Words
- 12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 12.11 Unit End Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to,

- discuss the nature and scope of employee counselling;
- explain approaches to employee counselling;
- discuss the process of employee counselling;
- describe stress and stress management; and
- explain employee wellness and health promotion programmes.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In past two decades technology and innovation has changed organizational culture drastically. Growth is perceived very differently compared to initial days of industrialisation. Organisations encourage culture of challenge among employees which in turn encourages tolerance of stress and acceptance of distrust, conflict and maladjustment as mundane affair. Currently it is being observed that productivity level and employee's well being are getting linked directly under pressure of performance. It is the call of hour that organization recognises the emotional need of employees. Employees' wellbeing should be taken care of to sustain organizational growth and contribute towards a healthy nation.

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Presently there is a growing trend of promoting global health promotion policies by organisations as goodwill gesture towards employees. Personal wellbeing intervenes with professional performance and vice-versa, hence it has now become absolute necessary to deal with emotional need of employees to minimise absenteeism and maximise productivity. Workplace counselling is an effective medium to diminish effects of bullying, conflict, substance abuse and other psychosomatic disorders which may occur as resultant of workplace stress. Providing counselling to solve work place conflict and work related stress, and offer help in health management will create a committed team.

12.2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING

Counselling can be defined as scientific and systematic interaction between expert and another individual who is in need of guidance. In counselling there are two main parties, one with expertise and the other who is facing certain issue or a problem. The individual with necessary expertise helps the person facing problem to understand the problem faced by him/ her adequately and derive solutions that can be used to deal with the problem. Counselling does not involve giving advice but mainly focuses on creating a conducive environment so that the person facing the problem is able to deal with the problem effectively. Counselling can also be explained as a talk therapy that involves a non judgmental and supportive counsellor and a person who needs guidance to make shift in perception, thought process and decision making to make life events more peaceful and successful. In the process counselee is guided through journey on how to avoid conflicts and stress, which may cause ill effect on personal health. Counselling helps individual choose between alternatives without getting fearful of rejection. Counselling that is carried out in workplace or when employees are provided with counselling, it can be referred as employee counselling. Employee counselling contributes in behavioural changes, quick decision making, and harmonious relations, which leads to positive situation and increased productivity.

Goal of employee counselling is to bolster employees' confidence in the process that confidentiality will be maintained. Through counselling they regain their trust in self, that participation would help them strategically develop solutions to manage the problems. In past decade workplace counselling was found to contribute in reduction of sickness absenteeism by fifty percent. It reduces the amount of conflict between employer and employee and therefore saves a lot of productive time from being spent in argument and discontentment. Workplace offers numerous opportunities to employees to seek professional help from counsellor, such as excess workload, emotional stress, performance anxiety, depression, and other relationship issues. Each employee face challenges with change in role and job. Life changing personal and professional events as marriage, promotion

or transfer, combined together may give way to emotional and financial crises, which in turn may lead to problems as addiction, illness or stress. The goal of counselling is to make two worlds meet within the organization, both at personal and professional level. The counsellors' goal is to ensure that employer's and employee's opinions, coworkers' ideas, and inner thoughts and projected behavior of an individual, everything should coincide at some common platform.

Employees today are constantly being challenged by lack of time and increasing work pressure. Counselling helps employee to think of new ways to deal with problems related to performance or other work related issues. Stress and depression are not always caused by work pressure. Sometimes not being able to attend to personal and social needs also adds to anxiety, frustration, stress and depression. Loneliness and grief caused by losing a family member or relocating to unknown place may also add to disturbing mood swings which leads to stress and anxiety. All of these factors ultimately affect performance. Failing official targets and family commitments creates lot of tension in interpersonal relationship at workplace and also with family. To help an employee come out of such troublesome situation it is needed that organization designates professional counsellor, who would help them see the problem from different perspective and hence come up with different solution. Availability of counselling service in organization is indication of how much an organization cares for its employees. It acts in favour of organization to win their employees heart and compliance.

