Chapter – 1

Design and Execution of the Study
CHAPTER - I

DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Today’s age is “The Age of Anxiety” and this century is called “The Century of Stress”. Today majority of people are in a state of stress. Their fast-paced lifestyle places them under pressure to perform the best. Stress is often termed as twentieth century syndrome born out of man’s race towards modern progress and its ensuring complexities. At one point or the other everybody suffers from stress. While the police personnel experience stress in meeting the demands of law and order and law breakers, the executives in jobs and businessmen get stress to reach office in time and to complete the projects on time. Even the household ladies experience stress in managing the home affairs, look for a maid or servant. Most of us experience stress at one time or other; for without stress, there would be no life.

Stress thus, has become a part of day-to-day living of every individual. A stress condition can be real or perceived. However the brain does not differentiate between real and imagined stress. Right from the time of birth till the last breath every individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations.

1.2 ORIGIN OF STRESS

The origin of the term ‘stress’ is ambiguous. It is a common term which came to be used in the 14th century. It meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. These days, however, the term revolves around the medieval definition, in which ‘stress’ simply meant ‘hardship’. The recent scientific developments inform us that ‘stress’ is actually good for us. Stress is derived from the Latin word stranger, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or
affliction. During the late 18th century stress denoted ‘force, pressure, strain or strong effort’, referring primarily to an individual or to an individual’s organs or mental powers, Hinkle (1973).

Stress is a physiological and psychological imbalance. Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well being. Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources. Stress is the body’s way of reacting to any situation and it can have serious repercussions on an individual’s life. Yet, people fail to realize the importance of stress management in their lives. Effective managers can stay in control of life, without panicking even under stressful situations. They handle stress by planning work, taking regular breaks, and rejuvenating them.

1.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF STRESS

“Stress is the demand made upon the adaptive capacity of mind and body”, David Fontana (1999).

It isn’t easy to find a generally acceptable definition of stress. The word takes different meanings with different people, be it professionals, psychologists, doctors, engineers, management consultants, all use the word in their own distinctive ways. Management consultants talk in terms of organizational challenges, psychologists in terms of human behaviour and doctors in terms of psychological mechanism.

The word ‘stress’ is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy”. It is a condition or circumstances (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physical and mental health of an individual.

Hans Selye, (1936) the father of stress has defined stress as a “non-specific response of the body to any demands made upon it”. Stress is a psychological reaction to problems, threats, opportunities and challenges
faced by an individual when the outcome is both important and uncertain. Everyone experiences stress on a regular basis. Police personnel, particularly the executives are highly prone to stress due to:

i. Pressure to learn a large number of business operations in a limited time.

ii. Heavy demands on their time to complete assignments and preparing for presentations and discussions.

iii. The challenges of adjusting in the new environment.

iv. Pressure to meet high expectations from self and higher authorities.

v. Uncertainties about future task.

Facing problems is a day-to-day affair for executives in any organization. Problem solving, needs creative and scientific approaches. The opinion about the problem solving ability of the executives underlines the need for their highly dynamic mental status. There are certain behavioural patterns which can hamper the dynamism of individuals. Executives’ leadership style, if understood has got an important role to play, in solving organization problems. Every effective leader is expected to have emotional balance.

1.4 NATURE OF STRESS

Hans Selye (1936) the father of stress said that stress is the spice of life and absence of stress is death. Without stress, there would be no life. Stress is not always necessarily harmful. He says, “Stress is not necessarily something bad. It all depends on how you take it”

Stress can be therefore negative, positive or neutral.

As a positive influence, stress can help and compel us to action. It can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective.
As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of distress, rejection
anger and depression which in turn can lead to health problems such as
headaches, stomach upsets, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressures,
heart disease and stroke.

Stress is a fact of life. But, too much stress can breakdown a person’s
physical, mental and emotional health. Planning can help people to manage
stress in their lives. They must begin to make choices that support their
values and develop a personal plan to take charge of their lives.

Stress is something that occurs all the time and affects everyone, one
way or another, at least some time. Stress can be a good thing. It can be a
source of motivation to help get something done or help one to react quickly
to a potentially dangerous situation.

