Chapter – III

Conceptual Framework of Stress and its Management
CHAPTER – III

CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK OF STRESS
AND ITS MANAGEMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher made an attempt to study the various causes and effect of stress. This chapter also elaborates the conceptual frame work of stress, stress management techniques and their consequences along with many research models.

3.2 EXECUTIVES JOB STRESS

Stress is an inherent part of every profession. It is something like the species and affects job performance either way depending upon how it has been perceived and experienced. The same level of stress at workplace may be perceived and experienced differently which results in differential productivity amongst the executives in the corporate. It is also true that executives who were recruited and selected have had more or less same level of intellectual quotient but day-to-day experience of non-intellectual abilities in these executives predisposes them towards management of job stress resulting in psychological well-being and effectiveness at work place. Stress at work-place has been a cause for concern in the present day financial meltdown which the corporate world has been experiencing. Stress at work-place for the executives may be considered a consequence of how the mind and the body function and interact.

Research findings indicate that there are five major factors which make the executive under stress namely, 1) factors intrinsic to the job, 2) role in the organization, 3) video display terminal stress, and 4) relationships at work and 5) career development, Cooper et al. (1988). Apart from these five groups of factors which are mainly organizational in
nature, the personality of individuals, their socio-economic conditions, and their family backgrounds also add on to the experience of stress at workplace, Fred Lertans (2000). Therefore, it becomes imperative for the organizations, not to ignore the impact of stress on their executives and their productivity. The role of psychological make up of the executives need emphasis as the research literatures suggest that the personality traits of persons have significant impact on the perception of role stress in the organization, Beehr.T.A., Newman, J.T. (2001). It was observed that out of the five major personality dimensions such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, neuroticism has been found to be positively related with job stress. In work settings, the executives who are high on neuroticism are likely to be emotionally unstable and experience negative feeling, Costa & McCrae( 1985).

3.3 STRESS AT WORK PLACE

French. J.R.P. and Caplan R.D (2003) states that the concept of stress has been approached in at least four different ways, namely, the stimulus or external force noting on the individual, the responses or changes in the physiological functions, the interaction between an external force and the resistance to it and finally, as a comprehensive phenomenon encompassing all the three stress at workplace, affects not only individual employee’s productivity but also of group as well as the total organization’s efficiency and effectiveness.

3.3.1 Common causes of excessive workplace stress

- Fear of layoffs
- Increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction.
- Pressure to work at optimum levels – all the time.
Stress is an inevitable outcome of modern day complex life in organizations and needs to be experienced at an optimal level which depends upon person’s characteristics, for making life meaningful and productive. This does not happen most of the time in organizational lines as demands from inside and outside the organization keep on constantly changing. Researches across the globe have found the relevance of emotional intelligence of the executives which act as a moderator vis-à-vis perception of job stress.

3.4. STRESS AS MOTIVATOR

Stress is omnipresent. We can’t live without encountering stressful situations. We work for and within organizations supercharged with deadlines, sales quotas, irritable customers, irrepessible subordinates, and frequently unrealistic superiors. Stress is what makes our lives challenging, thoughtful, endearing, and interesting, although sometimes too interesting. But if stress is uncontrolled, it can make our lives hectic and unhappy, and it can even physically disable our bodies. Stress is a physical and psychological reaction to environmental activities and events. However, stress is developed internally rather than externally. Most executives experience the external stressful event or situation (called a stressor), but stress is internally generated when individuals are unable to cope with their external stressors.

![Stress as motivator](image)

**Fig.3.1 Stress as motivator**
3.5 WHEN STRESS IS BENEFICIAL

Although stress has been widely criticized throughout business and industry as the road to burnout, controlled stress or stressors can be great motivators for accomplishment and creativity. If we picture a bell-shaped curve, the horizontal axis along the bottom represents stress. The further the bell curve moves to the right, the more difficult the stressors are to control, resulting in stress. The upward sloping curve represents a person enduring stressors and working to top productivity. Many people, particularly executives, would call this a challenge.

The negative side prevails, when the individual becomes controlled by these stressors on the downward slope of the curve, past the point of maximum efficiency. It is in this area that stress illness symptoms begin to appear. Stressors are great motivators, the spice of life, but too many of them can be devastating.


The sources of stress may be classified into two broad categories as follows:

1. **Organisational stressors:** There are several potential stressors in organizations. These are summarized in the Table below:

2. **Individual stressors:** Personality, motivation, ability, experience, status, life style, beliefs and values.
Organizational Stressors

1. Job Qualities
2. Physical environment
3. Roles in the organization
4. Relationships
5. Career development
6. Organisational structure
6. Change

1. Personal causes life
2. Career changes

Job Stress
Stress outcomes
Eustress of Distress

Fig. 3.2 Sources of stress

Organizational Stressors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOB QUALITIES</th>
<th>QUANTITATIVE OVERLOAD/UNDERLOAD QUALITATIVE OVERLOAD/UNDERLOAD TIME PRESSURES RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THINGS / PEOPLE WORK PACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment:</td>
<td>Working conditions like temperature, Noise, Lighting, Spatial arrangement, Crowding, Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles in the organization</td>
<td>Role ambiguity Role conflict Too little management support Holding a middle management position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>With superiors With subordinates With colleagues Inability to delegate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development</td>
<td>Quantitative overload/underload Qualitative overload/underload Time pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Organisational Individual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I) **Organisational stressors:**

