CHAPTER II

PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA AND THEORETICAL FRAME

WORK OF STRESS – AN OVERVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION
2.2. ORIGIN OF THE NAME
2.3. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA
2.4. ADMINISTRATION
2.5. ECONOMY
2.6. THERMAL POWER PLANT
2.7. SHIPPING
2.8. INTRODUCTION TO STRESS
2.9. DEFINITION OF STRESS
2.10. CONCEPT OF STRESS
   2.10.1. MENTAL STRESS
   2.10.2. CONCEPT OF WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT
   2.10.3. INVOLVEMENT IN WORK
   2.10.4. EXPECTATIONS IN WORK
   2.10.5. INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY
2.11. CAUSES OF STRESS
   2.11.1. CAUSES OF AN ORGANISATIONAL STRESS
   2.11.2. CAUSES OF NON-ORGANISATIONAL STRESS
2.12. MANAGING STRESS
   2.12.1. TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS
   2.12.2. TAKE A BREAK FROM OFFICE GOSSIP
   2.12.3. MODIFY YOUR ENVIRONMENT
   2.12.4. CULTIVATE A CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE
   2.12.5. FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION
   2.12.6. DO A TIME MANAGEMENT CHECK
   2.12.7. TAKE IN VISUAL SOUL FOOD
   2.12.8. LISTEN TO RELAXING MUSIC
   2.12.9. STRESS RELATED TO MARRIED LIFE
2.13. CONCLUSION
CHAPTER II
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA AND THEORETICAL FRAME
WORK OF STRESS – AN OVERVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In the history of India’s freedom struggle Thoothukudi district enjoys a unique place. It was Veerapandia Kattabomman the chieftain of Pachalankurichi waged a bitter fight against East India Company, V.O. Chidambarampillai, a man of immense courage plunged himself into the Swadeshi movement and launched the movement of boycott of the British goods and had the guts to take in the British when he launched his Swadeshi steam company. Another illustrious freedom fighter from Chidambaranar district was Subramaniasiva who was a close associate of V.O. Chidambarampillai one of the musical trinities Sri Muthusamy Dikshitar as well as the poet Umarupulavar were born at Ettayapuram in this district. The district covers an extent of 4,621 sq.km in the eastern part of Tamil Nadu and it is rectangular in shape. It is bounded by Kamarajar and Ramanathapuram districts in the north, Kanyakumari district in the south, Gulf of Mannar in the east, and Tirunelveli district in the west. Thoothukudi is part of the pearl fishery coast, and is known for its pearl fishing and ship building industries.

2.2. ORIGIN OF THE NAME

In ancient times, according to the puranas, it was called Thoothuvankudi. In the Ramayana, Hanuman camped here on his journey to Lanka in search of Sitadevi. He was known as Thoothuvan of Lord Rama and
so the place is referred to as Thoothuvankudi, that name then becoming transformed into Thoothukudi. Thoothukudi has also been known as Thirumanthiranager. Thoothukudi became the centre of the Indian Independence Movement in the early 20th century, with leaders such as Tyagi Mohanavalli Vadivu and Thalapathy Vennikalady, Veerapandiya Kattabomman, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, P.Kandasamy Pillai (popularly known as 'Pena Kana'), Tamil poet Subramanya Bharathy, Vanchinathan and Maveeran Sundaralinga Kudumbanar. In 1906, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai with the help of BalGangadhar Tilak, launched the first Swadeshi ship S.S. Gaelia from this port town against the British. The District of Thoothukudi was carved out as a separate district in the year 1986 as a result of the bifurcation of Tirunelveli district. “The government of Tamil Nadu in its G.O.MS.NO. 535 revenue department dated 23.4.1986 have ordered the formations of a new district viz., Thoothukudi district, which is named after the freedom fighter Shri. V.O.Chidambarampillai, who was born in this district. Thoothukudi district was inaugurated on 19.10.1986 by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and started functioning as the 20th district with effect from 20.10.1986 with the head quarters at Tuticorin.” The district has been renamed as Thoothukudi districts from 1997 as per the G.O MS.NO. 6/8 /revenue administration (1) department dated 1.7.1997.*


* Primary data for the study were collected during the period 1997-1998 when the district was renamed as Thoothukudi district 1997.
The major harbour of Thoothukudi is well known as a pearl diving and fishing centre. It is one of the oldest seaports in the world and was the seaport of the Pandyan kingdom after Korkai, near Palayakayal. It was later taken over by the Portuguese in 1548, captured by the Dutch in 1658, and ceded to the British in 1825. The lighthouse built in 1842 marked the beginning of the history of harbour development in the city. Thoothukudi was established as a Municipality in 1866 with Roche Victoria as its first Chairman. It attained the status of Corporation on August 5, 2008 after 142 years.

2.3. GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Thoothukudi is in South India, on the Gulf of Mannar, about 590 kilometres southwest of Chennai's Kathipara junction. The climate of Thoothukudi is extremely hot and humid. It is strategically located very close to the East-West international sea-route. It is well connected by broad gauge rail and road with all major cities. It has adequate and vast open storage area. Moreover, in this area so much of open lands is available in the port area suited for locating port based industries.

2.4. ADMINISTRATION

Thoothukudi was a part of Tirunelveli LokSabha constituency till 2009. Thoothukudi was separated from Tirunelveli LokSabha constituency and became a new LokSabha constituency from 2009. The constituency comprises the whole of Thoothukudi District, which includes Vilathikulam, Thoothukkudi, Tiruchendur, Srivaikuntam, Ottapidaram and Kovilpatti. There
are three revenue divisions in Thoothukudi district, that are Thoothukudi, Tiruchendur and Kovilpatti.

2.5. ECONOMY

The economy of Thoothukudi revolves around shipping, fishing, salt pan, and agricultural industries. Thoothukudi has a host of other industries including power and chemicals. The availability of skilled labour, an electricity generating plant, a container facility and a major port has made Thoothukudi an important centre for industry and business. The Sethusamudram project, the airport at Vagaikulam, Koodankulam Nuclear Power plant, improved road and rail infrastructure and Nanguneri Special Economic Zones are expected to make Thoothukudi an attractive choice for business investment. Tata Steel recently announced plans to set up a Titanium dioxide project in Thoothukudi.

2.6. THERMAL POWER PLANT

The Thoothukudi Thermal Power Station is the biggest power station in Tamil Nadu with five 210 megawatt generators. The first generator was commissioned in July, 1979. This power station supplies about one-third of the total power demand of Tamil Nadu. Electricity Board with three units of 2 ton Mega Watt, each generating 50 million units of energy daily. The first unit was commissioned in July, 1979, the second unit in December 1980 and the third unit in March 1982. This power station is feeding about one-third of the total power demand of Tamil Nadu.
2.7. SHIPPING

To cope with the increasing trade through Thoothukudi, the Government of India sanctioned the construction of an all-weather Port at Thoothukudi. On 11 July 1974, the newly-constructed Thoothukudi port was declared to be the tenth major port in India. There are 2554 and above small scale Industries registered in the district and about 14 major industries. They are engaged in the production of cotton and staple yarn, caustic soda, fertilizers, soda-ash, carbon dioxide gas in liquid form, etc., The important major industries are SPIC, TAC, Dharangadhara Chemical Works, Madura Coats Ltd., Sterlite Copper Industries, Kilburn Chemicals, Ramesh Flowers, Nila sea foods and some granite industries.

The District Industries Centre and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation are catering to the needs of the small and large scale industries. In Thoothukudi district so many food grains are cultivated that is paddy, corn, ragi, cotton and groundnut are the main crops. Thoothukudi district has numerous schools, including those classed as primary, middle and higher secondary. There are various colleges like medical, engineering, polytechnic and arts and science colleges in thoothukudi district. There are so many entertainment and pilgrim centres in Thoothukudi district like Panchalankurichi, Navathiruppathi, Kulasekaranpatnam, Thoothukudi, Kalugumalai, Ottapidaram, Ettayapuram, Cinthalaikarai, Korkai, Athichanallur, Vanchimaniyachi, Tiruchendur, Vanathirupathi, Manapad, etc.,
2.8. INTRODUCTION TO STRESS

Job stress produces negative effects for both the organization and the employee. For the organization, the results are disruption in normal operations, lowered productivity, and lower margin of profit. For the employee, the effects are threefold: increased physical health problems, psychological distress, and behavioral changes (Rice, 1992).

Stress is an adaptive response. It is the body’s reaction to an event that is seen as emotionally disturbing, disquieting or threatening. When we perceive such an event, we experience what one stress researcher called the “fight or flight” response. To prepare for fighting or fleeing, the body increases its heart rate and blood pressure; more blood is then sent to the heart and muscles and the respiration rate increases. This response was probably beneficial to our cavemen ancestors who had to fight off wild animals. But today, stress itself has become the “wild animal”. Untamed and allowed to run rampant in our lives, it can destroy our health. The modern male’s response to psychological stress differs little from the way our primitive forebears reacted to dangerous animals or other sources of potential physical harm (i.e., with surges of adrenaline, a rise in blood pressure and heart rate, and increase in blood flow to the muscles needed to fight or run away.)

But today, there are few wild animals to contend with, unless you happen to work in a zoo or live out in the wilds somewhere. Our stress response is more likely triggered by overwhelming responsibilities at home or work, by loneliness, or by the fear of losing our jobs. Life without stimulus
would be incredibly dull and boring. Life with too much stimulus becomes
unpleasant and tiring, and may ultimately damage your health or well-being.
Too much stress can seriously interfere with your ability to perform effectively
and a consistently high level of stress over a sustained period can damage your
health.

The word ‘stress’ is taken from engineering jargon; in essence it
means the deformation or change caused on a body by the internal forces that
wok on it. The maximum stress a body can withstand and still return to its
normal state is known as its ‘elastic limit.’ This applies on people too—an
individual has his or her own elastic limit, both in terms of degree and type of
stress. It is when the body is put under long-term stress that it can reach its
snapping point; if it does the damage can be irreparable. The art of stress
management is to keep us at a level of stimulation that is healthy and
enjoyable. Most people realize that aspects of their work and lifestyle can cause
stress. While this is true, it is also important to note that it can be caused by
your environment and by the food and drink you consume.

2.9. DEFINITION OF STRESS

"Stress is defined as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive
pressures or other types of demand placed on them’. This is distinct from
normal workplace pressure, which can create a ‘buzz’ and be a motivating
factor. This adverse reaction can seriously affect the mental health of
employees, for example through anxiety or depression, and also have a
significant effect on their physical health."
"Stress is at the wrong end of a continuum that includes the stimulus of pressure, the semi-stimulus of tension, the diversion of strain, and the disaster that is stress. Stressed people do not concentrate and tend to freeze in the face of anxiety. Failure to treat and eliminate stress often results in serious physical conditions."

2.10. CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress is a complex phenomenon. It is very subjective experience. It depends largely on background experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. Stress is a part of life and is generated by constantly changing situations that a person must face. The term stress refers to an internal state, which results from frustrating or unsatisfying conditions. A certain level of stress is unavoidable. Because of its complex nature stress has been studied for many years by researchers in psychology, sociology and medicine.

Stress is becoming inevitable these days in every organization and ultimately it is culminating to the Burnout. Burnout, experienced as a state of physical, emotional, an mental exhaustion (Pines & Aronson, 1988) well as depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, is the result of a process of attrition in which highly motivated and committed individuals lose their spirit (Freudenberger, 1980; Pines, 1993; Pines & Aronson, 1988).

2.10.1. MENTAL STRESS

Employees reported that “70 percent of their total life stress resulted from their jobs” (Cooper & Marshall, 1980). Due to the changes in the global competitiveness, the pressure on work-force to produce maximum output and
enhance competitiveness is also increasing day by day. Indeed, to perform better to their job, there is a requirement for workers to perform multiple tasks in the workplace to keep abreast of changing technologies (Cascio, 1995; Quick, 1997). The ultimate results of this pressure have been found to be one of the important factors influencing job stress in their work (Cahn et al., 2004). Right from the first day of going for a job till retirement, people are exposed to various stressful situations for some reason or occupational stress in a private sector for the women employees could be due to the daily experience of repetitive, intensive work. Long hours of work, different week offs, incredible high work targets, improper break schedules, role ambiguity and role conflict are also some of the causes of stress.2

“To fully understand women’s health experience, we need to look at both women’s social roles, e.g. paid worker, wife, mother, and the material circumstances under which these roles are enacted” (Macranet, et al., 1996).

A working woman has to perform the duties of a wife and a mother at home and perform the role of a superior, a peer or a sub-ordinate outside the home. The working women are required to perform multiple and at times, conflicting roles. Being simultaneously confronted with the multiple demands of home and outside, women have to face the problem of role conflict. At home in addition to biological functions, there are other duties, which they have to perform because of the prevailing cultural norms and value. They are required

2. Latha Suresh and Dr. Jayaram, “Health Hazards Due to Stress Leading to Attrition in BPO” International Journal of Applied Management Research, Volume 2, No.1, January 2013pp.278.
at the same time to undertake responsibilities, duties and certain commitment connected with their employment. Difficulty arises because often divergent and conflicting roles make demands on the women without taking into consideration their physical capability, energy, endurance and time, which are certainly finite. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have adorned high offices in India including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the LokSabha and Leader of the opposition. As of 2011, the speaker of the LokSabha and the leader of the opposition in the LokSabha (Lower House of the parliament) both are women. However, women in India generally are still exposed to numerous social issues. According to the global study conducted by Thomson Reuters, India is the “fourth most dangerous country” in the world for women. Although working women help in bringing financial stability to a family, their professional life often subjects them to increased domestic violence in India, according to a new study. According to Suneeta Krishnan, an epidemiologist in RTI’s women’s Global Health Imperative, the women subjected to the study were interviewed three times during the two-year period and their research “highlights the complex challenges of women’s empowerment”. While increasing women’s access to meaningful and fair employment, we must recognize the potential social repercussions of these efforts,” she said “our study is consistent with
evidence that rapid changes in gender roles and relations can lead to backlash, including violence against women.” Ms. Krishnan said key social expectation of men once married is that they work and earn for their family, and failure to meet this expectation can lead to social disapproval.

2.10.2. CONCEPT OF WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT

“The myth of separate worlds” to describe a widely held assumption that work life and family life constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds. Work and the family connected in many subtle and non-subtle, social, economic and psychological ways. A women’s life pattern has a unique time of hibernation, reward postponement and actualization on account of dual role played by them. A woman’s self-identification is delayed because of the conflicting expectations faced by her from the different roles she performs in home and office. Kapoor has opined; “Now she has two roles to perform, one as a house wife and the other as a wage earner. Both these roles make demand on her time and energy. She is quite often torn between the conflicting pulls of the dual role. The outer reality characterized by conflict in roles creates inner conflict in mind. Kapoor has rightly observed, “In the transitional era there is a role-confusion because of the absence of fitness between her roles as an employee and as a housewife because of the tension that is created due to her inner conflict.” This gets reflected overtly in many forms and creates conflicting social situations, thus further aggravating the intensity of conflict. Gerland R. Grace has explained the cause of conflict in the following manner: Role-conflict, role-strain or role-stress are all concerned with problems for the
individual which arise as the result of incapability. Among the women workers role conflict arises out of the problems of differences in the expectations of the individuals. A women employee is emotionally, more evolved and socially aware of her rights and privileges and it increases the level of her role conflict. Gandhiji had also pointed out the awakening of civil and political consciousness among Indian Women creating a conflict between the traditional domestic duties and the duty towards the society. A state of confusion is created because of the contradictory nature of the dual role of the women employees. “Work- family conflict occurs when an individual has to perform multiple roles: worker, spouse and in many cases parent. Each of these roles imposes demands requiring time, energy and commitment. The cumulative demands of multiple roles can result in role strain of two types: overload and interference”. Overload existing when the total demands of time and energy associated with the prescribed activity of multiple roles is too great for the roles to be performed adequately or comfortably. Interference occurs when conflicting demands make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of multiple roles. “The vulnerability of the female work role to family demands ought to be a major source of work-family conflict because of the sex-role norm that women should take responsibility for the conflict with the norms of the work role”.  

2.10.3. INVOLVEMENT IN WORK

“Work involvement is conceptualized as a person’s psychological response to his or her current work-role, the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with the work and the importance of the work to the person’s self-image and self-concept”. The work involvement of the women workers depends on the number of hours spent in work. “These hours, in turn, have been linked to increased work and family conflict”. High work involvement leads to more work-family conflict for women workers because they are adding a non-traditional role to a traditional family role.

2.10.4. EXPECTATIONS IN WORK

Expectations in work by the employer are goals of pressure an individual experiences when she assumes increased responsibilities. “High work expectations have been significantly linked to high levels work-family conflict”. “Women do not have mutually supportive work and family roles”. Central to the traditional roles of wife and mother is the obligation to be available to meet the needs of the family. The work base is in terms of position rather than gender. So, the women workers are unable to take time away from their family roles to satisfy work expectations.

2.10.5. INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY

“Family involvement is conceptualized as the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with family roles, the importance of the family to the person’s self-image and self-concept has traditionally been associated with their performance of the parenting and spouse roles”. The
family involvement of the women workers raises anxiety and guilt regarding their performance in non-traditional roles. High family involvement leads to more work-family conflict for women workers because they are playing a traditionally family role along with a non-traditional role.\textsuperscript{4}

Women in our society have so far had only a secondary status. It is well known that the economic dependence of women upon men is one of the primary reasons which have pushed them into the back-ground and resulted in their having only a secondary status both within and outside the family (Wadhera, 1976). In spite of the fact that the fair sex has proved their mettle in every walk of life, their contribution is not given due credit in most cases. In India women constitute nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in urban economy. Yet, their economic status is still low as reflected by the census data itself that present a distorted picture of women particularly of those who are engaged in the informal sector of urban economy (Tripathy, 1991).\textsuperscript{5}

Every human being in today’s fast paced world is plagued by stress every day. The means of tackling stress differ from person to person. The need of the day is to help people successfully to combat stress. Facing stress is unavoidable, but effectively tackling it is a necessity. A group of people who

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are most frequently affected by stress are women employees. Throughout their lives, they face various challenges and a whole lot of pressure in today’s competitive environment. Women need to be trained in handling stress. Handling stress is an art by itself and it needs some proven scientific methods to manage it. Several demands are placed during the life of women. These demands are environmental conditions requiring effort on the part of the women to mobilize and manage requisite resources. When the woman is unable to do so, stress occurs. Stress thus refers to a condition of perceived tension between demands and resources during women’s life. Stress is inevitable in the life of a woman.  

Work and family are the two most important domains in a person’s life and their interface has been the object of study for researchers world-wide. There is a felt need to balance and integrate family needs and career requirements (Sturges & Guest, 2004) and research in the field of work-family interface has increased dramatically in the past two decades (Frone, Yardley, & Market, 1997). The changing social structures arising out of dual career couples, single parent families, an increasing number of parents with dependent care responsibilities for children, and ageing parents have all contributed to increasing in the area of work life balance.  

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The modern world which is said to be a world of technological achievement is also a world of stress due to the increasing competition among nations, regions and enterprises on a global scale. The enterprises have to update their knowledge and skill in information technology on the one hand and enhance flexible responses to market change on the other. As a result managers and staff are pressurized for technological achievements, profit motives and productivity and sometimes traditional employment practices and contracts are replaced by temporary workers and contract labourers. Challenge, stress and strain have passed on the workforce at large. Employees now have to face and cope with leaner working conditions, increased flexibility with time pressure and long working hours due to narrowing deadlines and altogether with increased work load demands, at the same time being aware that jobs are no longer stable and the work is becoming precarious and unemployment indeed is real threat. Not surprisingly the organizational stress has increased manifolds and has become one of the most common occupational health, happiness and life satisfaction. While stress at work will remain the major challenge to occupational health, the ability to understand and manage the challenge is improving (Cox, Griffiths and Rial-Gonzales, 2000).

Since last two decades a number of empirical research studies on organizational stress have been conducted to find the casual factors, consequences and coping techniques. Social support is one of the major coping methods in work place today. The moderating effect of social support on job
stress-well-being outcomes has been identified by many researchers (Singh and Rai, Sud and Malik, 1999., Ganster, Fusilier; and Mayes, 1986).³⁸

Work is the most important aspect of one’s life. With many other job factors, rapid changes in technology and information processing produce pressure on the workers. They frequently have to deal with these job pressures that may have adverse consequences on their physical and psychological well-being. Here, one of the most fundamental questions for industrial and organizational psychologists is to explore the extent to which job factors affects employee health and well-being. Majority of job stress models posit a general causal flow from environmental conditions, role ambiguity, role conflict, and work load as being potentially important determinants of health and well-being. Among these role variables role overload have been reported to be dominant. Job strains are adverse reactions that employees have due to job stresses. Jex and Beehr (1991) discussed three categories of job strains (i.e.) behavioural, physical and psychological strain. Behavioural strains are things people do in response to job stressors such as careless on their duty and stay home from work when not ill. Physical strains are manifestations of health such as disease or physiological symptoms (e.g. headache). Psychological strains are affective reactions including attitudes (e.g. Job dissatisfaction) or emotions (anxiety and frustration).

On the definitional aspect, occupational stress can be defined as the physiological and emotional responses that occur when workers perceive an imbalance between their work demands and their capability and/or resources to meet these demands. According to French, Rogers and Cobb (1974) stress is a condition of misfit between a person’s skills and abilities and demands of the job, and a misfit in terms of a person’s needs supplied by the environment.

The organizational conditions most frequently identified and researched as stressors are job qualities, roles in the organizations and relationships at work. The job qualities commonly associated with stress are work under load and work overload whereas two types of role stress in the organization which have been widely researched are role conflict and role ambiguity (Van Sell, Brief and Schuler, 1981). Overload is a condition where the individual has excess job duties to perform which appear to exceed his abilities. Role conflict is a potential stressor because it may prohibit an individual from doing well in all roles or at least, cause uncertainty about whether that is possible. Similarly, role ambiguity may also prohibit an individual from experiencing a sense of accomplishment because the individual is unclear about what to accomplish.

In the job stress literature, most studies have assessed job stressors and strains using employees self-reports technique. In several studies, it has been reported that occupational stress is significantly related to psychosomatic health problems (Mishra, and Singh, 2006; Singh, Srivastava, and Mandal, 1999; Jamal, 1990; Steffy, Jones and Noe, 1990). The study conducted by Spector and
Jex (1998) found that interpersonal conflict, organizational constraints and work-load is significantly related with anxiety, job satisfaction as well as with physical symptoms. Jeckson and Schuler (1985) reveal that role ambiguity and role conflict are significantly correlated with physical problems. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them. Locus of control is originally developed within the framework of Rotter’s (1954) social learning theory, and refers to the degree to which an individual believes the occurrence of reinforcements is contingent on his or her own behavior. The factors involved with reinforcement expectancy are labeled “external” and “internal” control. Individuals with internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behavior and actions. Those with external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events. Those with internal locus of control have better control of their behavior and tend to exhibit more political behaviors than externals and are more likely to attempt to influence other people; they are more likely to assume that their efforts will be successful. They are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation than do externals.

Overall, person with internal locus of control is healthier, characterized by better overall psychological adjustment and greater success. An internal locus of control is positively correlated with self-esteem. They do not just tend to assume that their efforts will be successful, but generally achieve more than externals. Because ‘internals’ consider themselves
responsible for their outcomes, they are more active in seeking information concerning their situation than do ‘externals.’ On an average, internals are more physically healthy, as they will seek more information about health maintenance and engage in precautionary health measures, and will less likely become substance abusers. Work is the most important domain from which individuals derive satisfaction in life and equally it is the common source of stressful experiences. Present day working environment is continuously changing due to the globalization of the world economy and economic rationalization drive job restructuring, greater part time and workload demands that commonly occur in the context of higher job insecurity. Thus it is not unreasonable perception that the nature of work is not only deteriorating the performance of employees, but, it also leads them towards decrease in mental and physical health. Therefore, the relationship between stress and psychological well-being has become the prominent focus of present day researches.

2.11. CAUSES OF STRESS

Factors that cause stress are called "Stressors." The following are the sources or causes of an organizational and non-organizational stress.

2.11.1. CAUSES OF AN ORGANISATIONAL STRESS

The main sources or causes of an organisational stresses are:


2.11.1.1. Career Concern

If an employee feels that she is very much behind in corporate ladder, then she may experience stress and if she feels that there are no opportunities for self-growth she may experience stress. Hence unfulfilled career expectations are a major source of stress.

2.11.1.2. Role Ambiguity

It occurs when the person does not know what she is supposed to do on the job. Employee’s tasks and responsibilities are not clear. The employee is not sure what she is expected to do. This creates confusion in the minds of the worker and results in stress.

2.11.1.3. Rotating Shifts

Stress may occur to those individuals who work in different shifts. Employees may be expected to work in day shift for some days and then in the night shift. This may create problems in adjusting to the shift timings, and it can affect not only personal life but also family life of the employee.

2.11.1.4. Role Conflict

It takes place when different people have different expectations from a person performing a particular role. It can also occur if the job is not as per the expectation or when a job demands a certain type of behavior that is against the person’s moral values.

2.11.1.5. Occupational Demands

Some jobs are more stressful than others. Jobs that involve risk and danger are more stressful. Research findings indicate that jobs that are more
stressful usually require constant monitoring of equipment and devices, unpleasant physical conditions, making decisions, etc.

2.11.1.6. Lack of Participation in Decision Making

Many experienced employees feel that management should consult them on matters affecting their jobs. In reality, the superiors hardly consult the concerned employees before taking a decision. This develops a feeling of being neglected, which may lead to stress.

2.11.1.7. Work Overload

Excessive work load leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure. Work overload may take two different forms:-

i. Qualitative work overload implies performing a job that is complicated or beyond the employee's capacity.

ii. Quantitative work overload arises when number of activities to be performed in the prescribed time is many.

2.11.1.8. Work Under load

In this case, very little work or too simple work is expected on the part of the employee. Doing less work or jobs of routine and simple nature would lead to monotony and boredom, which can lead to stress.

2.11.1.9. Working Conditions

Employees may be subject to poor working conditions. It would include poor lighting and ventilations, unhygienic sanitation facilities, excessive noise and dust, presence of toxic gases and fumes, inadequate safety
measures, etc. All these unpleasant conditions create physiological and psychological imbalance in humans thereby causing stress.

2.11.1.10. Lack of Group Cohesiveness

Every group is characterized by its cohesiveness although they differ widely in degree of cohesiveness. Individuals experience stress when there is no unity among the members of work group. There is mistrust, jealously, frequent quarrels, etc., in groups and this lead to stress to employees.

2.11.1.11. Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict

Interpersonal and intergroup conflict takes place due to differences in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs between two or more individuals and groups. Such conflicts can be a source of stress to group members.

2.11.1.12. Organisational Changes

When changes occur, people have to adapt to those changes and this may cause stress. Stress is higher when changes are major or unusual like transfer or adaption of new technology.

2.11.1.13. Lack of Social Support

When individuals believe that they have the friendship and support of others at work, their ability to cope with the effects of stress increases. If this kind of social support is not available then an employee experiences more stress.

2.11.2. CAUSES OF NON-ORGANISATIONAL STRESS

Certain factors outside the scope of an organisation also cause stress. These main sources or causes of non-organisational stress are:
2.11.2.1. Civic Amenities

Poor civic amenities in the area in which one lives can be a cause of stress. Inadequate or lack of civic facilities like improper water supply, excessive noise or air pollution, lack of proper transport facility can be quite stressful.

2.11.2.2. Life Changes

Life changes can bring stress to a person. Life changes can be slow or sudden. Slow life changes include getting older and sudden life changes include death or accident of a loved one. Sudden life changes are highly stressful and very difficult to cope.

2.11.2.3. Frustration

Frustration is another cause of stress. Frustration arises when goal directed behavior is blocked. Management should attempt to remove barriers and help the employees to reach their goals.

2.11.2.4. Caste and Religion Conflicts

Employees living in areas which are subject to caste and religious conflicts do suffer from stress. In case of religion, the minorities and lower-caste people (seen especially in India) are subject to more stress.

2.11.2.5. Personality

People are broadly classified as 'Type A' and 'Type B'. Type ‘A’ people have the following characteristics.

i.  Feels guilty while relaxing.

ii. Gets irritated by minor mistakes of self and others.
iii. Feels impatient and dislikes waiting.

iv. Does several things at one time.

The 'Type B' people are exactly opposite. So they are less affected by stress due to the above mentioned factors.

2.11.2.6. Technological Changes

When there are any changes in technological field, employees are under the constant stress of fear of losing jobs, or need to adjust to new technologies. This can be a source of stress.

2.11.2.7. Career Changes

When a person suddenly switches over a new job, she is under stress to shoulder new responsibilities properly. Under promotion, over promotion, demotion and transfer can also cause stress. It is not that all persons suffer from all the said symptoms but, in all the sufferers, a few of the said symptoms suffice to trigger stressful states. It is for the attending physicians and the persons, who are in constant touch with a stressed person, to note the symptoms\(^\text{11}\). A stress free existence is, perhaps, a mirage. The pressures of modern living ensure that stress is always lurking in the background. It can’t be eliminated but one could try to control it. Stress can be good and bad, depending on the type. Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life, and we all thrive under a certain amount of stress. Deadline, competition, confrontations and even our frustrations and sorrows add depth and

\(^{11}\) Dr. Rajeev Sharma, *Stress Disorders including Anxieties and Headaches*, Manoj Publications; Delhi-6; pp.47-49.
enrichment to our lives. Our goal is not to eliminate stress acts as a depressant and may leave us feeling bored or dejected. On the other hand, excessive stress may leave us feeling ‘tied up in knots.’ What we need to do is to find the optimal level of stress, which will individually motivate but not overwhelm each of us.\textsuperscript{12}

\section*{2.12. MANAGING STRESS}

\subsection*{2.12.1. TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS}

It is not about a quick breath to calm us down; it is about the science of the breath. Take deep breaths throughout the day, in through the nose, and out through the mouth. Breathing into the nostrils stimulates the pre-frontal cortex of the brain. It triggers the release of stress-reducing hormones such as dopamine and serotonin.

\subsection*{2.12.2. TAKE A BREAK FROM OFFICE GOSSIP}

To avoid the water cooler gossip factory, it is important to cultivate healthy relationships at work, but diving in to the trashing of fellow colleagues and managers breeds negativity. It’s a time waster and induces stress.

\subsection*{2.12.3. MODIFY YOUR ENVIRONMENT}

Change your working conditions. Work from a conference room, head outside for a bit, or telecommute for a day. It gets your brain thinking differently. Try a family picture, small statue, knickknack, or just a post-it note with an inspirational phrase or word.

\textsuperscript{12} Dr. Rajeev Sharma, \textit{Stress Disorders including Anxieties and Headaches}, Manoj Publications; Delhi-6, pp.56.
2.12.4. CULTIVATE A CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

We are on overdrive. But we can slow things down by taking time to read some inspirational material in the middle of our workday. For some people, reading prayers, meditative passages, or philosophy calms the mind and soul. Others prefer the repetition of positive affirmations or spiritual mantras.

2.12.5. FOCUS ON MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

Poor communication creates frustration, and it can result in inefficient interactions and lead to stress. The trick is to be more mindful of how and when you communicate with colleagues or clients, and being aware of the goal for the communication.

2.12.6. DO A TIME MANAGEMENT CHECK

Sometimes we unintentionally clutter the playing field of the mind with confusion, rather than taking the time to prioritize and get organized. How we manage our time is a huge part of the puzzle to reduce stress. Keep a log of how we’re spending your time daily. Monitor that log each week, assess, and then adjust, on a regular basis. Identify the unproductive demands on your time.

2.12.7. TAKE IN VISUAL SOUL FOOD

Check out screen savers and applications that offer visual meditative exercises. What we watch impacts our brain and can either hype us up or calm us down. Surf the Web or YouTube for comforting videos. Nature or animal videos are easily found on the Web, and are generally relaxing to watch.
2.12.8. LISTEN TO RELAXING MUSIC

Classical music might not be for everyone but studies show that it has a relaxing effect on brain waves. Generally, in a busy work atmosphere, the brain is in a beta state, which tends to be frenetic. Relaxing music induces an alpha state and that reduces stress.

2.12.9. STRESS RELATED TO MARRIED LIFE

When joint family system is almost on the verge of collapse, multiple problems of married couples have growth multifold. When a couple opts to break away from rest of the family and stays independently, it has to arrange for all the requisite necessities of life. Mounting expenses and depleting income are the major causes of unhappy married life. There would have been no problem in life, if money could buy peace of minds. Possession of household goods and luxuries has no end and avarice to mass luxury goods is too deep to allow even a normal respite. When comfort and rest are sacrificed for the sake of luxuries of life, the chances are that we buy unrest which, in turn, surfaces in the form of tension, worry and uneasiness. Golden principle is to work to the extent that your body is not unduly overtaxed, and arrange for only bare necessities of life. Try to be content with what you have and avoid running after unwanted objects. Family peace is destroyed when lady of the house has also to work in an office, thus leaving the children to the care and protection of
servants who, at times, make away with valuables in the house. Money is earned at the expense of your child care and education. Stress is one of the leading causes for the loss of employee productivity. Stress is a particular unpleasant feeling that one experiences when one perceives that something has been lost or is threatened. The world health organization (2001) predicts that by 2020, mental illness will be the second leading cause of disability worldwide, after heart disease. The international labour organization (ILO, 2000) says mental illness affects more human lives and gives rise to a greater waste of human resources than all other forms of disability. Private sector is ranked as the most preferable source of employment for the youngsters. In India, almost 70 percent of the total youngster’s population is joining in corporate sector. Though the salary offered is lucrative compared to public sectors it is no surprise that they do not remain in the corporate field for a long time. There are various reasons for this. Private sector is providing sleep disorder, digestive disorder, and eyesight problem, number of other illness and broken marriages due to organization pressures to achieve targets. This results in high stress level which in turn affects their health forcing to quit the job or even switchover to a different sector. Modern era is known as the “era of anxiety and stress” (Coleman, 1976). Every job in every sector irrespective of whether that is in corporate, pharmaceutical

industry, banking sector and education sector is becoming the main reason to give the stress to its employees. Thus, when this stress becomes excessive, employees develop various symptoms of stress that harm their performance and even threaten their ability to cope up with their environment. It speaks about the health of the private sector women employees as a result of stress otherwise termed “employee burnout”.

2.13. CONCLUSION

Working women are supposed to give an ardent commitment to both their career and family. There are huge expectations from both sides and women feel that they must sacrifice one for securing another and the choice is never an easy one. While it is a norm for women to take time from work in order to address the household responsibilities, the similar expectation does not apply to men at all. Almost all married working women in India have to assume some degree of responsibility for cooking, household cleaning, shopping, child care and elderly care. Women in professional careers feel guilty either because they are unable to pay attention to their family because of career or vice-versa. They feel that whatever they are doing is not good enough and that they cannot meet their own standards. This inner sense becomes very painful when they are rebuked at either workplace or home due to their relative non-commitment.