Generation X, Y and Stress at Work Place

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Education has achieved its purpose to the present day economies. It has changed the world to into a land full of opportunities and challenges in every walk of life. The educated population is increasing steadily along with the rapid demand in the global market. Education is taking the young and the old to places where they have not been before, meet people and work with people even in different continents. Workforce diversity emerged as an opportunity for many people who are willing to explore their careers at different places for a better life. The world's increasing globalization requires more interactions among people from diverse cultures, beliefs and backgrounds than ever before. People no longer live and work in an insular market place, they are now part of a worldwide economy with competition coming from nearly every continent. As competition increases, so does work stress on the organization and individual employees. Before, we understand workforce diversity and stress at workplace, work and generational approach to work must be viewed. Anna M. Ponzellini (2009)1 has studied elaborately on young people at wor their behavior and how to unbalance the generation gap at workplace. In her study she stated that relation to work (or work orientation) can be considered through two main perspectives: the relative importance attributed to work compared to other spheres in the existence and the kind of attachment towards different dimensions of work. From a sociological point of view, the position of work occupies in people's life has been summarized into the opposition between 'distance' and 'centrality' of wok in the life experience (Hamel)2. She continued the thought by including the psychological perspective by applying to work, the famous Maslow's (1954)3 hierarchy of needs – physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self actualization – most authors consider two main areas: the instrumental one, which refers to material and safety expectations, such as level of wage and job security, and the 'expressive' one, which includes social and symbolic expectations, as good relations and well-being at the workplace, autonomy, career success and feeling of social usefulness (Habermas 1980,1987,Zoll; 2001).

Any disruption between the individual's needs whether instrumental or expressive, has got all possibilities of producing stress at workplace which has a direct effect on the organization's productivity. Stress at workplace comes in different forms to different people when work places adapt workforce diversity.When we talk about diversity, in a group, the usual connotation is differences in race, age or physical appearance of people. Diversity need not be limited to racial differences that are evident, such as age, gender, height, weight, skin, eye and hair color. There are other less – evident differences – such as personality styles, abilities, motivations, goals and cultural background. These coupled with our distinguishing physical attributes; make us diverse and unique individuals.

Need for the study:

India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is expected that, in 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years, compared to 37 for China and 48 for Japan; and, by 2030, India's dependency ratio should be just over 0.4[4]. The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the increasing diversification in the Indian workforce especially in the age group. Young employees at workplace usually face stress levels and are often found inadequate in overcoming workplace stress. This paper suggests various ways in which generation y' ers can be retained in the organization by managing stress at workplace.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study is made with the following objectives:
• To understand age diversity and gen X and gen Y
• To present various characteristic features of gen X and Y
• To understand various stress causing factors among young generation
• To study the perception of young employee's on stress at workplace
• To offer suggestions regarding stress at workplace

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Methodology:

The study was conducted among young employee's working in IT and Hospitality service organizations. A simple Questionnaire has been used for collection of the primary data. The data analysis was made according to the derived percentages. Every employee brings his or her unique self into the workplace. It is important that this uniqueness is recognized, accepted, and valued by peers, leaders and subordinates, just as it is important for an employee to value the uniqueness of others too. These differences provide a range of skills sufficient and successful. An organization needs new and different ideas to stay ahead of the competition and survive. In making decisions and finding solutions to problems, it is always important to look at situations from different perspectives. In short, valuing diversity is one of the keys to an organization's success. As much as an organization can benefit from having a diverse workforce, it may also prove challenging if not handled properly. In fact, if workforce diversity is not valued and managed effectively, it may lead to unnecessary stress, low productivity and possibly even high turnover.

As for the notion of generations, according to Manheim, in a strict sense "generation units" are a product of historical events: "individual who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process". They take the shape in opposition to the previous one , they become social movements and agents of change through a process of political self-consciousness. In this sense not all age groups are generations and not all countries have the same generational boundaries. In a broader sense, almost everybody agree in considering the relevance of institutional factors-like the education system, the family, the labor market regulation, the welfare state model, the type of capitalism, in drawing the boundaries among age groups or generations.From this point of view, with some minor diversity in the different countries, three 'generations of workers' being currently at work can be identified.