The major organizational stressors are as follows:

a) **Organisational policies:**

Organizational policies provide guidelines for actions. Unfavourable and ambiguous policies may affect the functioning of the individuals adversely & they may experience stress.

b) **Organisation Structure:**

Any defect in organizational structure like lack of opportunity, lack of participation in decision – making, lack of opportunity for advancement, high degree of specialization, line & staff conflict etc. affects the performance of the organizational structure.

c) **Organisational processes:**

Organisational process also affects individual behaviour at work. Organizational processes like poor communication, Poor & inadequate feedback of work performance, ambiguous and conflicting roles, inadequate information flow, cause stress for people in organization.

d) **Physical conditions:**

Organisational physical condition affects work performance. Thus poor working or physical conditions produce stress on people.

II) **Extra Organisational Stressors:**

Since an organization interacts continuously with its environment, event happening outside the organization also work as stressors. Thus, social and technical changes, economic and financial conditions, community conditions work as stressors.
III) Individual stressors:

There are several events, which may work as individual stressors, and they are.

a) Causes of Stress:

Personal causes of stress included: death of spouse or close family member, divorce / separation, jail term, personal injury / illness, marriage, change in health, and money problems. There was high agreement that each of the personal items were causes of stress (agreement ranged from 76 to 97 percent).

b) Life and career changes:

Stress is produced by several changes in life and career. Life’s changes may be slow and gradual or sudden. In both the cases the intensity of stress would be different. Like life changes, there may be changes in career, in the form of promotion, demotion, transfer, separation, etc.

Eustress and Distress:

Stress has neutral connotation. It is only the degree of stress which produces positive or negative consequences. From this point of view, stress can be classified as eustress or distress.

Eustress: It denotes the presence of optimum level of stress in an individual, which contributes positively to his performance.

3.7 DYNAMICS OF WORK STRESS

The modern world, which is a world of achievements, is also a world of stress. On finding stress everywhere, whether it be a family, a business organization / enterprise or any other social or economic organization, the extent of stress is however, a matter of degree. Some organizations are more harmonious whereas others have greater friction and tension.
Stress in organizations have been defined in terms of mismatch between a person’s skills and abilities and the demands of his job and as mismatch in terms of person’s needs not being fulfilled by his job environment.

Fig. 3.3 Dynamics of Work Stress

Sources of stress at work:

Cooper, Cooper.R.D. and Eaker. L.H. (1988) have identified the following six major sources of stress at work as shown in the above Fig.

Factors intrinsic to the Job:

Working conditions: The physical surroundings i.e., noise lighting, smells and all the stimuli that affect an individual’s sense can affect mood and overall mental state.
**Shift work:** Many workers have jobs, which require them to work in shifts, some of which go round the clock. Research studies have sound that shift work is a common occupational stress that affects blood chemistry, metabolic rates, blood sugar levels, mental efficiency and work motivation. Shift work affects the sleep patterns, family and social relationships of the individuals.

**Work Overload:** Two types of work load have been described by researchers. Quantitative overload refers to having a lot of work to do. Qualitative overload refers to work that is too difficult for an individual.

**Role in the organization:**

When a person’s role in the organization is clearly defined and understood and when expectations placed on the individuals are also clear and nonconflicting, stress can be kept to a minimum.

**Relationship at work:**

The working relationships, which one has with the people working in the same organization, can also be major sources of stress. Hans Selye suggested that learning to live with other people is one of the most stressful aspects of life. There are three critical relationships at work, those with superiors, those with subordinates and those with colleagues / co-workers, which can produce stress.

**Career development:**

A lot of issues as job security, fear of job loss, obsolescence, retirement and numerous performance appraisals can create pressure and strain. The frustration of having reached a career ceiling or being over promoted can also induce a lot of stress.
Organisational structure and climate:

Being part of an organization can present threats to a person’s sense of freedom and autonomy. People working in organizations have often complained that they do not have a sense of belonging and that they lack adequate opportunities to participate. They feel that their behaviour is unduly restricted and that they are not included in the office communications and consultations. All this has been found to be related to the overall poor health, escapist drinking, depression, low self-esteem, absenteeism, and plans to leave the work.

**Budget constraints**, downsizing, fear of job loss and loss of benefits, layoffs, outsourcing, shorter work weeks, cuts in overtime, overflow of duties from not hiring new executives to fill positions, and a slowing economy all lead to worker insecurity and this in turn leads to worker stress. Such downsizing, in turn, leads to stress factors such as work overloads, hectic routines, infrequent breaks, long work hours, increased pressure, staff shortages and personnel problems, time pressure and deadlines.

