ENHANCING WELLBEING AT WORKPLACE: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT:
The wellbeing and mental health have gained significant attention in the workplace, as organizations recognized the profound impact it has on employee productivity, engagement, and overall organizational success. Nowadays the problem related to mental health and wellbeing in employee has increased day by day. More than 10% of employees have mental problem and as of report 2019, more than 300 million people were living with anxiety globally, and more than 200 million people were living with depression. This article aimed at enhancing workplace wellbeing, with a particular focus on promoting mental health. The paper summarised findings from recent studies and expert recommendations to present a comprehensive overview of effective practices. This paper provides a roadmap for organizations seeking to enhance workplace wellbeing and promote mental health.

Keywords: Workforce Wellbeing, Mental Health, Organizational culture, Stress and Burnout, workplace Success, etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace wellbeing and good mental health is an important aspect of overall well-being. The mental health and wellbeing of employee is one of the important key concepts of today's world. Today, mental disorders are impacting millions of working people globally. India also faces several challenges in promoting employee's mental health. As per Census 2011 report India has more than 400 million working population, and in coming days working-age population is expected to increase 65% till 2036. And The National Mental Health Survey 2015-16, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) estimated that nearly 150 million individuals suffer from one or the other mental disorders of varying severity, comprising 10.5% of the population, while prevalence of mental illness is higher among males 13.9% as compared to females 7.5%. males from 30 to 49 age group of the working population, have the highest prevalence of mental Problems. at it results in increasing employee absenteeism, lower rates of productivity and increased costs to

organizations (Shankardass, 2017). Word Health Organization outlines aim for protection and promotion of mental health problems of the employees (2013–2030) Such as to realise the greatest population of mental health problems, to protect mental health by reducing work related risk factors and to promote mental health by developing the positive aspects of work. Problems related to mental health are both in symptomatic and asymptomatic like stress, anxiety, burnout, depression, psychological problems are usual in workplace.

1.1. Meaning and Definition

1.1.1. Mental Health:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in where an individual can handle everyday stresses of life, work effectively and is able to contribute to their society. Mental health is multifaceted in nature which refers to an Individuals Emotional, Psychological and Social Well-being which involves the ability to handle stress, and make choices. In the workplace context, mental health encompasses employees emotional, psychological, and social well-being, influencing how they think, feel, and behave in a professional environment.

1.1.2. Wellbeing:

According Dodge et al. (2012) Well-being is the balance point between an individual's resources and the challenges they face, encompassing physical, emotional, and social dimensions.

Wellbeing Encompasses both mental health and physical health along with factors such as social relationships, environmental conditions, and Personal fulfilment. Well-being of employees at the workplace refers to the overall state of employees physical, mental, emotional, and social health within the work environment, encompassing their ability to manage stress, maintain work-life balance, build positive relationships, and find meaning and satisfaction in their roles.

1.1.3. Relationship between mental health and wellbeing

Mental health and well-being are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing aspects of an employee's overall health. While mental health refers specifically to an individual's psychological and emotional state, well-being encompasses a broader spectrum of health,

including physical, emotional, social, and occupational factors. For example, Positive mental health (e.g., resilience, emotional stability) enables individuals to engage in meaningful relationships, maintain productivity, and experience satisfaction, all of which contribute to well-being. Also, well-being reflects how individuals perceive and experience their lives. High well-being (e.g., feeling satisfied and purposeful) is often a sign of good mental health. The holistic state of an employee's physical, mental, and emotional health that enables them to function effectively, adapt to challenges, build positive relationships, and find satisfaction and purpose in their work. This includes factors like stress management, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and the ability to thrive in the workplace.

a. Mental Health as a Core Component of Well-being

Mental health significantly influences an employee's overall well-being. Poor mental health, such as anxiety, depression, or burnout, can impair emotional balance, job satisfaction, and social interactions, reducing overall well-being. Conversely, good mental health enhances resilience, emotional stability, and the ability to manage stress, contributing positively to well-being.

b. Well-being Supporting Mental Health

A high level of overall well-being, driven by factors like work-life balance, positive workplace relationships, and access to wellness programs, provides a supportive environment for good mental health. Poor well-being (e.g., stressful work environments, toxic cultures, or lack of support) can lead to mental health issues like chronic stress, anxiety, or burnout.

c. Interdependence and Workplace Impact

Employees with strong mental health are more likely to feel engaged, motivated, and satisfied at work, contributing to overall well-being. Likewise, organizations that prioritize employee well-being through mental health support (e.g., counselling, flexible work policies) foster a healthier and more productive workforce. Therefore, Mental health and well-being are deeply interconnected. Promoting one typically enhances the other, creating a healthier, happier, and more productive workforce

2. METHODOLOGY:

A review of the literature was carried out by searching various databases including google Scholar, ResearchGate, Sodha Ganga, and relevant journals etc, focusing on studies related to the Mental health and wellbeing of the employees.

