



SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AFFECTING HEALTH AND WORK-LIFE PATTERN IN TODAY'S WORLD

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ABSTRACT

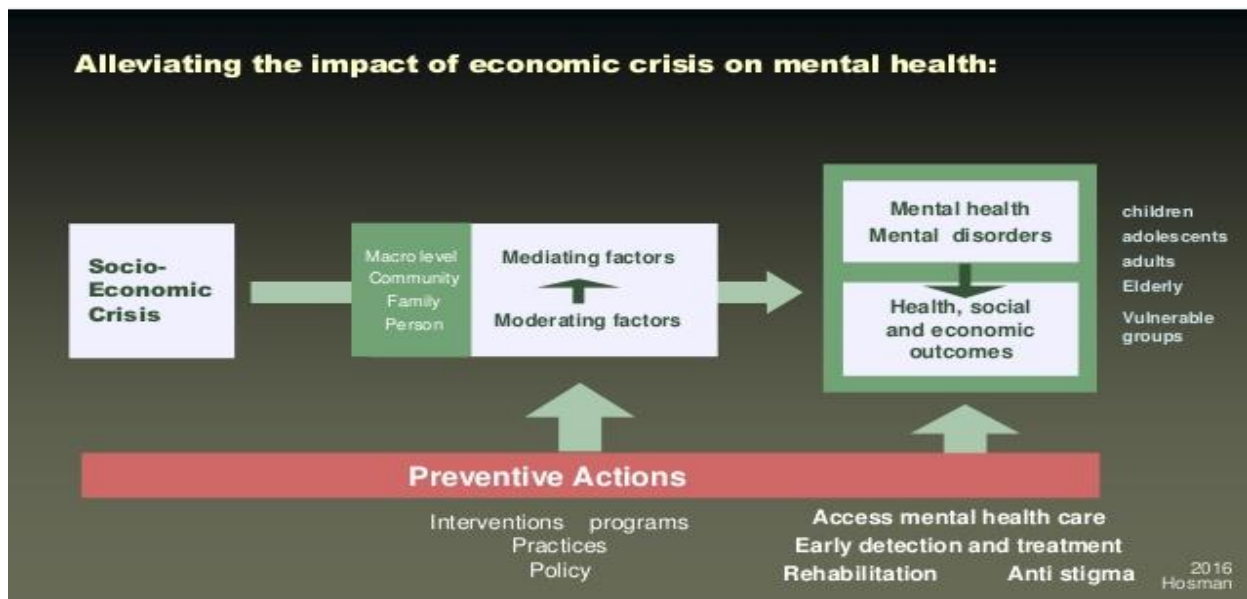
Socio-economic status plays a major role in the life dwelling activities which are followed by the people around the globe. SE status has emerged like a boon in disguise that has gradually and drastically changed from past many years. However, the work-life pattern adopted by people today is damaging the equilibrium of a healthier and longer life reducing the average life expectancy of a human being. Therefore, the efforts have been made in this research paper to deal with the present scenario of the socio-economic status that has greater impact on the health and work-life pattern of the people. It also suggests the precautionary measures and programs that could be adopted in order to reset the balance-bar of life of a human being.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, health, work-life

INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic status (SES) incorporates income as well as educational attainment, financial security, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. It can encompass quality of life attributes along with the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within society.

Furthermore, SES is a consistent and reliable predictor of a vast array of outcomes across the life span, including physical and psychological health. Therefore, SES is relevant to all realms of behavioral and social science, including research, practice, education and advocacy.



OBSERVATION/ METHODOLOGY

SES Affects our Society

SES affects overall human functioning which includes our physical and mental health. SES factors such as lower educational achievement, poverty, and poor health ultimately affect our society. Inequities in health distribution, resource distribution, and quality of life are increasing globally. Society benefits from an increased focus on the foundations of socioeconomic inequities and efforts to reduce the deep gaps in socioeconomic status in India and abroad.

SES Impacts Work Stress Level and Health

Work is central to the psychological health and well-being of individuals and communities (Blustein, 2008). Vocational and industrial – organizational psychology have demonstrated the importance of work and how it promotes connection to the broader social and economic world, enhances well-being, and provides a means for individual satisfaction and accomplishment (Blustein, 2006; Brown & Lent, 2005; Hall, 1996; Spector, 2005).

Workplace Stressors

There are multiple factors that can affect the physical health and psychological well-being of workers. Research indicates that



job strain and repetitive or hazardous work conditions may have detrimental effects on physical health of the workers. Also, stress experienced and perceived can affect one's psychological well-being. Moreover, work stress research has examined the psychological demands of workload, workers' perceived sense of control over their performance, safety stressors, work organization, and work atmosphere. (Aittomäki, Lahelma, & Roos, 2003; Clarke, 2006; Dembe, Erickson, Delbos, & Banks, 2005; Gillen, Baltz, Gassel, Kirsch, & Vaccaro, 2002; Landsbergis, Cahill, & Schnall, 1999; MacDonald, Harenstam, Warren, & Punnett, 2008).