Some of the types of counselling provided in an organisational set up are as follows:

- **Educational counselling:** Educational counselling is concerned with advising people on educational plan and acquires certification with specialisations. Suppose somebody has joined the organization at entry level with minimum qualification required. Since employees equipped with special skill set are always beneficial for the organization counsellors job is to make that employee realise true potential. In organisations educational counselling would mean advising employees on training and educational programs which would assist them in career growth.
- **Career counselling:** Career counselling helps employee in deciding career graph. Once associated with the organization employee would aspire for optimum growth. Organisations differ in schemes of promotional growth. Some of them have discreet policies only known to management or concerned authorities. Existing employees are tested at different stages and further counselled to take up new challenges, if required, recommended training. Employees need to qualify and prove themselves worthy of designations and parallel in skills and education with fresh entrees. Organizational counsellor guides the employee

through the world of work. It aids the employee in understanding the career ladder and also the required skill set to match.

- **Conflict counselling:** Conflict counselling is focused on resolving disagreement. Disagreements and arguments are inevitable in dynamic organization with diverse manpower. Cultural bias, linguistic barrier, and individual perception are frequent cause of conflict between coworkers or employee and employer. For example a new joiner is highly confused in new atmosphere and supervisor is overloaded with targets. It is easy for the fresher to assume that supervisor is avoiding and not taking time out to explain the task in detail. Similarly the supervisor may also get under impression that the new employee is incompetent and demanding. Counsellor helps both of them see the other side of the story in convincing manner, so that each of them are more concerned with resolving issues and try to improve on work as a team.
- **Mental health counselling:** It is concerned with various kind of psychological distress. Employees in organization are challenged from time to time on cognitive, behavioural and emotional issues which may play havoc with their inner peace and personal life. It may seem to be very joyous happening that someone gets married soon after getting into job, followed by transfer to new and remote destination. In reality it is more like facing multiple challenges with a compulsion to project being happy while getting burdened by each factor and over commitment. Counsellor helps in prioritising feelings and thoughts in logical sequence.
- **Rehabilitation counselling:** Rehabilitation counselling is focused on helping people who failed to achieve their personal, professional or basic living goals owing to certain disability. Employees in organization are confronted with physical and social limitations. Sometimes they are relocated to strange locations. Some industries that deal in heavy machinery are prone to accidents and so are the employees. Major setback in life are mostly caused by injury, illness, disease, ostracism, addiction or broken relations. Counselor is constant source of emotional support in re-establishing life. They motivate employee in every possible way to participate at work place and lead an independent life.
- **Relationship counselling:** Relationship counselling deals with interpersonal conflict between two members either in family or organization. Employees should be referred to Family and Marriage counsellors for in depth counselling.
- **Grief counselling:** Grief counselling deals with guilt and sorrow suffered after losing a family member. Employees should be referred to grief counsellor, if bereavement continues for abnormally longer period and alarming signs of anxiety and depression are noticed.

- **Substance abuse counselling:** Substance abuse counselling helps individual get rid of alcoholism and drug abuse. Employees should be referred to expert counsellor/psychiatrist if there are number of complaints on addictive behavior inside premises. Once Initial counselling is done by counsellor and there is no change in behavior as per norms, or misbehaviour increases in frequency, expert advice should be sought at the earliest possible, as this involves medical intervention.
- **Spiritual counselling:** Spiritual Counselling is concerned with values and believes. It is recommended to employees seeking to verify and establish their own belief system about religion, nature and universe. In process of counselling questioning or confirming somebody's religious faith and belief should be avoided.

Employee counselling can improve organizational performance by around 70% as predicted by research. It guides employee to reach effective solutions to problems by creating an understanding. It improves coping skill with a more positive outlook. Workplace counselling contributes to both organizational and individual productivity and better growth by minimizing conflicts. Reduced absenteeism, lesser conflict, lesser occurrences of fatigue and accidents, cohesive team, high morale, and improved family and social life are proven benefits of counselling in the organization.

In counselling certain norms are to be followed precisely to prevent failure.

- a) As a rule, never break confidentiality.
- b) Map intervention plans economically. Do not stretch it beyond required time.
- c) Remain honest to organizational goals and never get carried away on emotional ground.
- d) Do not venture into fields beyond expertise; refer cases to experts if needed.
- e) Technique of counselling should be compatible with new researches.