**The introduction of new technology** and equipment also leads to stress. Computer problems, e-mail overloading, incomprehensible jargon in manuals, lack of training, learning new skills, slow processing times, and unrealistic expectations are all stress factors introduced by the addition of new technology and equipment into the workplace.

**Non-work factors:**

The non-work factors which causes stress in individuals are family problems, economic problems, health problems and political uncertainties.

**Stress at home:**

Many people find it much harder to be objective about the causes of domestic stress than about the stress at work. This is because their emotional involvement with what is happening within the home is much greater.
Studies show that the main sources of stress in and around the home can be summarized under the following headings:

- Stress caused by a partner
- Stress caused by children
- Stress caused by domestic arrangements
- Stress caused by environmental pressures on the home.

**Stress caused by a partner:**

Partner induced stress may arise mainly as a result of clashes either of temperament or of interests. Illness or disability of a partner can also lead to stress. In a family, where both the husband and wife are working, the husband’s reluctance to help in the home / household chores can also lead to stress of the other partner.

**Stress caused by children :**

Stress caused by children can also lead to clashes of either temperament or of interests. The children’s illness or disability can also be a cause of stress in the home. When the children are not well in school the father or mother feel stressed because of guilty feeling that he / she is neglecting the children because of preoccupation with the work. In some cases, if one of the partners wants to spend with children and if the other partner is not able to help in that matter, it can lead to stress in the family / home.

**Stress caused by Domestic Arrangements:**

Stress caused by domestic arrangements, which can often be linked to partner or children is usually a consequence of having too many household duties and too little time in which to do them.
Stress caused by Environmental Pressures on home:

Environmental stress comes from such diverse sources such as noisy neighbours, road and building works that threaten the value or enjoyment of one’s property and financial worries brought on by the inability to pay household bills like mortgage repayments, etc. The amount of crime in the area can also be a major cause of stress in the family / house.

As with the stress at work, an essential step in dealing with domestic stress is to make a cool and accurate appraisal of where the stress comes from. One needs to be frank about it. Sometimes it is disturbing to admit even to us that our much loved partner or child is however unwittingly making our life difficult. But unless the admission is made, there is not much we can do to put the things right.

3.8 COSTS OF WORK PLACE STRESS

Stress causes problems, and these problems cost organizations in different ways:

Low quality of service: An increase in complaints received and customers lot cost time and money. Replacement of provision of expected or additional services, demand more time and additional work from the concerning staff. It leads to stress of the executives or loss of customers to the company.

High staff turnover: Both time (for retraining) and money (for recruitment) are spent on replacing unhappy workers.

Poor reputation: A company with dissatisfied customers has to bear the costs for changes to restore confidence in its products and services.

Poor organizational image: A company may recruit only a low quality or inexperienced workforce since high fliers are unlikely to be attracted to it.
Dissatisfied workers: Valuable time is spent in disputes with management over terms and conditions of the employment.

3.9 THE IMPACT OF WORK STRESS

Over the last decade, the escalating costs associated with workplace stress indicate an international trend among industrial countries, Aroba.T and James (1995). For instance, in the United States, the number of stress claims has trebled in the last year with 15 percent of all workers compensation claims being for stress. The cost to organizations of this level of occupational stress lies anywhere between 200 to 300 billion dollars per year as a result of high staff turnover, increased health and workers’ compensation claims and decreased productivity, Smith.I.C, (1997). In addition, recent figures emanating from Britain have indicated that approximately 70,000 workers are absent from work due to occupational stress every year, Bachin.A (2006) costing the nation around seven billion pounds in lost productivity, worker entitlements and health care.

A subsequent result of these factors is the loss of 40 million working days per year, Stephen Robains (1999) reported that in one year, 5.9 percent of workers surveyed in England and Wales recorded having an illness that was caused or made worse by work. Almost 14 percent of the population reported they had suffered work stress or depression in the previous year. Three occupational groups showed raised rates of stress, namely teachers, welfare workers and other health professional. The stress rate among teachers was particularly marked, being over four times the average. The Canadian compensation board (1996) found that 60 percent of Canadian workers’ felt negative stress in the workplace’, and 80 percent of this group stated that stress was adversely affecting their job performance and health. Workers between the ages of 25 and 44 years, as well as managerial and professional executives were identified as the groups that tended to be more likely to lodge a stress claim.
3.10 WORK LIFE BALANCE

The expression “work-life balance” was first used in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual’s professional and personal life. (New Ways to Work and the Working Mother’s Association in the UK). In the US, this phrase was first used in 1986. According to Jim Bird, CEO of worklifebalance.com, work-life balance is meaningful achievement and enjoyment in everyday life. Work-life balance does not mean equal balance between work and personal life. It is the happy medium between the minimum and maximum. There cannot be a universal standard for application of work-life balance. It is person specific and very often balance itself is a dynamic equilibrium and changes over time. Just as a balanced diet is necessary for the physical well-being of an individual, a balanced life is necessary for the mental / emotional and psychological well-being of people.