Health

Stress due to work pressure has been identified as a risk factor for hypertension, diabetes, upper extremity musculoskeletal problems, back problems and cardiovascular disease.

- High demands and low decision control have predicted heart

disease in white collar workers (Kuper & Marmot, 2003).

- Job strain has been shown to increase blood pressure in men of low SES (Landsbergis, Schnall, Pickering, Warren, & Schwartz, 2003).
- Exposure to cumulative job strain in white collar workers revealed modest increases in systolic blood pressure (Guimont et al., 2006).
- Fatigue and sleep deprivation are correlated to mandatory and voluntary overtime and are also associated with work-related accidents in blue collar workers (Barger et al., 2005; Cochrane, 2001).
- Smoking prevalence among blue collar workers is double that of white collar workers. This difference may be explained by the additional psychological stressors low income brings (Barbeau, Krieger, & Soobader, 2004; Sorensen, Barbeau, Hunt, & Emmons, 2004).
- Male infertility has been associated with job burnout for persons working in industry and construction (Sheiner, Sheiner,



Carel, Potashnik, & Shoham-Vardi, 2002).

Socio-economic crisis is impacted by factors related to mental health which includes work, income, debts, housing, neighborhood quality, social protection, health care quality and access, family functioning and parenting, stress, vulnerability and coping with the society norms. Poor mental health involves mental disorders leading to depression, anxiety, externalizing problems, suicide attempts, etc.

Family vs. Work Conflict

Along with the workplace and social supports, family support is essential to the psychological well-being of those under job strain. All those people who manages multiple roles may be at added risk of stress due to competing responsibilities at work and at home. Moreover, higher incidence of children with chronic health conditions, learning difficulties, and child care issues create the added need for flexibility as parents try to balance these conflicting responsibilities.

(Richman, Johnson & Buxham, 2006). Quality of child and elder care programs are needed to help caretakers fulfill their obligations both at work and at home.

- Workers working with low wages are more likely to work for small businesses and therefore less likely to have access to health insurance, paid vacations, and sick days. However, they are also less likely to be allowed to use paid time off for sick child care. (Richman et al., 2006).
- On the other hand, jobs with higher rates leads to dissatisfaction and job-related stress that has been observed in workers with more frequent overtime requirements, little managerial support, and less work flexibility (Richman et al., 2006).
- A study of dual-earner middle-class families revealed that the majority are not pursuing two high-powered careers, in order to reduce stress and balance life-work responsibilities (Becker & Moen, 1999).
- Also, lower wage workers are more likely to work part-time, at lower



hourly rates, with few to no benefits and often mandatory part-time schedules — all of which create work-life challenges for families and single parents (Richman et al., 2006).

- Research on the attitudes of employers revealed that the majority did not regard flexibility as an option for their low-wage workers and expressed little sympathy for the employees' needs (Richman et al., 2006).

Job Insecurity & Unemployment

Job insecurity is the perception of being threatened by job loss (Mohr, 2000), that can have consequences on an individual's health and well-being.

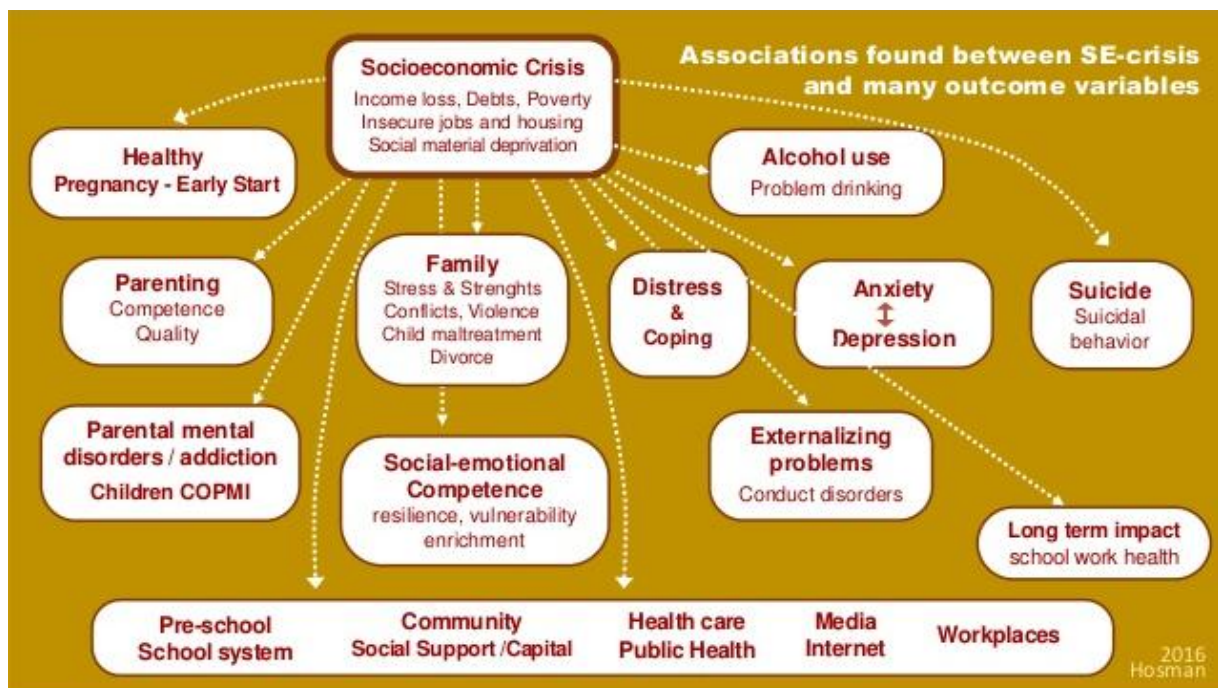
- The fear of job loss has a significant impact on physical and mental health; the effect on mental health is greater than the effect on