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is counselling?

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12.3 APPROACHES IN EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING

One of the most important decisions a counsellor need to make to ensure positive outcome of counselling is to select the right approach of counselling . Since every employee is a different individual, from different background, facing different challenge with unique personality, counsellor 's job becomes difficult to choose right timing, right language and right approach. There are three major approaches of counselling .

- **Directive Counselling:** In directive counselling an active role is played by the counsellor. Although the interaction is not pre guided, still it is guided by the counsellor to reach certain conclusion in a systematic and scientific way. In organisations employees are recommended to meet counsellor whenever there is a need to address an issue in detail. Employee is helped to see the problem from different aspects and a constructive solution is reached in agreement. For example, an employee in the organization aspires for growth or aiming to reach next designation but falls short in qualification required for that specific role. The HR executive who looks after appraisal and promotions succeeds in explaining the gap but fails to win the employees trust on this matter. The employee in turn is not reluctant to undergo training and equip self to occupy the post, but finds it quite disheartening that he is asked to do so. Counsellor helps the employee to understand the situation by posing certain leading question without dominating the conversation.

In directive counselling counsellor deliberately tries to replace emotional behavior with logical behavior. Counsellor approaches the employee in a trained manner and helps him identify the trigger and nature of the problem without threatening the employee's position. In above example, counsellor 's role is to help the employee realize that suggested training program is required to fulfill expectations from the designated role and nobody is questioning the current knowledge and status to belittle his experience. In directive counselling the employee takes more time to open up presuming threats to his position. Counsellor 's primary role in this is to listen, advice and reassure emotional security.

- **Non-directive counselling:** In non- directive counselling counselee plays active role unlike directive counselling . The direction of interaction is mostly guided by the counselee. Many times employee in organization finds themselves stuck in some adverse situation and willingly solicits counsellor 's opinion to resolve the situation. In such case sharing of information is lucid and open, under counsellor 's guidance to keep the conversation on right track and avoid irrelevant details. Let us take same example discussed in directive counselling. Suppose the employee himself sought counselling instead of being referred by the human resource department. In such case the employee is

aware that training is required to be done in order to occupy the aspired post. Though there could be a little misunderstanding that he is being forced to undergo that training and organization is not considering the amount of experience acquired in all these years.

The role of counsellor remains same as to listen, accept and encourage objectivity and help the employee perceive things in logical manner and not with emotional bias. Only difference is employee would disclose thoughts more freely and take initiative in discussing matter with better understanding of situation, in non directive approach.

- **Participative counselling:** Participative counselling is an eclectic approach of both directive and non directive counselling . It is rather cooperative exchange of ideas between the counsellor and the counselee. This is also more economic and less time consuming. This is better suited approach in organization. Employees do not take counselling very enthusiastically. Most importantly independent employee do not see being referred to counsellor as kind gesture and similarly many of them do not approach by self in fear of being mocked among fellow workers. Let us understand this approach referring to the same example. In such case the organization should first recognize the inner motivation of the employee to develop and grow. In addition, each employee who is eligible to hold the post and falling short in some way should once be referred to counsellor . This would reduce the feeling of animosity to some extent and situation can be handled positively. In Participative approach counsellor 's role is to help the employee in self acceptance by allowing contributing diverse solutions to problems.

Counsellor may chose either approach but the success of counselling would depend on the quality of interaction. Sometimes the whole process of counselling gets wrapped up in very short time because mere exchange of emotions and ideas resolves issue sooner than expected. Sometimes just somebody's availability to patient hearing does the trick and everything gets resolved in minutes.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List the three approaches to employee counselling.

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12.4 PROCESS OF EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING

In the process of counselling both counsellor and counselee sails through many emotional changes and end up developing therapeutic bond amongst them. Both of them face good and bad, win through ups and downs. The whole process of counselling not only benefits the employee in resolving issues, it also broadens counsellor's understanding of the situation. The process of counselling transpires through six different stages to be successful and pleasant.