![Diagram showing the relationship between happy individuals, executives, families, productivity, and societies leading to a prosperous nation/happy nation](image-url)

Fig.3.4 Importance of Maintaining Work-Life Balance
Importance of maintaining work-life balance:

Conversely, an individual whose life is dominated by a single dimension, viz., work to the exclusion of everything else, is the building block of an unhappy family and society. While the developed countries have been grappling with the issue for quite some time now, India remained relatively unaffected due to the social support system available so far. Nevertheless, natural progression would take us to the situation faced by other countries, unless we recognize the potential issues and act with forethought, learning from their experience. The causes for work-life balance may be many, ranging from personal ambition, increasing consumerism, and the pressure of family obligations to the accelerating pace of technology, etc. whatever the reason, its effect extends beyond the individual.

3.11 LEVERAGING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The concept of ‘Emotional intelligence’ (EI) is very recent in the literature of the management science but has revolutionized management thinking across culture and industry. To begin with, it is contended that IQ and emotional intelligence are not opposite competencies but rather a separate one. As a result, it is stated that people with a good mix of IQ and emotional intelligence tend to be more successful in their chosen fields of endeavors than those who have outstanding IQ and under-developed emotional intelligence. The literature on EI suggest that emotional intelligence is nothing but managing the emotions of self as well as of others in interaction either in personal or in professional lives, *Frenkel.S (1996)*. Emotional intelligence as a concept refers to a set of non-cognitive abilities that influence one’s ability to get on in life, working synergistically with IQ to enhance performance, it is the one that differentiates exceptional from mediocre performance, *M.Johnson (2000)*
The experience of stress at work-place is inevitable and it can not be eliminated totally. Hence, the executives need to develop for themselves a kind of psychological attribute called ‘emotional intelligence’ which will enable them to be happy, healthy, and productive. People with high EI have tendencies which predispose them to behave in such a way that results into managing self as well as relationships at workplace. Such a special kind of psychological skills makes the concerned employee and people around to have stress resistant persona.

Fig.3.5 Emotional intelligence

3.12 CONCEPT OF BURNOUT

Burnout is a syndrome wherein a person breaks down physically and emotionally due to continuous over work, over a long period of time. Work addicts or workaholics are susceptible to burn out.
| Stage 1 | The stage of job contentment | Enthusiasm to work. High energy levels. Positive attitude. Good outlook. |
| Stage 2 | The stage of Fuel shortage | Physical and mental fatigue. Frustration and disillusionment. Low morale. |
| Stage 3 | The stage of withdrawal and Isolation | Avoiding contact with co-workers. Anger, Negativism, Emotional distress. |
| Stage 5 | The Final Breakdown | Alcoholism or drug addition. Suicidal tendencies. Heart attacks |

**Fig.3.6 Stages of Burnout**

There are different views on workaholics. One view is that it is a positive attribute in the modern competitive environment. A person who gets through his work efficiently and effectively is seldom a workaholic. There are certain sectors which demand that executives work longer hours. That is not workaholism but a part of the job. A workaholic is characterized not by the amount of time he spends at work but by the fact that he cannot switch off even when he is removed from his work environment and cannot even relax with his family.
3.13 STRESS AND ITS EFFECTS

Its effect on society:

The social costs of stress are already high and are increasing steadily. Society bears the cost of public services such as healthcare for those made ill by stress, pensions for the early retirement brought on by stress, and disability benefits for accidents occurring because of stress. In addition stress often makes people irritable and this affects the overall quality of everybody’s life.

Its effect on organizations:

Stress costs the industries about $150 bn a year in the US alone – through absenteeism and reduced levels of performance by those who are physically present but mentally absent. As much as 60% of absenteeism is caused by stress-related disorders in the U.K.

Its effect on the Body:

Making sure executives learn to recognize symptoms of excessive and dysfunctional stress. For example, symptoms often include intestinal distress, rapid pulse, frequent illness, insomnia, persistent fatigue, irritability, nail biting, lack of concentration, and increased use of alcohol/drugs, *Taylore and Francis (1988)*. Common methods used to help identify stressors and symptoms include self-report measures (e.g., interview and surveys), behavioral measures (e.g. observation and performance measures) and physiological stress measures (e.g. heart rate and blood pressure), *Fleming & David (2000)*.

When the human body is placed under physical or psychological stress, it increases the production of certain hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones produce marked changes in heart rate, blood pressure levels, metabolism and physical activity. This physical reaction can be extremely damaging to the body in the long term.
**Its effect on Physical Health and Wellbeing:**

Long-term stress has been identified as one of the most prevalent causes of numerous common conditions; including high pressure and heart disease. It is now commonly thought that prolonged stress can also increase the risk of psychological or psychiatric ailments. Behavioral changes caused by stress such as the increased and excessive use of alcohol or drugs, are also linked to a marked decline in physical health.

When one is under an abnormal amount of stress, the risk of dependency on alcohol is very high, apart from major physical health problems caused by excessive drinking. Over consumption of alcohol can also result in high strain and therefore causes stressful personal relationships, both at home and at work. Alcohol abuse and the resulting worker absenteeism is reckoned to cost the US economy about $100 bn annually.