physical health (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002).

- A study found that physical health decline was related to fear of job loss in blue collar workers, automobile workers in particular (Heaney, Israel, & House, 1994).
- Higher blood pressure for women and weight loss among those with higher job insecurity was found in blue collar workers (Ferrie, Shipley, Stansfeld, & Marmot, 2002).
- Involuntary job loss for older adults was connected to health declines and even morbidity (Wilson & Mossakowski, 2009).
- Unemployment not only correlates with distress but also causes it. (Karsten & Moser, 2009). The negative effects of unemployment are illustrated by declines in psychological and physical health (Wanberg, 2012).



Relationship between SE-crisis and other outcome variables



- Socio-economic crisis leads to distress and coping which further affects mental health and causes depression which could be minimized by adopting stress management programs, CBT programs.
- Socio-economic also affect public health whose impact could be reduced by adopting early detection and treatment by using E-mental health technology, taking professional guidelines by trained health professionals periodically.
- Media/internet coverage of suicidal attempts adds to the impact on socio-economic crisis which could be managed by reducing access to lethal means.
- As far as community and social support/capital is concerned socio-economic crisis could be minimized by incorporating methods such as community development, social empowerment, consumer organizations, micro financing projects, social innovation initiatives, etc.
- Socio-economic crisis includes socio-emotional competence especially from the pre-school system which leads to distress, anxiety, depression, externalizing problems which have long term impact. This could be brought in



control by following preschool enrichment programs, school based socio-emotional learning, after school programs, etc.

- As we step ahead, the SE-crisis have impact on parenting and family as well which have same causes as that of pre-school system. This needs to be taken as a serious concern as it affects various other factors related to SE-crisis. In order to minimize its effects various methods like

parenting education, support from family, child abuse prevention, proper divorce programs, etc. could be adopted. COPMI (Children of Parents with a Mental Illness) support, i.e., preventive interventions for children and families dealing with parental mental illness or addiction, could also be taken into consideration.

Improve implementation, scaling, research and public impact

Programs

- Improve effects of intervention (effect management)

- Use intervention & dissemination methods with large reach and low costs

Advocacy

- More interventions more adaptable and consumable: working elements

- Make the multiple health, social and economic benefits visible

- Advocate for more prominent position of prevention

- Increase power, involve citizens, social movements, stakeholders

Embed prevention in sectors, policies and legislation

Capacity

Enlarge resources for prevention by budget shifts and return for investment

- Train professionals and officials in prevention and mental health expertise

Inter-organizational collaboration and monitoring

Shared Leadership

Use principles of 'Collective Action' and 'Collective impact'

Improve management and shared leadership



CONCLUSION

The precautionary measures could be beneficial for the human kind if they are adopted before the water reaches at the brim of the glass to spill. The level of socio-economic status that people pursue could not be changed in a day but the effect of it on health and work-life could be minimized by balancing the day-to-day working of a human being and knowing the need/desire of person to survive peacefully and achieving it accordingly.

It is truly said that there are no shots-cuts in life, hence, SE crisis should not hamper the living of an individual that could damage his/her performance or efficiency. The programs mentioned in this paper are time tested and practical enough which acts as a guide to reduce the negative effects of such crisis so that they do not have the power to control any individual's living.

In order to cope up with these programs along with daily work routine could be difficult initially, but would be beneficial in

long run. It is to ponder that we work to fill our stomach and sharpen our brains but work should not be on the verge of getting drained out and malnourished by avoiding the necessary tasks to be done for survival.

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