1.5 STRESS – LIFE SAVER / LIFE DESTROYER

At one end of the scale, stress represents those challenges that excite us
and keeps us on toes, whereas on the other end stress represents those
conditions under which individuals have demands made upon them, that they
cannot physically and psychologically meet. Hence, at one end stress is a
life-saver and on the other it is a life destroyer.

1.6 WORK STRESS

Work stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual confronts
with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires
and for which the outcome is perceived to be both certain and important.

1.7 TYPES OF STRESS

Prof. D.M. Pertonjee (1999) a well known expert on stress research,
classified stress into four main categories that people experience.
Fig.1.1 Types of Stress

1. **Eustress**: Eustress or positive stress occurs when your level of stress is high enough to motivate you to move into action to get things accomplished.

2. **Distress**: Distress or negative stress occurs when your level of stress is either too high or too low. It causes physical, psychological and behavioural problems. Distress creates feelings of discomfort and unfamiliarity.

There are two types of distress:

a. **Acute stress** is usually for a short time and may be due to work pressure, meeting deadlines, pressure or minor accident, over exertion, increased physical activity, fearing something you misplaced or similar things. Symptoms of this type of tension are headache, back pain, stomach problems, rapid heartbeat, muscle aches or body pain. Acute stress can crop up in anyone’s life and it is highly treatable and manageable.

b. **Chronic stress** is prolonged stress that exists for weeks, months or even years. Someone who is constantly relocating or changing jobs may experience distress. While acute stress can be thrilling
and exciting, chronic stress is not. This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It’s the stress of poverty of dysfunctional families of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a depressed job or career.

The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it and forget it is there. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new. They ignore chronic stress because it is old, familiar and sometimes almost comfortable.

3. **Hyper stress:** Hyper stress occurs when an individual is pushed beyond what he or she can handle. Hyper stress results from being overloaded or over worked. When someone is hyper stressed even little things can trigger a strong emotional response.

4. **Hypostress:** Hypo stress is the opposite of hyper stress. Hypo stress occurs when an individual is bored or unchallenged. People who experience hypo stress are often restless and uninspired.

1.8 **SIX MYTHS ABOUT STRESS: Fred Luthans (1980)**

Six myths surround stress. Dispelling them enables us to understand our problems and then take action against them. Let’s look at these myths.

**Myth 1:** Stress is the same for everybody.

This statement is completely wrong. Stress is different for each of us. What is stressful for one person may or may not be stressful for another; every individual responds to stress in an entirely different way.

**Myth 2:** Stress is always bad for you.

This statement is not correct. According to this view, zero stress makes us happy and healthy. Stress is to the human condition what tension is to the violin string: Too little, the music is dull and raspy; too much, the music is
shrill or the string snaps. Stress can be the kiss of death or the spice of life. The issue, really, is how to manage it. Managed stress makes us productive and happy; mismanaged stress hurts and even kills us.

**Myth 3:** Stress is everywhere, so you can’t do anything about it.

Not so. You can plan your life so that stress does not overwhelm you. Effective planning involves setting priorities and working on simple problems first, solving them, and then going on to more complex difficulties. When stress is mismanaged, it’s difficult to prioritize. All your problems seem to be equal and stress seems to be everywhere.

**Myth 4:** The most popular techniques for reducing stress are the best ones.

This is not so. No universally effective stress reduction techniques exist. We are all different, our lives are different, our situations are different, and our reactions are different. Only a comprehensive program is tailored to the individual works.

**Myth 5:** Absence of symptoms does not mean the absence of stress.

In fact, camouflaging symptoms with medication may deprive you of the signals you need for reducing the strain on your physiological and psychological systems.

**Myth 6:** Only major symptoms of stress require attention.

This myth assumes that the ‘minor’ symptoms, such as headaches or stomach ache, may be safely ignored. Minor symptoms of stress are the early warning that your life is getting out of hand and that you need to do a better job of managing stress.