Mental health and wellbeing of employee's are presumably affected by multiple factors ranging from organizational practices to individual circumstances such as:

a. Negative organizational culture such as Inflexible working hours, excessive workload, Lack of Support,

b. Toxic work culture and lack of recognition

c. Understaffing inadequate pay

d. Job insecurity or temporary employment status

e. High job demands

f. Unsafe or poor physical infrastructure

g. Harassment or bullying and violence at workplace

h. Gender discrimination and exclusion

i. Conflict with colleagues

j. Communication Issues

k. Ineffective feedback and

l. Limited mentorship

2.1. Impact of poor level of mental health and well-being

Many studies have found that poor level of mental health can affect not only the employee but also it can affect the organization too. Poor mental health and wellbeing of the employee can lead to absenteeism, negative impact on productivity and profits, poor performance in the organization, poor and ineffective communication with a lack of support. Harvey et. Al (2017) stated that mental health workplace goes beyond employee's wellbeing, and it significantly affects every employee as well as coworkers. According to Cottini & Lucifora, (2013) Mental health problems are usually understood as it's a burden on employees, to families, and also to communities. Also, Workplace stress is a significant contributor to works mental health problems. Maslach & Leiter, (2016) study found that common stressors include excessive workload, lack of control, role ambiguity, and interpersonal conflicts. Evans-Lacko and Knapp (2014) found that factors like bullying, lack of social support from

the organization and colleagues and high-pressure work can lead to mental health issues including depression in employees.

3. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AT WORKPLACE

3.1. Promote Work-Life Balance

Work life balance is a critical factor in promoting employees mental and wellbeing. Many studies have shown that flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible hours, can alleviate work-family conflict and improve overall well-being. Shockley et al. (2017) found that flexible work arrangements help reduce stress and increase job satisfaction, by letting employees match their work schedules with personal needs. Derks et al. (2014) demonstrated that employees who disconnect from work during non-work hours experience lower stress and higher well-being. Hence offering flexible working hours, remote work options, or hybrid work models can help employees manage personal and professional responsibilities.

3.2. Foster a Supportive Organizational Culture

A supportive organizational culture can also helps to improve mental health of the employee Organizational cultures that prioritize mental health create environments where employees feel comfortable discussing problem of mental health and seeking help when needed. Allen et al. (2000) highlighted that supportive supervisors and coworkers improve employees' perceptions of work-life balance and mental health. Therefore, high quality, and supportive relationships between coworkers are vital to creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected and valued.

3.3. Good Leadership Style

The leadership style within an organization plays a critical role in shaping good mental health of employees. Bass & Avolio, (1994). Stated that Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiring and motivating employees, can lower the problem of stress and leads to higher job satisfaction. Daniels, K., & Harris, C, (2013) studied the effects of organizational culture and leadership style on employee's well-being and mental health. And the study found that supportive leadership and a positive organizational culture are crucial for maintaining employee well-being.

3.4. Employee Assistant Programs (EAPs)

EAPs offer confidential counselling and helps to resource mental health issues. These programs help in reduce absenteeism, improve productivity, and enhance overall well-being. McLeod J. (2014) Evaluated the impact of employee assistance programs on Mental Health Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. And the study suggested that EAPs are generally effective in reducing symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety among employees with variations based on the type and duration of services offered. Hence Employee Assistant Programs can help to resolve mental problems of the employees.

3.5. Mindfulness and Resilience Training

Mindfulness and Resilience training programme can also helps to reduce mental problems of the employees. A study by Wolever, R. Q., et.al (2012) studied Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction in the Workplace: A Randomized Controlled Trial. Their findings suggested that MBSR significantly reduces stress and improves wellbeing and mental health in employee. Aikens et al., (2014). Stated that organization has to offer mindfulness and resilience training programs at the workplace to encourage healthy lifestyles to improve employee well-being.also It helps to reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and enhance overall mental health

<u>4. RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

a. Allow employees to choose work hours that best suit their personal lives. Offer remote work on specific days. And promote regular breaks to prevent burnout and improve focus. So that the employee can feel comfortable to work

b. Provide access to counselling services, mental health apps, and wellness programs. Also create an environment where everyone can feel comfortable discussing mental health issues without stigma. Implement programs where employees can support each other in managing stress and problems of mental health.

c. Offer workshops and courses that help employees grow professionally and personally. Clearly define and communicate potential career paths and growth opportunities within the organization. Pair employees with mentors to get guidance in their career development.

d. Create programs to recognize and celebrate employees' achievements. Support diversity, equality, and inclusion at work. Foster a culture that emphasizes positive feedback instead of criticism.

e. Offer regular mental health training for managers and employees to help employees recognize and manage stress, anxiety, and other issues related to mental health. Also to have good open communication and active listening to fosters better understanding.

f. Offer regular mindfulness or meditation sessions to help employees to manage stress. Educate employees to learn techniques like time management, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques.

5. CONCLUSION

Mental Health Primarily focuses on cognitive and emotional functioning, including the absence of disorders like depression or anxiety. And Well-Being Broader, encompassing physical health, life satisfaction, and fulfilment, alongside mental health. Mentally sound employees are more active and good mentally healthy employees shows more creativity and Improved physical health, more prosocial behaviours, positive interpersonal relationships, and Increased longevity, and more productive than unhealthy employees. Mentally healthy employees can handle any stressful situations. they can have capacity of control on their emotions and participation in the work. by implementing varies strategies, helps to protect and also promote mental health and overall wellbeing of every individual at workplace.

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