1.People born before the end of fifties
2.People who have born this date and late seventies
3.People born from this date on.
In the second half of the 20th century almost everywhere, a strict protection of labor and a wide development of welfare systems created a generation of highly protected, strong and collectively represented labor force:

it is the so called Baby boomers generation. Later on, following two world petrol crises, the welfare state financial collapse and the consequent end of Keynesian policies, entered the scene a new generation more exposed to unemployment, called Gen. X. (Coupland 1991; Cannon 1994; Smola, Sutton 2002)5.In the same period, the hugely increasingly participation of women to the labor market was the reason of a sharp generational transition from a 'one – career generation 'to the 'dual – career generation', with new priorities, aims and needs. The impact of globalization on economies and the increasing preferences for flexible labor markets of most governments; are producing a generation of more precarious, less collectively represented, less socially protected workers. They are currently defined as the Generation Y or the millennial generation (Pirie, Worcester 1998)[6]. Despite its being the best qualified generation since history its enjoying the privilege of being in the right side of the digital divide (which makes it also the 'net generation'), someone call them roundly as 'baby-loser generation". (Keely 2008)[7].

## Benefits of diversity in the workplace:

Diversity is beneficial to both associates and employers. Although associates are interdependent in the workplace, respecting individual differences can increase productivity. Diversity in the workplace can reduce law suits and increase marketing opportunities, retirement, creativity, and business image (Esty, et al., 1995)[8]. In an era when flexibility and creativity are keys to competitiveness, diversity is critical for an organization's success. Also, the consequences (loss of time and money for the organisation) should not be overlooked.

Challenges of diversity in the workplace:

There are challenges to managing a diverse work population. Managing diversity is more than simply acknowledging differences in people. It involves recognizing the value of differences, combating discrimination and promoting inclusiveness. Managers may also be challenged with losses in personnel and work productivity due to prejudice and discrimination and complaints and legal actions against the organization (Devoe, 1999)[9].Negative attitude and behaviors can be barriers to organizational diversity because they can harm working relationships and damage morale and work productivity (Esty, et al., 1995). Negative attitudes and behaviors in the workplace include prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, which

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should never be used by management for hiring, retention and termination practices (could lead to costly litigation). An important part of one's life that causes a great deal of stress is, one's job or work. Work related stress is of growing concern today, than it was two decades ago Bruce Cryer et.al. (2003). Increased complexity in organizational work environments has given rise to higher levels of job-related stress experienced by organizational members (Champy, 1995 as cited in Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Globalization and Liberalization has brought in its wake, tremendous pressure in terms of competition in a borderless world, rising customer expectation,