**1.9 STRESS AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL**

Does stress tend to affect the executives in the crucial police departments of the government? Opinions vary, since there are differentiating
factors between the departments. All parameters being equal, however, the preponderant view is that police executives are more adept at handling stress.

Police personnel and employees do not seem to differ in the amount of stress they face but they differ only in their reaction to it. Police personnel seem to be slightly more reactive to stress and related illness than other employees. Lakshmiram.D and Mishra.P.K (1999). They comment that profession has a major effect on the experience of occupational stress. Police department are particularly prone to experiencing stress as they shoulder more responsibilities of law and order and other criminal activities and seek perfection in work. Police department tend to use more social support than other employees in dealing with stress. While other executives tend to use more avoidance than police executives, Police personnel too are more likely to seek counseling or advice from professionals. The Police personnel report the top source of stress, department responsibilities, pressure from top level executives over duty accomplishment, personal problems, finance, worries about the future, promotions, change and personal relationships.

1.10 CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL

There may be numerous conditions in which police personnel may feel the stress. Conditions that tend to cause stress are called stressors. The various stressors can be grouped into three categories.

1) Individual, 2) Group and 3) Organizational.

1) Individual Stressors: There are many stressors at the level of individuals which may be generated in the context of organizational life or his personal life.

2) Group Stressors: Group interaction affects human behaviour. Therefore, there may be some factors in group processes which act as stressors. Following are the major group of stressors:
• Lack of group cohesiveness
• Lack of social support and conflict

Group interaction may become stressing for the individual, be it interpersonal conflict among the group members or intergroup conflict.

3) **Organisational Stressors**: (Pertonjie.D.M – 1999) An organization is composed of individuals and groups and therefore individual and group stressors may also exist in organisational context. Organisational policies of police department provide guidelines for action. Unfavourable and ambiguous policies affecting adversely may lead to stress.

**1.11 SYMPTOMS OF STRESS**

For convenience of the study, the various symptoms of stress can be classified into three broad categories viz.

1. Psychosomatic
2. Psychological and
3. Behavioural

**Psychosomatic:**

The term “psychosomatic” combines the two words, namely, ‘psyche’ which means mind and ‘soma’ which means body. The psychosomatic symptoms of stress are physical for which the cause are mental. The physical symptoms are like ulcer, headaches, chest pains, constipation, bronchial asthma etc.

**Psychological :**

Stress also manifests in various forms of emotional disorders. Researchers have found that stress gets its reflection in the form of anxiety, depression, helplessness, hopelessness and anger.
Behavioural:

There is a general agreement that a high degree of job stress drives people adopt certain easily visible behavioural symptoms such as sleeplessness, excessive drinking, smoking, absenteeism, obesity etc.

1.12 EFFECTS OF STRESS: Pravin Durai (2010)

I. Individual:

a) Physical Ailments:

- Headache
- Indigestion
- Insomnia
- Heart trouble

b) Mental:

- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Lack of clear thinking
- Inability to relax
- Frustration
- Helplessness
- Loneliness etc

c) Behavioural:

- Excessive smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- Strained relationships
- Speech disturbances
II. Organization:

The following are the causes of stress to the department. Low productivity, poor quality, higher costs, increased absenteeism, low job satisfaction, accident proneness, poor interpersonal communications etc.

1.13 STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management is dealing with stress in a positive way to ensure good health and general well being. Although stress in a changing world is inevitable executives have options on how to manage it. Stress management includes regular relaxation, physical exercise, talking with others, making time for social activities and reasonable self-statement. To master change, workers need to assess the need for stress management and develop strategies for reducing the impact of stressful changes at work. Learning changes at work and learning to lower the stress load will enable staff to function and adapt more effectively.

Stress management helps executives to cope when change threatens to become overwhelming. Ideally one would like to see change unfold in a systematic way that allows one to remain calm, confident and optimistic. Stress can cause unpredictable and immeasurable problems to an individual and also to the organization. It can cause job-related problems like negating safety norms, indifferent job performance, quality compromises, not caring for others and surroundings, forgetfulness, uncharacteristic clumsiness, defying authority, defensiveness and violent behaviour.