**Its effect on emotions:**

Those who suffer from stress are far more likely to indulge in destructive behaviour which can have a high cost to themselves, to executives and to society. Typical symptoms such as mood swings and erratic behaviour may alienate colleagues as well as friends and family.

**Its effect on Decisions:**

Suffering from any level of stress can rapidly cause individuals to lose their ability to make sound decisions, especially if their self-confidence fails since stress in one area of life inevitably affects others. Faulty decisions made in the work place and at home may lead to accidents or arguments, financial loss, or even the loss of job.
3.14 THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Stage of stress:

Hans Selye, a Pioneer in stress research developed a model called GAS (General Adaptation Syndrome) which helps people cope with External / Environmental demands. GAS is a defence system, which occurs in three stages, i.e.

i) Alarm Reaction

ii) Resistance and

iii) Exhaustion

SELYE’S GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME

General Adaptation Syndrome Describes the stress experience

![Diagram of GAS model with stages: Alarm Reaction, Resistance, Exhaustion]

Fig.3.7 Hans Selye’s general adaptation syndrome


i)  **Alarm reaction:**

This is the initial / shock phase. At this stage the individual resistance capacity and coping effectiveness, decreases in response to the initial shock. In most situations, the alarm reaction alerts the person to the conditions and prepares the body for the resistance stage.

ii)  **Resistance:**

In this stage the person’s resistance increases above the normal level, and the person’s organism deteriorates to the next stage of “Exhaustion”.

iii)  **Exhaustion:**

Here, people have a counted resistance capacity. Resistance level begins to decline abruptly finally the organism gets collapsed.

The general adaptation syndrome describes the stress experience, but this is only part of the pretime to effectively manage work – related stress. One must understand its causes and consequences as well as differences in the stress experience.

**3.15 MANAGING STRESS**

Stress is an inevitable part of the work environment in the 21st century. Learning to manage it positively at all levels is the key to high performance. Most people use the work “stress” in its negative sense. Managers found its negative impact on team performance. In a research survey conducted in member-countries of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) in 1999, increased global competition, the changing nature of work, sub-contracting and outsourcing, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring and downsizing, and reduced opportunities for permanent employment were indicated as major contributors to increased stress at the workplace. In a survey on India’s conducted in 2003 by Dataquest, a leading IT company the findings identified job stress and work related ailments as
ever-present realities. The costs to companies were high attrition rates, demotivated executives and high recruitment costs. Apart from late night work schedules (35 percent) and salaries (39 percent), the other reasons cited for high attrition rates were the following: no opportunities for growth (33 percent), physical illness (27 percent), physical strain (27 percent), no personal life (25 percent) and insufficient leave / holidays (23 percent).

Another popular phenomenon mentioned by, Pestonjee (2001) is the ‘Burnout Stress Syndrome (BOSS)’, which can be defined as the consequence of high levels of job stress, personal frustration, and inadequate coping skills. BOSS tends to have major personal, organizational and social costs, and these costs are probably increasing. BOSS can lead to at least four types of stress-related consequences, such as depletion of energy reserves, lowered resistance to illness, increased dissatisfaction and pessimism, and increased absenteeism and inefficiency at work. Contrary to BOSS, and the opposite phenomenon, the ‘rust out stress syndrome (ROSS)’, is a case involving stress under load. It occurs when there is a gap between a person’s actual performance potential and inadequate job demands.

3.16 STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH STRESS

“The problem is not stress. Rather it is how we react to stress”, Michael Morrison (1996)

Coping with stress involves an adaptive response to stress so as to eliminate or to reduce the stress producing factors and both the individual and the organization must stick on to certain important strategies increase to minimize their degrees of stress / stress level.

Strategies to fight stress:

Some of the important strategies for managers to fight stress are prioritizing and delegating work, laughing a lot, exercising regularly,
practising relaxation techniques, maintaining a good balanced diet, and having a good night’s sleep.

A) Individual coping strategies:

Following are the major individual coping strategies.

i) Physical exercise:

Physical exercise is a good strategy to get body fit and to overcome stress. Physical exercises like walking, Jogging, swimming, playing, etc are good methods to overcome stress. Physical exercise helps people to better cope with stress generally as a side effect, such as relation enhanced self-esteem, and simply getting one’s mind off work for a while.

Exercise and maintaining a nutritious diet are two of the most agreed upon stress management techniques (Arbetter, 1991; Lohmeier, 1992; Williams, 1992). Organizations can help executives by providing information and access to physical recreation facilities or equipment by either establishing on-site facilities or provide memberships to local health clubs. Regular exercise lowers blood pressure, lowers pulse rate, boosts blood circulation in the body, increases artery suppleness, lowers cholesterol, and reduces fatigue and tension. These benefits help an individual to tackle the physiological changes that occur during stress. Exercise should increase blood circulation to the heart.

ii) Behavioural self-control:

A conscious analysis of the cause and consequences of their own behaviour help managers controlling the situation instead of the situation control them. Here, swot analysis, i.e. strength, weakness, opportunities and threat analysis if carried out periodically by an individual will enable him to understand his ownself and to find out his stress point. Thus, by identifying the stressors and the reason, stress level can be reduced.
iii) Organise work and time:

Create a balanced schedule. Analyse your schedule, responsibilities daily tasks. All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

“It’s not enough to be busy, the question is: What are we busy about?”, Henry David Thoreau (1999).