knowledge and information explosion and technological advancement (Toffler, 1970)10. Coupled with these external pressures is the inner urge of an individual to stay updated which calls for dedicated approach to self-development.One traditional way to analyze and discuss careers is to consider them in stages. Progression, from a beginning point through growth and decline phases to a termination point, is typically a natural occurrence in one's work life. Career formation starts during school years and ends at the retirement age five career stages regardless of occupation can be identified: exploration, establishment, mid-career, late-career and decline.
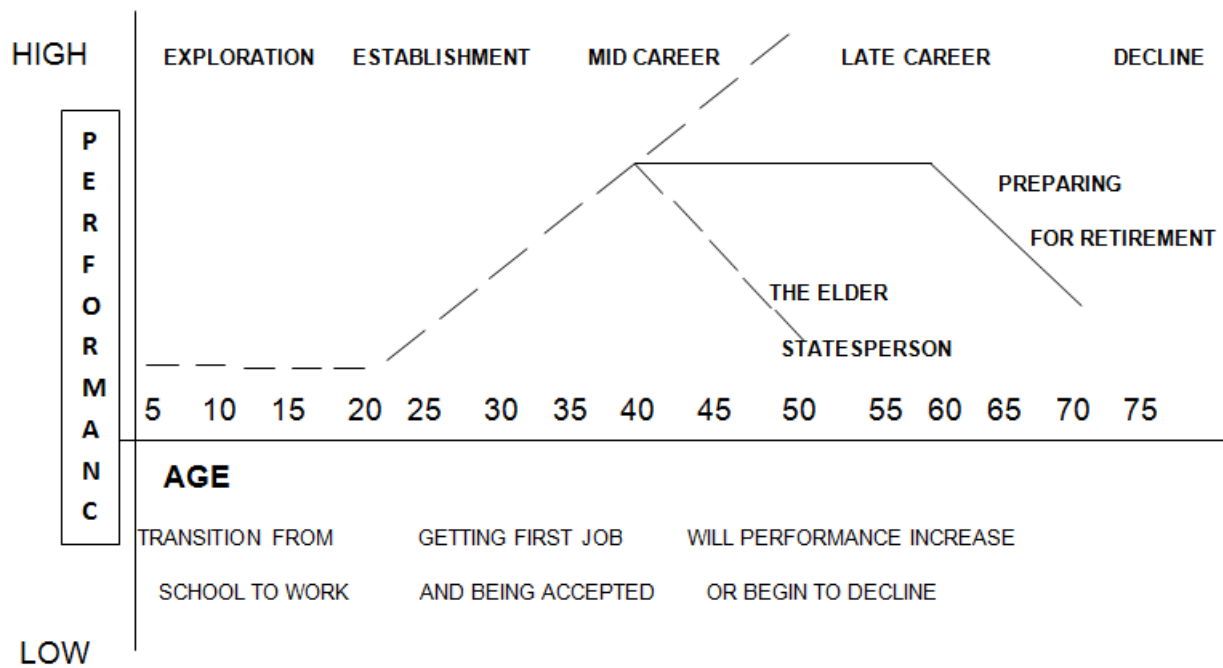
GenX and GenY, characteristic features:

Generation X and Y represent a whole new breed of workers – nothing like the baby boomers who have dominated the workforce for decades. Generation X workers are born between 1965 and 1977. They are highly educated, self-reliant, technologically savvy and skilled in multitasking. They welcome change; are independent and entrepreneurial and seek experience and opportunities more than money and security. Generation Y workers are those born between 1978 and 1995. Like Gen X, Gen Y workers are educated and self-reliant. They also welcome change, think differently and want opportunity more than money and security. They are attracted to work environments that promote communication, flexibility, personal recognition and immediate feedback.

In the larger social picture, Gen Y is an optimistic, civic minded generation, concerned with equality, fairness and creating change. These youngsters who are born literally with mobile phones and laptops identify themselves not with the organizations but with their work. They believe they work only what you do to have life, work doesn't define their life(Nagle, 1999).11 Generation Y has been described as being well educated, creative thinkers, ambitious, impatient, arrogant, disengaged, technologically adept, disrespectful, having an international perspective, and demanding a greater work/life balance than previous generations (Garlick and Langley 2007; McCallum 2005; Sorman-Nilsson 2008)12. They tend to have high and some would say unrealistic expectations of possible employment options and do not believe they need to "do their time" before becoming managers and executives.

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Such characteristics would not normally be tolerated by business, but this has changed with valuable labour being at a premium as many countries come to terms with the effects of lower birth rates. The following Australian workforce estimates from Ross (2005: 41) put into perspective the issues that many Western countries are facing:

•In 2008, for the first time, more people will leave the workforce than enter it.

• In the next decade, annual workforce growth will drop from 0.8% to 0.4%.

•In the next five years, more than 20% of senior executives will reach retiring age.

•The current workforce growth is 170,000 a year. In 2012 it is forecast to be 105,000 a year. In 2022 it is forecast to be 12,000 a year.

The widely used headline of the "War for Talent" means that organisations have little choice but to hire Generation Y.

	BABY BOOMERS	GEN X and GEN Y
Work-life balance	Live to work	Work to live
Job Stability	Seek job stability, security	Are comfortable with job changes
Job expectations	Respect authority, expect to have and to earn rewards	Question formal authority, want immediate payoffs, demand change and fun
Technology	Learned as adults	Technology savvy

Benefits in Hiring GenY:

•The Generation Y values sustainability. The generation Y is flexible, mobile, collaborative and unconventional.