1.14 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Review of Literature has raised some research questions which motivated the researcher to undertake the present study:

- Stress related issues like productivity, physical ailments, psychological pressure etc?
• Stress among police personnel with different designation?

• Stress management techniques to be adopted to cope with stress and tension in order to create a healthy attitude?

1.15 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress is a dynamic condition in which the police department faces with constraint and strains. Stress is the discomfort of an individual. Stress is a pressure condition causing hardship. It is an internal phenomenon of mental attitude. Stress is generally believed to have deleterious effect on health and performance. But a minimum level of stress is necessary for effective functioning and peak performance. It is the individual’s reaction to stress which makes all the difference.

Stress is a mental, emotional or physical reaction resulting from an individual’s response to environmental pressure. It refers to pressures that executives feel in life. Different persons respond to stressful situation in different ways.

It is important to distinguish between pressure and stress. Pressure is motivating, stimulating and energizing. But when pressure exceeds the ability to cope, stress is produced. Stress is an external force or pressure on the human mind. One should try to transform stress into vitality, energy into power and knowledge into wisdom.

Stress can have serious consequences on both health and work performance. In terms of health, the current belief among many practitioners is that 50% to 70% of all physical illness is related to stress.

Behavior response to physical and psychological stress can affect police department negatively. Police personnel under stress grow unhappy with their pay, work, co-workers and have less organizational commitment and exhibit greater degree of indifference and inefficiencies.
1.16 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The present law and order situations and the entry of sophisticated technology have put the police personnel to enormous pressure due to the acute maintenance of law and order and to serve the public. This competition reflects on human resource and quality of service. The maintenance of law and order is a continuous process and it has sustained its responsibility in the democratic set up. Under these circumstances, the police department needs extensive research as they are instrumental for maintaining a healthy society. Delighted police personnel are the need of the department whose performance decides strategies, to create a conducive climate and environment which would enable them to ease out stress and strain for their better performance.

Although a lot of research has been conducted on ‘Stress’ over the last hundred years, some theories about it are now settled and accepted, while others are still being researched and debated. Researchers still continue to trace the causes and consequences of stress and strategies for coping with stress have not yet gained finality. Since then a great deal of further research has been conducted on this subject and new ideas have come to light. Though there are many researches going on, there are some missing links and gaps in the information provided by them. So an attempt is made in the present study to fill the gaps in the research and add new dimensions to the selected police department.

1.17 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the personal factors causing stress among the police personnel
2. To analyse the departmental factors leading to stress among the executives.
3. To study the work related factors creating stress.
4. To ascertain the stress management techniques of the police department.

5. To construct an empirical model of cause and effects of stress in police department.

6. To suggest the implementation of coping mechanism among the police personnel to fetch their maximum human resources.

1.18 HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no influence of personal variables of police personnel on causes of stress, stress management techniques and coping mechanism.

2. The factors causing stress do not differ significantly among the police personnel.

3. Organizational factors in police department do not cause stress among police personnel.

4. Work related factors do not influence stress among the police personnel.

5. Stress management techniques and coping mechanism among the police personnel do not differ significantly.

1.19 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study has the scope of analysing the perception of Police personnel regarding stress with personal revealations.

2. Different classifications of the respondents explain the scope of stress severity, stress management in the respective branches of the department.

3. The study is confined to the Tamil Nadu police personnel in Salem, Dindigul and Madurai districts.
4. The personal bias of the respondents have an impact on the data collected due to the respondents’ reluctance to answer the questions.

5. The study is confined to selected groups of police personnel in the department and it is not be equally applied to all the executive classes of the country.

6. Stress can be either temporary or long term and hence the level of stress can vary at any time.

7. Findings of the study are based on the assumptions that respondents have divulged the correct information.

1.20 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.20.1 Pilot Study

A preliminary investigation is undertaken by contacting 50 police personnel with different designation to identify the important variables regarding stress and the factors influencing stress. The responses are obtained from the police personnel for stress management techniques adopted in the organisations and its direct impact on individual and organisational efficiency. The purpose of the pilot study is to test quality of the items in the questionnaire and to confirm the feasibility of the study. This preliminary investigation is conducted in all levels of the executives. The random sampling method, cronbach alpha method and Hotellings t-square test are applied. It is found that cronbach value and Hotelling t-square value are .837 and 85.317. They are statistically significant at 5 percent level.