“It is those who make the worst use of their time who most complain of its shortness”, Jean dela Brayere (1996).

Every individual needs to separate work from home. Break the routine in the form of a small vacation or a picnic, share problems with spouse and friends.

iv) Develop positive attitude:

A positive attitude to both life and work does reduce stress

v) Networking:

Networking is a formation of close associations with trusted empathetic co-workers and colleagues, who are good listeners and confidence builders. Therefore, it provides mental support to get the person through stressful situations.

Prioritize work:

Multi-tasking is the buzzword these days. An individual requires special skills to perform multiple tasks simultaneously. One way to minimize stress while multi-tasking is to plan, prioritize and perform. Planning involves preparing a list of activities that need to be performed. This involves considering the time factor. Prioritizing involves ranking the activities based on their importance and performing these activities in that order. Prioritizing
activities each day is the simplest way to tackle stress. The next step is to schedule time for tasks depending on the priorities. Break projects into small steps. If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.

**Delegate work:**

Some individuals prefer doing all the work themselves. This adds to their stress. They should learn to delegate routine work to others. For instance, a manager can delegate the work of preparing a report on a project to a subordinate.

**Laughter:**

Laughter is a good de-stressor. An individual can relax and de-stress by watching a humorous movie, reading comics, etc. A sense of humor allows an individual to perceive and appreciate the imbalances of life and provides moments of delight.

‘A day without laughter is a day wasted for life’. This is very true. Laughter is the best outlet for stress. It is a great stress buster. Laughter is a no cost, no side effect medicine. A person with a sense of humor is less likely to be under stress. A sense of humor allows an individual to perceive and appreciate the imbalances of life and provides moments of delight.

**Exercise:**

Exercise is another good stress-buster. It keeps an individual physically and mentally alert. When a person is nervous, tense, or angry, exercise is the best outlet for giving vents to his/her emotions.

**Relaxation:**

The best strategy to reduce stress is to relax. Relaxation is not being idle. It is doing what one wants to do, rather one should do. It is very
important for a person to schedule some time for relaxation. This relaxation time should disconnect the person from all his / her tensions, worries. This is the time when the person rebuilds his/her energy levels. Relaxation techniques vary from person to person.

**Diet:**

A good balanced diet plays a vital role in reducing stress. A person tends to neglect diet when under stress. This may lead to overeating or under eating. This improper eating results in a weak immune system and creates health problems. A well-balanced meal that is eaten on time is very important to minimize stress.

**Sleep:**

Sleep is a weapon. During sleep, a person prepares himself/herself to face another day. Stress makes a person sleepless or very sleepy. A stressed person may feel sleepy throughout the day and awake during nights. On an average, everyone needs at least 7-8 hours of sleep per day. Some may need more sleep or some less. After a good night’s sleep, a person feels fresh. An individual must adopt a bedtime routine that induces sleep like reading a book that is soothing and listening to music that is relaxing. One must go to bed at the same time every day.

**Meditation:**

Meditation is one of the most effective techniques in reducing and avoiding stress. Regular meditation helps in stress reduction. It

- Enables one to control the thought process
- Enables one to take effective decisions
- Helps in physical and mental relaxation
- Improves concentration.
Meditation is a technique to achieve a thoughtless or mindless state. In this state, a person has no thoughts. This kind of state thus acts as a stress reliever and a great rejuvenator.

**Yoga:**

Yoga is another important stress reliever. Yoga has been tried and tested since ancient times. According to Patanjali Maharishi, yoga is the cessation of mind. It is a state of no-mind. Yoga is not for bodybuilding. It simply focuses on gentle postures that improve circulation of blood to vital parts of the body. The increase in blood circulation rejuvenates the organs and releases stress.

**Maintaining work-life balance:**

Work-life balance means a harmonious balance of work and domestic life. It allows an employee to fulfill all the roles in his/her life effectively and efficiently. Researches have proved that executives are at their best when they are contented and motivated both at work and at home.

Achieving a work-life balance is not as easy as it seems. In the corporate world, change is constant and imminent. The impact of globalization has further fuelled these changes. The corporate world signifies uncertainties, too many responsibilities, and long work hours. These changes in the environment disturb the balance between domestic and work-life of executives. The increasing competition and demands of society further aggravate the situation. All this adds up to stress.

**B) Organisational coping strategy:**

When respondents were asked what they perceived the best approach to be if an organization were to help to manage employee stress, the majority (70 percent) felt that welcome centres would be effective. Respondents from firms with less than 100 executives (81 percent) and firm with over 500
executives (76 percent) tended to perceive organization-wide coping mechanisms as beneficial, compared with those from medium-sized firms (53 percent). Medium-sized firms may be less employee-oriented than smaller firms and may lack the resources larger firms can devote to coping strategies.