•The Generation Y prioritises opportunities to learn, work colleagues and corporate culture & value when it comes to deciding for which job to apply for.

•The Generation Y prefers workplaces in an urbanised location with access to social and commercial facilities, good public Infrastructure and the ability to use public transport or drive to work.

•The Generation Y prioritises collaboration and interaction in the workplace and requires particularly access to dedicated team spaces as well as ample breakout spaces.

•The working environment of the Generation Y is a place they emotionally engage with, a space where they socialise in with other co workers and a space which supports their health and well being.

•The Generation Y sees the workplace as a very important factor and values it as a place of learning and development.

•The Generation Y privileges access to their own desk rather than desk sharing or hot desking (hoteling).

India and Gen Y13 :

In India, Gen Y make up the more than half of the population. Despite the large potential workforce, not all are 'employment ready' and so their talents are in short supply. The Generation Y in India is a remarkable group that is ambitious, optimistic, embraces change and have a clear sense of where they are headed. Most are 'entrepreneurial and business savvy, as well as technologically capable and connected. With about half of India's one billion people under the age of 25, Generation Y in India is the world's largest. Positioned in a time of exciting and rapid economic growth in the country, they are keen to participate in the country's future and success.

The country's recent parliament elections saw a huge turnout of Generation Y population, demonstrating their ambition to take the country forward. Highly competitive, Generation Y is more than ever before seeking higher education and landing jobs in multi-national companies in areas such as IT, back office operations, media, strategy and management positions. With opportunities aplenty in the current economy, they are also job-hopping, something not seen in their parents' generation.
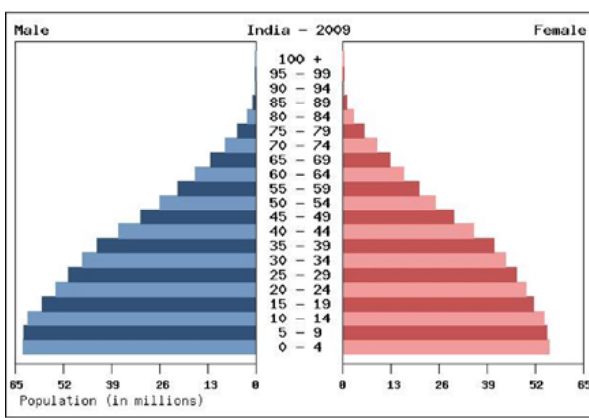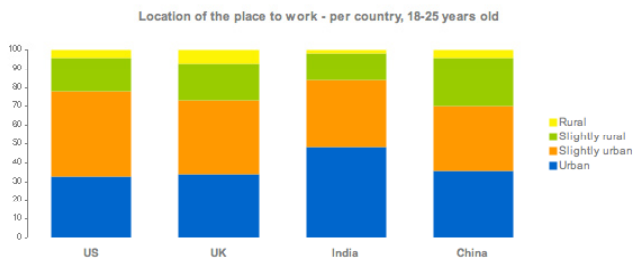
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**Figure 4: India – Demographic pyramid, 2009 25
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base**

Location of the office: per country, 18-25 years old

Being young at workplace, how much stress can they handle?

Stress at workplace could be due to two possible reasons, first being the task itself and the second being the way the task is approached. The differences between the stress felt is more significant due to the diversity seen in organisations today. Diversity due to age is more prominent and it is affecting recruitment, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing and maintaining and increasing productivity. Each generation at workplace has distinct attitudes, behaviours, expectations, habits and motivational requirements14.Whenever a specific reference to younger worker is available, international surveys report a lower perception of work as central dimension in life and a higher importance given to social and symbolic dimensions than the elders : because of their greater involvement in the ongoing process of individualisation, young people show a more intense expectation of self-expression (Inglehart 1977,1997). Single country studies on young workers confirm the results of institutional surveys periodic monitoring. In France according to Gorz (1997), for young people " to have a personal project is more important than the goals of the organisation in which they are employed", in Germany, according to Baethge (1994),"