1.20.2 Main Study

The data is collected for the study by means of a three section questionnaire. Section I of the questionnaire is framed to obtain general information about the police personnel, section II deals with different types of stress due to inter personal relationship, work environment and organisational
culture and climate. Section III deals with various determinants of stress due to organisational climate.

Section –I of the questionnaire is designed in optional type, where as the section II is designed in likerts 5-point scale, ranging from 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree. The questionnaire with covering letter is handed over personally to each and every respondent and they are requested to return the filled in questionnaire after 15 days, when the researchers visit them. The respondents took a period of 15 days to 2 months to return the completed questionnaire.

1.20.3 Sample Selection

The proportionate random sampling method is applied to collect the primary data. The researcher collected the responses from top level executives, middle level officers and operational level police personnel in three districts of Salem, Madurai and Dindigul in Tamil Nadu. The researcher considered these districts because these areas are very sensitive and extract maximum efforts of police personnel and they suffer in the domains of stress. The population is definite and well defined. Therefore the researcher proportionately circulated 200 questionnaires each in all the three districts to all level executives in the department and rationally obtained the responses.

1.20.4 Sample Size

The researcher circulated the questionnaire and obtained the responses among the three districts as stated in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Circulated</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SALEM</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADURAI</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A sample size of 600 respondents is selected on proportionate random sampling method. 600 samples are distributed among the police personnel of three level of management in equal proportion as the total number of police personnel in each segment is more or less equal. Police personnel belonging to all the categories and levels are included in the sample selection. Out of 600 samples, only 534 returned the questionnaire. Among 534 questionnaires 510 of them are found usable. The sample of this study covers all types of executives. Hence, the exact sample of the study is 510.

1.20.5 Data Analysis

The sources of data are primary as well as secondary. The data collected from the police personnel’ survey constitutes primary information; the data gathered through books, journals, magazines, reports, dailies constitute secondary data. The data collected from both the sources are scrutinized edited and tabulated. The data is analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and other computer packages. The following statistical tools are used in the study.

01. T-test and Paired t test are applied to ascertain the nature of responses of police personnel about the causes of stress, stress outcomes, stress management and its impacts.

02. Factor Analysis by Principal Component Method is used to identify the factors of causes of stress, stress effects, stress management and effects of stress management.

03. K-means Cluster Analysis is exploited to classify the police personnel based on their perception.

04. Discriminate Analysis and correspondence analysis are brought to bear upon the problem of identifying the discrimination of factors of various aspects of stress.
05. Karl Pearson’s Co-efficient of Correlation is brought into the context to explore the parametric relationship among the various factors of stress and consequences

06. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is applied to ascertain the significant relationship between various stress management practices and their effects with respect to the organisational and personal variables of police personnel.

1.21 CHAPTER ARRANGEMENT

Chapter I: Design and Execution of the Study - deals with brief account on causes and effectiveness of stress, need and importance of the study, scope of the study, objectives of the study, hypothesis and methodology.

Chapter II: Review of Literature – highlights the studies relevant to the present study. Studies on causes of stress and stress management are included in this chapter.

Chapter III: Conceptual frame work of stress and profile of police department - elaborates the complete conceptual frame work that leads to stress causes, effects and stress management techniques adopted. This chapter also explains the history and growth of the police department.

Chapter IV: Analysis of Demographic and Organizational Elements Influencing Stress Among the Police Personnel – highlights the analysis of the primary data using higher order statistical tools.

Chapter V: Analysis of Individual and Organizational Stress Management and Coping Mechanism in Police Personnel - indicates the various techniques of stress management and coping mechanism adopted in Tamilnadu police department.
Chapter VI: Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions - summarizes the findings along with the suggestions to the management as well as to the police personnel for framing the strategies of stress management.
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