- 1) **Pre-contemplation:** Pre contemplation is the first and opening stage of counselling. In this stage the employee is apprehensive of the counsellor and the process of counselling. Before it starts the employee either tries to put the blame on others (people or surrounding) to be the problem or is still trying to figure out what must have caused the problem. It is also possible that employee is caught unaware of why he had been referred to the counsellor. The counsellor is at advantageous position in this stage to set an optimistic ambience and win employee's trust to begin with the process. It is important that the employee trusts the counsellor for positive results.
- 2) **Contemplation:** Contemplation is also called stage of exploration. Here both counsellor and employee are apprehensive about how much the other person is aware of the problem. They start with knowing each other and set to spell expectations from each other. Counsellor is free to explore employee's past and current problems, their values, preference regarding work and organization. This stage offers ample of space to grow friendly bonds. Employee on the other hand tries to explore more about counselling tries to understand the counsellor's experience and exposure towards worldly affairs. In this stage employee would develop trust or doubt depends on counsellor's behavior. It is recommended that the counsellor make best use of this opportunity and wins employee's confidence before proceeding further.
- 3) **Preparation:** Preparation is also called stage of understanding. In this stage counsellor starts mapping the conversation and employee gradually start sharing information on issue. It is very important that counsellor remain alerts and carefully chooses phrases in conversation. Employee also gathers self to confess the truth and face reality.
- 4) **Intervention:** Intervention requires the most of patience on counsellor's part and encouragement on employee's part. A quick jump to action by either of them may ruin the final outcome of the process. Before suggesting any action or asking straight question counsellor should check employee's readiness to participate. Employee's organizational status, self image, self esteem, and acceptance of the procedure, acceptance of the counsellor, and eagerness to change will decide how the counselling will progress. If it is hurried or delayed too much, the

whole process may lose its essence and the change in behavior may not happen at all.

- 5) **Maintenance:** In this stage both counsellor and employee starts exploring options and also logically evaluates the pros and cons associated with those options. Everything shared and explained, every plan drawn and accepted, every promise made and expected to be fulfilled, will first have to be understood, accepted, and valued in thoughts as our own and not something impelled. Once everything is exchanged in enough detail and employee can visualize the effect of changed behavior, it can be safely assumed the change in behavior will persist out of counselling too.
- 6) **Post care:** It is important to understand for both the counsellor and the employee that certain situational factors cannot be completely removed or changed. Hence the trigger to conflict or stress may reappear and challenge us to react in the same old way. Permanency of temporarily changed behavior lies upon employee's commitment to self. Counselling process should end with transition of empowerment in employee. Successful counselling ends up with this knowledge of fact in both parties that situation may reoccur but the employee is now in control of his behavior.

Check Your Progress III

- 1) What is the first stage in the process of employee counselling?

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12.5 STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress has today become a part and parcel of life and in the context of an organisation, it is important to understand stress that can have an impact on the wellbeing and performance of the employees. Let us first discuss about what is stress.

The terms stress find its origin in 'stringere' that is a Latin word and means 'to draw tight' (Cox, 1978). Stress is a very commonly used term in every context whether school, workplace, day to day life and so on. We often come across people who say that they are stressed or experiencing stress in their lives. We ourselves experience stress often.

Hans Selye (1974) described stress as a response of the body to certain demand that is made on it and he further stated that this response was non-specific.

Schafer (1998, page 6) defined stress as “arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them”.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984, page 19) defined stress as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/ her resources and endangering his/ her wellbeing”.

Truxillo et al (2016, page 440) defined stress as “the body’s reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response”. In the context of stress, it is also important to discuss about stressor.

Gerrig and Zimbardo (2005, page 430) defined stressor as a stimulus event that places a demand on an organism for some kind of adaptive response”.

As can be seen from the above definitions some of the important aspects related to stress are that stress is a response to certain stimuli and is mainly experienced when the resources of the individuals are challenged. The physiological changes that take place as a result of stress was also highlighted.