the majority of young people want to work in a job where they can improve and develop their qualification where they can bring themselves in as a person, which offers a good communication, climate and which challenges their creativity, in Italy, according to Gosetti (2005), for young people, "the idea of a position to hold and where to make roots is faded away, leaving space to the idea of a path". In India, according to Oxygenz-Report 2010, the Generation Y 'value work life balance more than any other generation'. Level of engagement among Generation Y employees in India was found to be about the same as the other generations, making them an exception compared to their cohorts around the world. While they are willing to work in shifts to support global operations, they are averse to working long hours.According to Yasmeen Haider and Supriya, M.V (2007),15 it is becoming increasingly clear that career stages be it exploration, establishment, mid career, late career or decline is perceives as being stressful in varying degree by the individuals.

The American Psychological Association in 201216 conducted a study across America, "Stress in America" and found out that 19 percent of millennial in America, 14 percent of Gen Xers, 12 percent of Boomers and 11 percent of Matures have been told they have depression. Twelve percent of Millennials, 8 percent of Gen Xers, 7 percent of Boomers and 4 percent of Matures have been told they have an anxiety disorder. Though young generations are taking the up the world of work in all sectors, it should also be identified and realised that they are taking in lot stress as well. Realising factors which are causing this stress and finding various ways through which it can be managed should be the concern of the individual and the organisations too.There are more pronounced differences between the generations today than ever before. Being aware of these differences can help individuals tailor their message for maximum effect, regardless of the task, or the relationship – family, friends, workplace peers. Good business is based upon understanding others (Hammill, 2005)17.

What causes stress at work?

Work content:

> Job Content: Monotonous, under stimulating,
> Meaningless tasks
> Lack of variety
> Unpleasant tasks
> Aversive tasks

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Work load and work pace
-Having too much or too little to do
-Working under time pressures
Working hours:
-Strict and inflexible working schedules
-Long and unsocial hours
-Unpredictable working hours
-Badly designed shift systems
Participation and control:
-Lack of participation in decision making
-Lack of control (for e.g., over work methods, work pace, working hours and the work environment).
Work context:
-Career development, status and pay
-Role in the organization
-Interpersonal relationships
-Organizational culture
-Home – work interface

When affected by work stress people from different age groups may –

•Become increasingly distressed and irritable
•Become unable to relax or concentrate
•Have difficulty thinking logically and making decisions
•Enjoy their work less and feel less committed to it
•Feel tired, depressed, anxious
•Have difficulty sleeping
•Experience serious physical problems such as
* Heart diseases
* Disorders of the digestive system
* Increases in blood pressure, headaches,
* Musculo – skeletal disorders (such as low back pain and upper limb disorders).

Effects of stress at workplace on organizations:

* Increased absenteeism
* Decreasing commitment to work
* Increased staff turn-over
* Impairing performance and productivity
* Increasing unsafe working practices and accident rates
* Increasing complaints from clients and customers
* Adversely affecting staff recruitment
* Increasing liability to legal claims and actions by stressed workers
* Damaging the organizations image both among its workers and externally[18].

Various stress factors to Gen X and Y:

* Gen X and Y res corporate careers got off to a slow start and many feel the pain.
* As teenagers, X and Y érs witnessing adults being laid off from large corporations create lack of trust among them.
* Most corporate career paths "narrow" at the top – the perceived range of options diminishes as individuals become increasingly specialized in specific functions or roles. Y érs crave for options, which assuage one's concerns about being backed into a corner, laid off from one paths and increased vulnerability is often most palpable at the transition from middle to upper management. This step also often brings demands for relocation and separation from established social networks – an additional assault on one's sense of self – reliance.
* Economic recession: stepping into leadership roles right now looks more difficult and the roles themselves, more vulnerable than they have at any point in the past decade.
* Gen X and Y érs are more conservative cohort in today's workforce – Gen X and Y érs are surrounded by "shake them up "types on both sides. In personal lives, X and Y 'ers are not particularly keen on rules, but they need to follow them in the workplace and it creates a disruption in the demands and their fulfillment causing stress.
* Many X and Y ers are guarding a closely held secret: they are not all as comfortable with the technology that is changing the way things are done as everyone seems to think. While it's perfectly acceptable for boomers to feign ignorance and ask for help, it's embarrassing for X érs to do so.
* If boomers colleagues are annoying, X érs can't believe the frequency of Y- parent interactions and are deeply turned off by parents who make their presence felt in the workplace.

