Chapter VII

Summary and Conclusion
It was observed that the higher educational institutions in India face many challenges such as demands from society and industry, the increased enrolment of students, financial constraints, changing values, culture, and many other similar demands. Due to these demands, the leaders of higher educational institutions need a great deal of psychological stamina for the effective functioning of these institutions.

At the same time, due to their structure, technologies and competitive environment, educational institutions have become complex, whereby, the human element is reduced to a mere insignificant aspect of it. This may tend to build a feeling of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and a feeling of low importance, which adds to the stress level of an individual.

Majority of individuals, at some time in their lives, experience stress at work, though it may be short lived, however, at times it can be very damaging.

Academic managers of higher educational institutions are expected to perform multiple roles – ranging from academician, administrator, liaison officer between the Government and University, and similar other roles. These roles are demanding and taxing on physical and psychological well – being of academic managers.

It was therefore, necessary to conduct an exploratory study to discover the possibilities of work related stress experienced by these academic
managers. The results revealed in this research study are summarised in this Chapter.

In the text of this thesis, Chapter I gives an introduction to the problem under study and has highlighted the need for this study. Chapter II has given an insight into stress as a phenomenon manifested into different psychological and physiological attributes and reactions, as well as, personality patterns. At the same time, it has given a brief historical view of stress, especially from the point of view of psychophysiological and organisational studies.

Chapter III gives an account of review of the related literature, especially, of last fifteen years. This chapter highlighted research conducted in area of stress at educational institutions, stress and personality, stress and coping styles and life style, stress and disease, physiological attributes of stress, stress at the organisations, and stress amongst the female employees.

Chapter IV described research methodology applied to the study for execution of research plan, data collection, and data analysis. It has elaborated on the statement of problem, outlined aim and objectives and the operational definitions of the terms. Ten broad hypotheses were stated based on broad areas related to intrinsic stressors at work, personality factors, life – style, health status, and coping strategies. This
chapter has also elaborated on tools used for the study, procedure used for the pilot study as well as for the final study, and the sample description.

Chapter V is a presentation of data analysis and interpretation of the results and Chapter VI gives a logical discussion on the analysis of data and highlights probable deductions from data analysis.

7.1 Main Findings of the Study:

It was found that the academic managers are facing high role stress and there are many factors that affect stress levels of AMHEs. Role Overload (m:11.29) ranked the highest amongst academic managers, which meant that academic managers do feel that there were too many expectations from significant others. This indicates that the role of academic management was not simplified and Role Overload could be due to complexity of the role itself. During their interviews, academic managers reported that they have many activities, many stakeholders and many different governing bodies to report to, which, at times were very stressful.

Role Overload was followed by Resource Inadequacy (m:10.65), which was high in comparison to the cut-off point 8. Academic managers therefore, felt that resources required for performing their role effectively, were not made available to them.
The intrinsic stressors due to University Functioning, Government Authority and the General Administration of institution played a significant role in the experience of role stress in case of academic managers.

Academic managers from SNDT Women's University were at a higher risk of role stress and those from aided minority showed low role stress. AMHEs belonging to the institutions with more teaching staff experienced lower RE. This indicates that interactions with teaching staff helped AMHEs to feel as though they were doing some challenging work of academic calibre. Whereas, they felt overloaded with work in relation to non-teaching staff.

It was found that bigger cabin space and student strength have buffering effect on the levels of RO and infrastructural facilities, work-load, staff and student strength, minority status, university set-up and so on, play an important role in stress levels of academic managers.

However, no significant associations between age, sex, marital status and role stress among academic managers were found during the study.

It was found that majority of the academic managers (81.3\%) followed a healthy life-style. They were concerned about their health and reported about following a healthy diet, having regular exercises, and they spend some personal time to recuperate from the stress at the work. However,
no significant relation was found between the life style and role stress in academic managers.

A significant correlation was obtained between high ORS scores and high mental and physical disease symptoms. This indicates that it was possible to quantify stress levels based on the number of mental and physical disease symptoms.

No conclusions could be drawn from findings of the study on personality factors of academic managers, although some factors such as 'Hardiness' and 'Thinking' do say a lot about the relation between personality factors and the experience of stress. Academic managers using 'Thinking' factor and 'Hardy' personality showed lower levels of role stress. At the same time, it was visible from the results that the relationship between stress and personality needs a case-study approach with more focus on individual personality instead of focusing on calculation of a group personality.

While studying the conflict management styles of AMHE, it was found that Competing Style helped in reduction of role stress, especially in the area of Role Ambiguity while Compromise Style increased RA among academic managers.

The findings on motivational needs showed that with high Achievement Motivation, IRD, RS, REC and RA levels decreased, with Control
Motivation PI decreased and with Dependency need, REC, RE and RI levels decreased. With Influence Motivation, PI levels of role stress increased.

The coping styles that emerged as useful for academic managers were Active Coping and Planning. Also it was visible that the ‘Planning’ behaviour of academic managers reduced neurotic symptoms and ‘Seeking Social Support for Instrumental Reasons’, ‘Denial’ and ‘Acceptance’ style of coping showed an increase in physical disease symptoms amongst AMHEs.

These findings are discussed in Chapter VI along with two case presentation of academic managers.

7.2 Conclusion:
This research work is in no way an exhaustive study of work-stress experienced by the profession of academic management of higher educational institutions. It is merely a humble attempt to bring out some facts and realities about stress experienced due to the demands of this profession. Though the present study needs improvisation in many areas, it has generated an empirical evidence about role stress and its relation with factors such as intrinsic job stressors, job milieu, life styles, coping styles, personality factors and the health status of academic managers of higher educational institutions.
The study has established a strong correlation between the ORS scores and the mental and physical disease symptoms amongst academic managers. The two cases of academic managers have given an insight into 'person – environment' interaction.

Finally, it has been concluded that various factors contribute towards the experience of stress. The stress responses were multidimensional, involving different kinds of responses in different systems, different individuals and different situations. Hence, it is immensely important to study individual as a whole in a specific situation at a specific period of time. Stress amongst academic managers can be tackled by viewing 'person – environment fit', i.e. the whole system instead of parts.

It has been suggested that a deep insight and awareness of higher educational system, personality and behavioural patterns would lead to stress management amongst academic managers.

At this point of conclusion of the study, it is hoped that the findings of this study would contribute to beginning of another venture ..........''

7.3 Limitations and Recommendation:

Though, so far, there was no mention of academic administration being a stressful profession, the vulnerability of this profession with increasing
demands from government, management trustees and the system itself was evident. Therefore, an exploratory study to discover work-related stressors experienced by academic managers of higher educational institutions was taken up by this researcher.

Being exploratory in nature the study used various tools and techniques to measure stress amongst academic managers from different angles. However, it is visible from the data and findings that there is a need for improved sampling technique and simplified and brief instruments. In spite of this, the present study definitely will help the future research in the field, giving guideline and direction about what to ask and what to expect.

1) Firstly, the sampling technique needs improvisation. During this study incidental sample was used and whosoever willing to participate was considered as the participant of the study. It is possible that those who have responded to the questionnaire were highly stressed academic managers, venting out their problems to whomsoever approached them.

2) A number of constraints were faced while collaborating with the hospital authorities when the Physiological check-up was arranged for academic managers and weekly schedules were set for these busy AMHEs.
3) Third limitation of the study was that it could not incorporate the physiological test - data and could not correlate the physiological parameters with the self - reported data. For the future study, a 'Physiological - Test Kit' could be designed so that the participants of the study need not visit any hospital and the physiological stress - tests could be conducted at their work place itself.

4) The forth limitation was the lengthy questionnaire, which requires modification and adaptation to educational set - up. The check - lists on the institutional profile, life - style, coping styles, personality and behavioural factors can be reduced and adapted to educational set - up. The check - list on intrinsic job stressors needs standardisation in order to get a true interpretation of the situation at higher educational institutions.

5) Another limitation was the time constraint, which was felt by researcher during data collection phase as well as while compilation of correlation obtained during the study.

6) The academic managers being responsible and busy people, it was extremely difficult to find them free for study procedures without getting interrupted by their work related problems while their interviews were in action or also to get the questionnaire filled in time from them.
7) The correlation between important stressors and its effect on physical and psychological health status of academic managers was not achieved through this study.

8) The delimitation of intrinsic stressor in relation to the different faculties, university set-ups, college set-ups and student-staff strength was not achieved through this study.

7.4 Scope for future studies:
In spite of these limitations of the present study, because of its exploratory nature, has brought to the forefront many results, which can be used for future-research studies.

The stressors at educational institutions are intrinsic part of the system and academic managers can be trained in handling these stressors effectively. An experimental research study with different training models would give much needed relief to the profession of academic management. A stress management programme focusing on coping abilities can be developed with the help of such a study.

This study has revealed that AMHEs do experience a great deal of role stress, especially Role Overload and Resource Inadequacy, and what these institutions need is an exercise of 'role-centring' and 'role-setting', which could finally lead to holistic 'role making' of academic management.
The study has brought out frustrations amongst academic managers in relation to their university functioning and approach of government authority. These findings could be shared with university and government authorities so that in future, an insightful interaction could be achieved.

It was found that many of the academic managers do show physical disease symptoms and some of them are at risk of mental health problems and therapeutic intervention is necessary in such cases. The academic managers need therapies that may range from counselling and group therapies to diet schedules, exercise regimen, to self-awareness programmes and a regular health check-up with physicians, consultants, counsellors, dieticians and fitness experts. A physical and psychological check-up can be made a part of their routine system of assessment. A set-up for counselling centre for academic managers along with a mini fitness gym could be considered by the university authorities.

The present infrastructural facilities provided to academic managers have many limitations. The infrastructural facilities at educational institutions could be studied with theoretical background from science of Ergonomics. A well-designed model for office and simplified work-station could be developed with help from the field of engineering and architecture to reduce physical stressors at work environment.
This study can be replicated with different populations, the urban and rural population, also at different levels of academic management. This will give a complete picture of stress amongst academic managers at different levels ranging from schools, colleges, and universities, in urban as well as rural set-ups.

From this study it is clear that there are many angles through which one can study stress and coping; through the field of psychology, physiology, management, engineering, architecture, medicine, nutrition and diet, physical fitness, and therapeutically through wide range of therapies.