Since here we are discussing stress related to workplace, let us understand the concept in organizational set up. Suppose an employee suffered bad relations with fellow workers, suffers ruined relation at home, and constantly being bothered about senior’s behavior, assuming he is being ill treated. Counselling was provided in more than one occasions but nothing changed because the employee did not learn to alter thought process. The employee would continue to suffer threat and criticism. In effort to handle this threat the body will start releasing stress hormones, adrenalin and cortisol. Lot of other bodily changes will also take place. Strained muscle, overworked heart, quick breath everything will add to panic. It is natural to suffer stress in such situation.

Ideally speaking stress helps in focusing and staying alert, defending individual against danger. Moderate Stress causes positive influence on work. It is the physical response to any kind of challenge or demand, which cause damage to body and mental health. In threatening situations stress protects us, only if it remains in check to certain limit. Beyond certain limit stress cause adverse effect on quality of health, relationship and workplace performance. Chronic stress leaves individual prone to anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. Stress aggravates pain, insomnia, indigestion, ulcerations, other skin and hair problems, and heart problems. Stress is characterised by excessive hair fall, loss of appetite or sudden weight gain or loss. Loss of appetite, concentration and unexplained fatigue are some common and early symptom of stress.

Workplace stress is a combination of physical and emotional response towards high demand of job performance and low control over situational factor. It causes similar kind of impact over both employers and employees. Stress results into illness, absenteeism, employee turnover, reduced objectivity, bad politics, reduced efficiency and productivity, poor managerial decisions and apathy.

Most often work related stress is caused by poor organization of infrastructure, hierarchy, work, and self. To a large extent stress is related to employee's perception of work overload, role conflict, perception of social support, and past experience. It can be used in employee's and organisation's favour by shifting perception. Counsellor is largely responsible to guide individual employee on how to perceive things in different light. They try to bring change in cognitive process and emotional behavior through counselling. In stress management there is sequence of action to execute and monitor.

- 1) **Stress recognition:** Initial symptoms of stress are mostly in form of physical ailment (headache, indigestion, insomnia etc. etc.) and emotional mood swings (loneliness, anger, memory loss etc. etc.). Work place syndrome would include social withdrawal, disobedience, frequent accidents and overreactions to small things.
- 2) **Stress assessment:** This stage essentially works upon identifying the stressor. Stressor is the trigger factor that induces stress in individual. In an organization culture, values, roles, work relations and individual coping mechanism are majorly responsible to cause stress.
- 3) **Coping with stress:** When it is said that stress is mere physical and emotional response to mismatch of demand and delivery, it also suggests that by creating balance between the two, stress can be avoided or treated to great extent. In fact, each step taken to erase this imbalance is a step to towards positive management of stress.
- 4) **Monitoring and evaluation:** Accidents and illness is major contributor to stress in organizational premises. Psychological training and supervised observation proven strategy to avoid stress at workplace. However continuous and constant monitoring is not feasible in organizational setup with huge manpower. Anti stress initiative are maintained by implementation of several preventive programs. Stress counselling is an effective tool in stress management; it can help obviate severe illness.

There are various ways in which stress can be managed. The serenity prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr (1932) “ O’ God give me the courage to change what must be altered, serenity to accept what cannot be altered, and the insight to know the difference of one from the other.” is classic strategy to manage stress.

- 1) Avoid confronting the situation/stressor/trigger to avoid stress. In reality it is seldom possible to avoid the entire situation that causes stress. In workplace avoiding argument with supervisor to keep stress away from you, but you cannot avoid the supervisor all the time.
- 2) Alter the situation /behavior/ perception to avoid stress. Alter the situation by adding positive element, a positive response to it. Instead of avoiding the supervisor it is preferable to avoid mistakes which may cause arguments.
- 3) Adapt to situation/people/outcome to avoid stress. Adapt to situation with positive learning. Adapt to people by accepting their flaws. Adapt to results knowing the limitations. Evaluate what is the root cause of argument. If it is bad work, improve your performance; if it is temperamental nature of supervisor, accommodate the flaws with knowledge that nobody is perfect; if the result of your input is not satisfactory, figure out how you can do better next time.
- 4) Alternate: There exists an alternate option to every option. If nothing you do helps you in avoiding stress, then choose alternative. It is better to venture and create a better world for self and surrender to peace than leading a stressful life.