Stress prevention techniques:19

Organization's role in preventing stress for youngsters at work:
-The company's initiatives for managing diversity are reflected in staffing procedures, performance appraisals, and training
-Adapt a more analytical approach in the recruitment of Gen X érs
-Support experimentation and evaluation

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-Reduce pressure on the youngsters for too much perfection at work, if you want perfection at its best in a short period of time, don't recruit youngsters.

-Be ready to play a supportive and guiding role, not authoritative and dictator's style.

-Train for group – processes skills among the youngsters.

-Listening to the Gen X érs is the most prominent requirement to retain and develop the young workforce.

-More flexible work schedules

-Occasional weekends off, even for unmarried employees

-Giving employees more authority and flexibility with respect to dealing with customers.

Individual's role in preventing stress at work:

-Healthy life style, Healthy diet, Exercise, Restructuring priorities, Changing one's response towards stress, Finding methods for managing and reducing stress, Relaxation techniques like, Deep breathing exercises, Muscle relaxation, Meditation, Vegetarianism which reduces the amount of cholesterol in the body which reduces the other complex results of stress offering the employee frequent short intervals in the work periods besides lunch breaks. Providing stress literature at the libraries in the hospital so that a physician can even come out with various new techniques to reduce stress at workplace.

Main Findings:

The survey conducted among few young employees belonging to gen X and Y showed that they were facing stress at workplace due to their young age. The survey also showed that the organisations are supporting their employees to overcome stress at workplace. The study showed that among the respondents, majority of the respondents started working from 22 years of age. 68 per cent of the employee's were not afraid initially to come to work, 70 percent of the youngsters did not feel that they are left out by the adult groups at work due to their young age. Frustration and difficulty in making decisions was found to be a major consequence due to stress. Major stress factor was found to be the workload as employees are working 8-10hrs a day and sometimes even 10-12 hrs. Due to this tiresome working hours, many respondents complained sleeplessness and insomnia in some too. Many respondents responded saying that they overcame stress by sleeping/ taking rest and also playing sports,

followed by reading and other recreation like movies' etc. Keeping aside all the stress felt at workplace, respondents, 94 percent of them responded that they enjoy their work which ultimately is what is required at workplace. All the young workers, agreed that education is must for all and 54 percent said that one must start working after graduation and 17 per cent said that one can start working after post graduation.

Suggestions:

Though the organisations are following comfortable techniques to keep their employees from feeling stress at workplace, techniques can be implemented more effectively. Complaints about sleeplessness, anxiety, working for 10-12 hours a day is absolutely not desirable at workplace. Therefore, a major change in the shift systems followed and distribution of work could be made more acceptable and less stress causing.

Conclusion:

Young people at work look different from other generations as far as both their 'subjectivity" attitudes and expectations and their "objectivity" labor – market and social protection conditions are considered. A diverse workforce is a reflection of a changing world and marketplace. Diverse work teams bring high value to organizations. Respecting individual differences will benefit the workplace by creating a competitive edge and increasing work productivity.Generation Y enter the workforce as being more educated and technologically adept than their parents, and when combined with the current labour shortages, find themselves highly employable. Generation Y are being noted for their different work ethic, expectations, values and beliefs; having high levels of confidence; and a greater focus on a work/life balance. Generation Y is the workforce of the future and to ensure they are productive contributors for the organisation, attempts need to be made now on what motivates them if they are to be attracted and retained in the maritime industry in the new age of less company loyalty and increased job switching. Age Diversity Management benefits associates by creating a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to opportunities and challenges. As most of the workplaces are of diverse cultures, organisations have to learn adaptability for their success. More and more employers are turning to stress management to tackle these problems.

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Stress Management can enable people to improve their own response to stress to reduce stress at workplace. Stress management aims to prevent stress at workplace and helps a lot for improving productivity and efficiency at workplace.

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