Like an individual, an organization can also help manage stress through various proactive interventions. Some of the interventions are listed below.

i) Setting clear objectives:

Organization shall set clear objectives for its members. This helps in minimizing role ambiguity.

ii) Stress audit:

According to pestonjee, when an organization decides to have a scientific peep into mental and physical health status of its executive, the exercise is called “Stress audit”. It involves an attempt that organization makes to study, explore and control various types of stresses.

iii) Counseling:

Counselling to executives in matters like career planning to provide them clarity in their roles and helps them in identifying their strength and weakness this will enable the executives to cope with stress.

iv) Fit between person and work:

Research evidence show that striking a match between worker and his / her work environment serves as one of the best strategies to manage stress.

v) Clarity in Roles:

Defining individuals role through role efficacy helps them reduce their role shared stresses. Role efficacy is found negatively related with role stress and role efficacy helps in overcoming the experience of role stress.
Emotional intelligence in the workplace:

Emotional intelligence in the workplace has four major components:

- Self-awareness – The ability to recognize our emotions and their impact while using gut feelings to guide our decisions.

- Self management – The ability to control your emotions and behaviour and adapt to changing circumstances.

- Social awareness – The ability to sense, understand, and react to other’s emotions and feel comfortable socially.

- Relationship management – The ability to inspire, influence, and connect to others and manage conflict.

The more emotional intelligence one have, the more stress one can avoid in the workplace. Fortunately, emotional intelligence is not something we are born with; it's something we can learn and develop.

3.17 A TRIPARTITE MODEL FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Thus, an organizational approach to stress control has three separate levels. It means we need.

- To identify and eliminate or minimize stressful situations.
- To teach the individual to cope with stress.
- To help those individuals who have become victims of exposure to stress.

Thus, the aim is to develop stress management and adaptive coping strategies through education and training.

- Tertiary level stress management.

These forms of intervention are ‘symptom directed’. The objective is to assist in the cure and rehabilitation of stressed executives.
Within each of these levels it is also possible to direct the focus on either the:

- Individual
- Team or work group
- Organization.

This integrated model of stress management. Using an ‘onion’ as our metaphor, we would describe stress management in the workplace as ‘peeling an onion’. The organization exists within its ‘universe’ and is thereby exposed to many different factors. Peel off this layer and you find the organization, exposed to changes and pressures imposed by the global economy, finance constraints, international politics, and legal requirements. All of these and more influence the fortunes of the business and the decisions it must make. To survive, and be successful and effective, the organization must be AWARE of the potential stress problems and might exist to adversely impact upon performance, productivity and the well being of its work force. From an ANALYSIS or diagnosis, ACTION is possible at one of the three levels described. A description of each of the levels of stress management, with examples of strategies and interventions, is provided below:

3.18 PRIMARY LEVEL STRESS MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

A more commonly used term for this type of stress management strategy is ‘organisational –level interventions’, Burke (1993). Essentially these ‘stressor’ directed strategies for the reduction or elimination of stress in the workplace can be categorized in three ways, including:

1. Changes in the macro environment, that is, organization culture and leadership, physical work conditions and workload, safe climate, career development programmes and bullying at work.
2. change in the micro environment, that is systems and task redesign, alternative work arrangement, shift working and communication exercises such as role negotiation.

3. improving perceptions of worker control, increasing opportunities for decision making.

3.19 SECONDARY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

Although a growing body of evidence supports the view that organizational level stress control and stress prevention interventions are more effective than individual level coping strategies, because they have a more lasting effect, Ganster et al., (1992). Newman and Beehr (1979) grouped these strategies into four categories aimed at:

1. Psychological condition.
   - Planning ahead, managing one’s life.
   - Self awareness
   - Realistic aspirations.

2. Physiological or physical conditions.
   - Diet,
   - Sleep,
   - Exercise
   - Relaxation and meditation
   - Anger management

3. Change behaviour
   - Taking time off for leisure and holidays
   - Changing certain aspects of behaviour that are stress inducing
   - Building social support networks at home and work
   - Being more assertive.
4. **Changing the environment**

- Changing to a less demanding job
- Changing to a less demanding organization.

It is commonplace for organizations to help individuals to either minimize the effects of exposure to stress, or to learn techniques to cope more effectively with stress. We classify these under two separate headings, namely ‘skills training options’ and healthy lifestyle education and management.

3.20 **SKILLS TRAINING**

The term skills training options refers to the fact that the stress management activity is in the provision of training per se. After training, individuals or work groups are required to put their new skills into practice by using them to deal with potentially stressful situations. Therefore, these stress management techniques tend to be classified as a ‘reactive’ approach to stress management in that they help the individual to cope effectively when exposed to a stressful situation. As we have stated, the objective is to improve or modify the individual’s response to perceived strain to avoid a negative outcome. This includes a variety of skills training including:

- Interpersonal and social skills, leadership skills
- Assertiveness
- Cognitive coping techniques, for example, avoiding faulty thinking.
- Time management
- Relaxation training, meditation, yoga and biofeedback
- Type A behaviour management
- Anger management.
3.21 TRAININGS AS METHOD OF STRESS REDUCTION

Effective training is a method of reducing the adverse impact of stress at work. This type of programme should be tailored by finding out what the employee already knows and expects, what they need to know and do, and how the information should be presented and best received.