Stress counselling at workplace adapts norms and procedure of (CBT) cognitive behavior therapy. Cognitive behavior therapy aims to restructure thought process. Suppose an employee suffers social anxiety driven by work place stress caused by misperception of being ill treatment by fellow workers. Counsellor guides employee in replacing automatically generated negative thoughts with positive ones by showing them logical side of each argument. Let us follow the case step by step:

- 1) Identify trigger events causing this perception. Whenever supervisor reaches the site an argument takes place.
- 2) Guide the employee visualise the events from different angles using imagination, instead of asking them to be positive in thinking. The employee can be asked to visualize factors which could have avoided the argument.
- 3) Out of several probable outcomes that employee has just imagined, help them to see the positive ones more logically.
- 4) Explain how to replace negative thoughts with positive ones with few more hypothetical examples. Quoting direct incidences every time will cause more anxiety.
- 5) Suggest the employee to practice replacing negative emotions with possible positive outcomes before jumping to any conclusion.

- 6) Starting with simple and small incidences, eventually the employee will see changes in his mood and behavior.
- 7) Maintain regular interaction for desired time period until it is evident in his behavior and health. Length of such periodic interaction varies from case to case.

Stress counselling follows path of identification, exposure, reasoning, practicing, and evolving as mature individuals. The fact should never be forgotten that counsellor also acquire next level of maturity with each counselling, resolving diverse issues. As a word of caution always start stress counselling with the least challenging issue, that helps in gaining trust of the employee.

There are various stress management techniques that can be used to manage stress. Some of these are discussed as follows:

- **Relaxation techniques:** There are various relaxation techniques that can be used in order to manage stress. These techniques mainly focus on the physiological changes that take place when stress is experienced. For instance, when stress is experienced, the pulse rate will increase, breathing will also become faster, muscles may become tensed and so on. Relaxation techniques such as Jacobson's progressive muscle relaxation mainly include breathing exercises and contracting and relaxing various bodily muscles.
- **Meditation:** Meditation means 'Dhyan' in Sanskrit. It can be described as a process of "quieting the mind in order to spend time in thought for relaxation with a goal to attain inner state of awareness and intensify personal and spiritual growth" (<https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/4949/meditation>). There are various types of meditation including mindfulness meditation, transcendental meditation, guided meditation, Vipassana meditation, loving kindness meditation (meta meditation), Chakra meditation that can be effectively used in order to deal with stress.
- **Yoga:** Also known as Yog (Sanskrit) can also be helpful. Yoga includes various Asanas and pranayama. And when Yoga is practiced on regular basis, it can have long term health benefits.
- **Time management:** Time management can be explained as effective utilisation of time and this as well can help in managing stress. Main aspects of time management include prioritisation, scheduling and execution. Various techniques of time management include following a planner system, blocking time wasters, delegating and dealing with procrastination besides others.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Improving one's interpersonal skills can also help in effective management of stress. Interpersonal skills includes adopting

effective communication skills, enhancing self awareness and learning effective conflict resolution strategies. Emotional intelligence can also help enhance one's interpersonal skills and manage stress effectively.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) What is stress?

12.6 EMPLOYEE WELLNESS AND HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMMES

Employee counselling alone cannot fill the gap between expectation and demand. It is also required to take initiatives and implement employee wellness program to safeguard employee's overall well being. It covers many aspects of employee's life such as financial, physical and social health. While designing wellness program it is important that it should be economical both for organization and employee. There are five basic wellness routine recommended at work place without engaging financial expense are:

- a) **Meditation:** Constructs garden and/or a hall for the employees' to pray and meditate when it gets hard on them to keep up with challenges.
- b) **Exercise:** Free membership for gymnasium, yoga clubs, or dance classes is given to employees to engage them in physical activity and ensures health.
- c) **Cushion breaks:** An official library with free access (hosting good relevant literature), cafeteria (mentioning time slots for entry), and pet care centre (where employees are allowed to bring along their pet on certain days and everybody is allowed to play in break time).
- d) **Social connection:** Organise luncheon, parties, Pot luck parties (bring healthy food from home) and picnics from time to time, and allow employees to vent out their bottled up emotions.
- e) **Futuristic goals:** Mark specific days in calendar to engage employees in outdoor sports, plantation drive, and charitable tasks outside organization. Self realization of making significant contribution to environment and society adds new dimension to self worth and people with high self esteem enjoy high wellbeing scores.

Annual health survey, medical camps, group health plans, financial counselling, sponsored vacation, are all examples of employee wellness program run by organisations . It is important to ascertain the need of employee before selecting any program to offer. It is also important to determine whether it would be offered as part of incentive or reward, to bring optimum result.

Various other employee wellness programme that can also be initiated include:

- **Operational training:** To benefit existing employee upgrade their skill organization either design in- house training program, outsource trainer, or/and sponsor candidate to pursue training from other institutions.
- **Financial risk management:** Financial agencies are invited to provide timely consultation to employees on managing investments and expenses. Some organization offers incentive in form of investment policies
- **Employee assistance:** Employees are guided on ways to adjust in organizational, social and personal life.
- **Paramedic services:** Organisations prone to accidents and fatigue can provide paramedic assistance (physiotherapist, nurse, etc.) to employees in rehabilitation.
- **Smoking cessation:** Considering ill effects of smoking and to eradicate problem many organization now solicits experts to promote smoking cessation programs.
- **Stress reduction:** It is a combination of many activities as exercise, yoga, meditation etc.etc. Some organisations with longer shifts offer rest room for short naps similarly sedentary jobs can also schedule walk time.

Employees vary tremendously in their needs. Being recommended for wellness program should be valued. Preliminary assessment is most important to carry out designing and implementing wellness program. Once done with assessment wellness program gets implemented in following steps.

- 1) Get approval from management
- 2) Finalise budget
- 3) Form a team/committee to implement
- 4) Develop goals
- 5) Design program and categorise them as in- house/outsourced/sponsored etc.
- 6) Identify trainers/experts/outside agencies.
- 7) Invite member employee to join group
- 8) Assign them to different programs as suits (self sponsored/incentive /reward)
- 9) Re assess the employee's current status of affair
- 10) Either wrap up or re- assign member to same or different program, as required.

Effectiveness of wellness program largely depends on willingness of employee to participate. As we discussed in previous section employees are counselled before they being assigned to any wellness program. Success of wellness program is verified by participants' feedback and frequency of

changed behavior. Eventually it should decrease rate of absenteeism and increased rate of productivity. Wellness program implemented well will always result into enthusiastic employees willing to participate, followed by requests for additional program. It should lead to overall positivity in employees' behavior, health, relations, performance and organizational culture.

Check Your Progress V

- 1) List five basic wellness routine recommended at work place.

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12. 7 LETS SUM UP

To sum up, in the present unit, we discussed about employee counselling. Employee counselling is professional interaction with individual or group of employees who are psychologically healthy but needed guidance to resolve their situation of current conflict. Various types, approaches and the process of employee counselling were also discussed. The unit further focused on stress and stress management. Lastly the employee wellness and health promotion programmes were also discussed

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12.9 KEY WORDS

Counselling: Counselling can be defined as scientific and systematic interaction between expert and another individual who is in need of guidance.

Stress: Lazarus and Folkman (1984, page 19) defined stress as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/ her resources and endangering his/ her wellbeing”.

12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

- 1) What is counselling?

Counselling can be defined as scientific and systematic interaction between expert and another individual who is in need of guidance.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) List the three approaches to employee counselling.

The three approaches to employee counselling are

- Directive counselling
- Non-directive counselling
- Participative counselling

Check Your Progress III

- 1) What is the first stage in the process of employee counselling?

The first stage in the process of employee counselling is pre-contemplation.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) What is stress?

Schafer (1998, page 6) defined stress as “arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them”.

Check Your Progress V

- 1) List five basic wellness routine recommended at work place.

The five basic wellness routine recommended at work place are:

- Meditation
- Exercise
- Cushion breaks
- Social connection
- Futuristic goals

12.11 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the nature and scope of employee counselling.
- 1) Explain the approaches to employee counselling.
- 2) Describe the process of employee counselling.
- 3) Discuss stress and stress management.
- 4) Explain employee wellness and health promotion programmes.



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