☐ Thank your colleagues or subordinates when they have performed services for you.

☐ Do not try to do numerous tasks at the same time.

☐ Reduce workaholic tendencies by engaging in social activities outside of work. Do not engage in activities that create feelings of hostility, anger or irritation. Try to find interests that encourage a feeling of calm without triggering your natural Type A tendencies. The aim is to establish a more realistic balance between professional and personal life activities and achievements.

☐ Avoid setting unrealistic goals and deadlines for yourself and other people.

☐ Cease trying to be an idealist because it is likely to simply end up in disappointment and hostility towards others.

☐ Do not bottle up emotions or anger because that is extremely damaging.

☐ Learn to say No inorder to protect your time. Stop trying to prove yourself.

☐ Avoid working for long period of time without taking a break since this is not an effective work strategy.
Anger management:

Anger is defined as an emotional state that includes feelings or irritation, annoyance and rage, whilst aggression is a destructive behavioural response that is directed at others. Thus anger can motivate aggression. Essentially, anger management programmes include three components. The first, described as cognitive preparation is needed to diagnose the anger-provoking situation.

In the second phase of training the individual will learn and develop skills such as relaxation, communication techniques and cognitive control. This means that they should.

- Stay in control, remember to keep calm
- Use relaxation techniques.

Apply cognitive control – Use silent self-talk to acknowledge how you are feeling.

Healthy lifestyle options for management of stress:

In addition to stress management training, many companies have adopted health promotion programmes that attempt to keep executives healthy and to lower health risks. These include weight control and dietary advice, smoking and alcohol cessation programmes, hypertension reduction, drug clinics and exercise programmes. A generic term often used for this approach is ‘a wellness programme’.

An integrate model of stress management:

It is desirable that organizations will use proactive, preventive and curative approaches to the management of stress, at the same time operating at more than one level of focus. Elkin and Rosch (1990) suggest that a multilevel approach to the management of stress might be introduced in three stages, such as:
Level ONE – Awareness:

Introductory workshops; health fairs; lunch time speakers, questionnaires or stress scales.

Level TWO – Employee – directed strategies and programmes

- Employee needs assessment
- Relaxation skills
- Behavioural, cognitive coping skills
- Life and workstyle modification skills
- Programme maintenance skills
- Assessment of programme effectiveness
- Introduction of reinforcement programmes

Level THREE – Organisation – directed strategies and programmes

- Organization needs assessment
- Identification of stress consequences
- Identification of organizational stressors
- Introduction of organizational change strategies
- Assessment of programme effectiveness.

As Elkin and Rosch (1990) remind us, the best approach is one that recognizes that changing life patterns, those of the individual worker, or those of the organization, takes time and commitment. Therefore it is suggested that certain issues are key to successful stress management in the workplace.

It is worth remembering that stress and pressure are an inevitable part of living and working, but distress is not! Our lives continue to become more complex. Like death and taxes, organization change will continue to be a feature of life in the 21st century, and thus a potential source of stress. However, it is mismanaged stress that is damaging in it consequences. Both preventive and curative stress management strategies are essential in an
organizational approach to stress control in the workplace. Increasingly, evaluation studies indicate that prevention is more effective and cheaper than trying to cure problems and victims of exposure to stress.

3.22 SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES AGAINST STRESS

- The definition for success:
  The measure of success is the number of joyful smiles per day every day – Shri Shri Ravishankar.

- Life is full of choices: The choices one makes determine one’s life – they are like cross – roads.

- Manage Mind
  - Healthy mind for a healthy body
  - It is mind, and not body, that differentiates the leader from the rest

- Positive energy is most fundamental to any leader

The vicious cycle for success and joy

![Diagram showing the vicious cycle for success and joy with less money](image)

Fig.3.8 – The vicious cycle for success and joy with less money
People spend half of their life in making money and lose health in that process.

In the remaining half they spend that money trying to regain the health

Pursue health (mind + body) and knowledge (universal knowledge) then money & fame will follow as a byproduct.

Fig.3.9 – The vicious cycle for success and joy with more money

This is followed by the other chapters on the analysis of stress and its effectiveness among the police personnel in The Tamilnadu police domain.
REFERENCES


• Fred Lethans, “Stress, Causes, Consequences and Coping Strategies” Organisational behavior” by M.C. Gras, Edition-4, Pg.No.138-152.


• Henry David Thoreau (1999) - Time Management – Published by Capstone publishing (a Wiley Company) United Kingdom – pp.104-112.
• Dr. P.C. Tripathi (2010) - Personnel Management and Industrial Relations, pp. 484-495.
• Shri. Ravishankar - The Science of Stress and the Art of Managing it – Vishu Hegde, Vice President – Quality Mind – Website: