CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION
Stress Management is drawing more and more attention nowadays, particularly in the corporate context. There is no such work as a stress-free job. Everyone in their work is exposed to tension, frustration and anxiety as they get through the duties assigned to them. In order to make one’s work experience and environment as pleasant as possible, it is better to learn the technique of moderating and modulating the personal stress levels. In fact, stress can also be used as a positive and forceful associate for achieving success and for right level of motivation to drive through any obstacles on the way.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the current lifestyle of utmost complexities, the stress level is raising at a phenomenal rate. The factors that contribute to stress differ from person to person, between nature of job, level of social class and even between cultures.

Stress in the 21st century is not something new, not anything unknown. Stress has been experienced since time immemorial, but its toll is higher now than ever before. Today, 75-90 percent of health problems are from stress related problems (Pareek, 1999).
1.2 UNDERSTANDING THE ‘STRESS’

‘Stress’ is the reaction of an excessive pressure. People are living in a world of rapid and radical changes. These changes affect them considerably and increase their expectations. Therefore, people have to tolerate more pressure now than ever before.

Stress is a word that can mean many things. For a speaker, it means ‘put emphases’. For a scientist, it means putting pressure on an object until it shows a breaking point. For a fitness expert, stress means an extreme activity that gives pressure on muscles. And for many others stress is fear.

It is hard to define exactly what stress is as the word ‘stress’ like ‘success’, ‘failure’, or ‘happiness’, means different things to different people. However, stress restricts and acts as a hindrance in the performance of an individual. It is a kind of pressure that people feel in life due to their reaction to situation.

The concept of stress was first introduced in Life Sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. He defines stress as an “adaptive response to the external situation that results in physical, psychological or behavioral deviation for organizational participants”. It is a condition arising from the interaction of people of their job and is characterized by changes within the people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. There are two sides of stress - a positive and a negative side. A force that deviates from the normal functioning is distress, a negative side. A positive side is called as Eustress, which refers to healthy, positive and constructive outcome of stressful event.

1.2.1 Origin

The term stress has been derived from the Latin word "Stringere" which means ‘draw light’. The word ‘stress’ then became absorbed into the French word “Estresse” meaning ‘to straighten or narrow’. It is interesting to look at this— the most ancient meaning of the word already implies a force that is pressing or
squeezing things into tightness or constriction. Which can be compared with the way you feel when you think about the effects you associate normally with stress.

In the seventeenth century the term stress was used to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. In the eighteen and nineteenth centuries the term was used to mean force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person.

Although the phenomenon of stress exists since ancient times, conscious attempts to study the concept systematically have begun in the later half of the twentieth century. Social and biological sciences have found it necessary and useful to investigate the effects of stress and psychological tension on the physical and mental well-being of the people.

Initially stress was studied in terms of general adaptation syndrome concentrating mainly on physiological dimensions of stress. Now attention has also shifted to psychological and behavioural dimensions as stress is more than a simple cause effect reaction. Stress is a common experience of people when any demands are placed on them by their work or personal environment. This is of course an inevitable part of life. Mild stress proves useful in overcoming periods of frustration and dull routine. However, too much stress affects the health and well-being, every day performance and behaviour adversely.

Day to day problems, work related pressures, conflict of interests between home and work place, unrealistic expectations of others – all lead to stressors which are the causes of stress. Stressors include physical stressors, environmental stressors, individual stressors, family stressors, inter personal stressors, career and job related stressors. These stressors need to be managed. Stress management is integral to good management practice. Stress has both positive and negative aspects. Both need to be managed for enhanced performance and benefits at work.
Job stress can become an important topic for study of understanding organizational behaviour since it may adversely affect the physical and mental health of the employees and their contribution to the efficiency and effectiveness of organisations.

1.2.2 Stress – Traditional and Modern perspective

There is no exact parallel for the term ‘Stress’ in Indian society and culture, but the ancient philosophical and religious texts provided considerable information on this stress. They contain references to the very many causes of stress-like states. Even more important is the information on how these conditions can be managed.

There are at least two approaches to the teaching of stress management. In the first approach one begins with the nature of human experience and moves systematically to its dysfunction i.e., sees how stress is generated under certain circumstances (Ramayana is a classic example of this approach). The second approach is exemplified by the Bhagavad Gita: a problem is identified and the principles of dealing with it are woven around the problem and its resolution (e.g. the dilemma faced by Arjun and Krishna’s discourse on how to resolve it). However, no matter how one looks at it, the basic propositions are more or less identical.

At the base of all worries are ‘desire’ and the associated ‘ego’ involvements, called ‘Kleshas’ (worry). Five types of Kleshas have been enunciated: Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Raga (attraction), Divesa (repulsion) and Abhinivesa (lust for life), with the first lying at the base for the other four. It is when one gets caught between Kleshas, the Dukha (sorrow or suffering) arises. In other words, kleshas lead to dukha.

Various indigenous systems such as Samkhya, Yoga and Ayurveda highlighted these two concepts. Klesha and Dukha, though not exact parallels, are concepts
which come closest to the word stress in the technical sense of the term. As seen in the Yoga framework, Klesha refers largely to the stressor aspect, while the Dukha refers to the phenomenon of the stress response itself.

From the psychological point of view, Indian literature is replete with minutely detailed texts. All of them attempt to integrate the individual’s personal and social life with stress and disease through personal mental mechanisms. Physiological imbalance between the three constituents (i.e., Tridoshas) of the physical body, Vata, Pita and Kapha, may produce any of the three associated mental states or trigunas. These are satva, tamas and rajas, which may be translated as lightness, dullness and activity, respectively. Normality consists of a balance between the doshas and the gunas. The yoga vashista describes how mental disturbances produce physical disturbances. The proposed sequence of events follows closely the present ideas regarding psychosomatic ailments. Mental disturbance is said to produce a variety of symptoms, which eventually create an imbalance of the tridoshas causing disease.

Thus every disturbance has somatic repercussions. The interesting part of the analysis is that it had been derived more than 2,000 years ago when modern imaging monitoring systems were unheard of.

The integration of mind and body is even more intricately described, when one focuses on the concept of health in the Indian tradition. While ‘to heal’ in English means to make whole, the Sanskrit equivalent of health is not merely aarogya (absence of disease). It is swastha i.e., being relaxed, maintaining one’s equanimity. The idea, therefore, is that health cannot be attained with mental peace.

As one proponent has rightly said, the correct meaning of disease should be dis-ease, or lack of ease. In addition, the body (sharer), which is made up of five elements, should be kept pure and unpolluted: one must follow sharirik dharma, i.e., those principles by following which one can ensure that one’s
physical body is free from disease. It is on these principles that the entire theory of nature care or the art and science of naturopathy are based on.

As mentioned earlier, there is no special concept of stress in the Indian tradition, yet much has been written on its causes and the ways of managing stress. Many of the methods, in common parlance today, find detailed discussion in the ancient Indian texts: meditation, relaxation, the role of diet in the management of stress and related diseases, exercises, yoga etc. Similar ideas may be gleaned from Jain and Buddhist philosophical texts as well. One such example is called ‘Vipassana’.

The term ‘Vipassana’ was mentioned in the Rig Veda, the art of vipassana was rediscovered by Lord Buddha. The term vipassana means ‘to see things as they really are’ and ‘insight into our self’. The Rig Veda talks highly of this art: One, who practises Vipassana in a perfect way, comes out of all versions and anger, the mind becomes pure. It leads to inner peace, and those who practise it learn to share it with others.

According to Lord Buddha, stress lies within us. It arises as a result of our reactions to worldly events. Once we stop reacting, we will no longer get stressed. Vipassana believes in the triumph of mind over matter. We can educate our mind to stop reacting to material objects through various ways. Thus we may divert our attention by attending spiritual talks, by engaging in leisure time activities, by taking drugs and other intoxicants. However, the effect of all those will be, at best, temporary. Vipassana, on the other hand, teaches us how to attain Nirvana: how to achieve the pristine beauty of the mind thus reduce stress.

Vipassana focused on the absolute interconnection between the mind and the body. Through disciplined attention i.e., meditation, the student learns to observe his own sensations. He gradually comes to understand that all such sensations are temporary.
1.2.3 Stress in the Western tradition

As early as in the fourteenth century, the term stress was used to denote hardship, straits, adversity or affliction (Lumsden, 1981). In the late seventeenth century, Robert Hooke (as cited in Hinkle, 1973) used the word stress in the context of physical sciences (now famous as Hooke’s Law of Elasticity), although this usage was not made systematic till the end of the early nineteenth century.

As far as western scientific thought on the concept of stress is concerned, human kind owes a lot to physics. Long before behavioural scientists, physicists had been using the term stress to denote the effects of overload on machines. Over worked machines, overloaded pieces of equipment tend to show lower productivity, or are said to be under strain. Such strain, if allowed to build up over a period of time, finally caused the machine to breakdown. The excessive load is normally called stress, while such stress on the machine is referred to as strain. The evolution of the concept of stress across various sciences was exhibited in table 1.1.

The principle followed for this line of analysis is the much talked about Hooke’s Law regarding elasticity of material substances, including metals. According to Hinkle, Hooke’s law defines load as the external force; stress is the ratio of the external force (created by the load) to the area over which the force is applied; and strain is the resultant deformation in the object. It is this idea which was adopted to understand the effects of load on individuals. If metal break down under constant overload, it’s obvious for the individuals.
Table 1.1  Evolution of the Stress Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>Nature of Contribution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1633</td>
<td>Galileo Galilei</td>
<td>Observed that rods pulled in tension had strength proportional to their cross-sectional areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Italian Scientist</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1679</td>
<td>Robert Hooke</td>
<td>By studying springs, discovered the Law of Elasticity, which states that, within the elastic limits of a body, force is proportional to extension.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>English Physicist</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Thomas Young</td>
<td>Developed Young's Modulus of Elasticity, a constant which denotes the stiffness of a material within its elastic limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>English Physicist</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Augustin Cauchy</td>
<td>Coined the terms &quot;stress&quot; and &quot;strain&quot;, defining stress as the pressure per unit area and strain as the ratio-of increase or decrease in the length of an object to its original length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>French Mathematician</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Hans Selye,</td>
<td>Recognized the phenomenon of &quot;biological stress&quot;, defining it as the sum of nonspecific changes in the body caused by function or damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Canadian Endocrinologist</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Robert Dato,</td>
<td>Developed the Law of Stress, which states that stress is the difference between pressure and adaptability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>American Psychoanalyst</em></td>
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Courtesy: The Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Bio feedback, Inc.

The analogy between the man and material may be extended further. For instance, if a certain amount of load is applied to a piece of iron wire, the wire may remain unaffected. However, the same amount of force may overload a delicate silk fibre, causing it to break. Thus, the capacity of an object to withstand stress depends on its inherent characteristics; toughness and strength. Human beings are no different. The effect of stress varies widely from one
person to another. While sports, car racing or paragliding may provide just the right amount of exhilaration and thrill to one individual, it may be highly stressful for another. Remaining quiet may serve a very important purpose for individual X, but individual Y may suffocate during such a period of forced solitude. Thus, whether a particular situation will be stressful for an individual or not, depends on the inherent characteristics of the individual.

The concept of stress and strain has survived over the centuries and in nineteenth century medicine they were conceived of as the basis of ill health. For the first time the connection between the stress and the disease was noted by Sir William Osler in 1910 (Hinkle, 1973).

Much along the same lines, Walter B. Cannon in 1932 studied the effects of stress on human beings and animals in terms of the well-known ‘fight or flight’ syndrome. Under stress, human beings tend to choose between two alternatives: the first is to make all attempts to resist (i.e., fight) the environmental pressures and through that process emerge victorious. The second is to avoid the pressure (i.e., flight) through the use of a variety of defence mechanisms. This is their way of reducing the pressure. It was Cannon who first elaborated on the physiological basis of stress. He observed that individuals experiencing extreme heat or cold, lack of oxygen, or excitement tended to show increased levels of adrenaline secretion. He described such people as being under stress.

1.3 TYPES OF STRESS

Stress is a part of our lives which, though it can be overcome, cannot be avoided. Indeed, it is very often a topic of conversation: the stress of living in a recession, executive life, unemployment, retirement, exercise, family problems, pollution, and the death of relatives or friends. Even school children are placed under enormous stress, caused by a host of factors such as parental
expectations, examinations, peer pressure and discipline in schools, to name but a few.

Stress management can be complicated and confusing because there are different types of stress. Most people think that stress is always bad. But, a little stress is absolutely necessary for our survival in this highly competitive world!

**Eustress: The Good Stress**

Eustress is the good stress which helps us to improve our performance. For example, if there is no stress of performing well in the exams or athletic events, students will not study harder or the athletes will not sweat it out on the tracks. A certain amount of positive stress keeps us pepped up to meet all challenges and is necessary for our survival and progress in life.

**Distress: The Bad Stress**

When stress gets out of hand, it becomes bad stress or distress, which will bring out the weakness within us and make us vulnerable to fatigue and illness. If distress is continued unchecked, this will lead to all the ill-effects of stress.

To *American Psychological Association*, the different types of stress are acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress, each with its own characteristics, symptoms, duration and treatment approaches.

**Acute stress**

Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. Acute stress is usually for short time and may be due to work pressure, meeting deadlines pressure or minor accident, over exertion, increased physical activity, searching something but you misplaced it, or similar things.
Fortunately, acute stress symptoms are recognized by most people. It's a laundry list of what has gone awry in their lives: the auto accident that crumpled the car fender, the loss of an important contract, a deadline they're rushing to meet, and their child's occasional problems at school and so on.

Because it is short term, acute stress doesn't have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- **Emotional distress** — some combination of anger or irritability, anxiety and depression, the three stress emotions.
- **Muscular problems** including tension headache, back pain, jaw pain and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems.
- **Stomach, gut and bowel problems** such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.
- **Transient over arousal** leads to elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath and chest pain.

Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life, and it is highly treatable and manageable.

**Episodic acute stress**

It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Often, they describe themselves as having "a lot of nervous energy." Always in a hurry, they tend to be abrupt, and sometimes their irritability comes across as hostility. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. The workplace becomes a very stressful place for them.

Another form of episodic acute stress comes from ceaseless worry. "Worry warts" see disaster around every corner and pessimistically forecast in every
situation. The world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These "awfulizers" also tend to be over aroused and tense, but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile.

The symptoms of episodic acute stress are the symptoms of extended over arousal: persistent tension headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease. Treating episodic acute stress requires intervention on a number of levels, generally requiring professional help, which may take many months.

Often, lifestyle and personality issues are so ingrained and habitual with these individuals that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They blame their woes on other people and external events. Frequently, they see their lifestyle, their patterns of interacting with others, and their ways of perceiving the world as part and parcel of who and what they are.

Sufferers can be fiercely resistant to change. Only the promise of relief from pain and discomfort of their symptoms can keep them in treatment and on track in their recovery program.

**Chronic stress**

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. This type of stress is the most serious of all the 3 stress types. Chronic stress is a prolonged stress that exists for weeks, months, or even years. This stress is due to poverty, broken or stressed families and marriages, chronic illness and successive failures in life. People suffering from this type of stress get used to it and may even not realize that they are under chronic stress. It is very harmful to their health.
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 despised job or career. It's the stress that the never-ending "troubles".

Chronic stress comes when a person never sees a way out of a miserable situation. It's the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time. With no hope, the individual gives up searching for solutions.

The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. They forget it's 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.

Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, heart attack, stroke and, perhaps, even cancer. Because physical and mental resources are depleted through long-term attrition, the symptoms of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may require extended medical as well as behavioural treatment and stress management.

1.4 CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress is an interaction between individuals and any source of demand (stressor) within their environment. A stressor is the object or event that the individual perceives to be disruptive. Stress results from the perception that the demands exceed one's capacity to cope. The interpretation or appraisal of stress is considered an intermediate step in the relationship between a given stressor and the individual's response to it. Appraisals are determined by the values, goals, individual commitment as personal resources (e.g., income, family, self-esteem) and coping strategies that employees bring to the situation.
The distinction between stressor and stress was perhaps the first important step in the scientific analysis of this most common biological phenomenon that is understood by everyone from their personal experience.

Studies show that many maladies have no specific single cause but are the result of a constellation of factors (such as inherited or environmental factors) among which non-specific stress often plays a decisive role. The ailments such as peptic ulcers, high blood pressure, nervous breakdown, and so on, may not occur primarily due to the causes such as diet, genetics, or occupational hazards. They may simply be the products of the ongoing non-specific stress. It’s now seems that ‘working hard’ or ‘getting the job done’ are not the prime cause of heart attacks. The culprit is, in fact the negative thoughts that one carries: anger, frustration, tiredness, depression and so on.

Thus, instead of undergoing complicated drug therapies or surgical operation, we can often help ourselves better by establishing whether or not the decisive cause of our illness is stress, which may stem from our relationship with a member of our family or our employer, or it may merely be due to our own over-emphasis on being right every time. Anything which upsets the balance of the mind or the body can cause stress. For the purpose of definition, let us say that ‘stress’ is ‘imbalance’ as the stress-response forces the body’s functioning into an excited, imbalanced state.

In Asia Pacific, the top contributors were inadequate staffing, low pay (or low increase in pay) and lack of work/life balance. Globally, inadequate staffing is common as the single most important contributor to work-related stress (Towers Watson, 2014).
The common causes of stress at home, work and others are listed as follows:

(i) Causes of Stress at Home

- Death of spouse, family, near relative or friend.
- Injury or illness of any family member.
- Marriage of self or son or daughter or brother or sister.
- Separation or divorce from partner.
- Pregnancy or birth of a new baby.
- Children's behaviour or disobedience.
- Children's educational performance.
- Hyperactive children.
- Sexual molestation.
- Argument or heated conversations with spouse, family members or friends or neighbours.
- Not sufficient money to meet out daily expenses or unexpected expenditure.
- Not sufficient money to raise your standard of living.
- Loss of money in burglary, pick-pocketed or share market.
- Moving house.
- Change of place or change of city or change of country.

(ii) Causes of Stress at Work

- To meet out the demands of the job.
- Relationship with colleagues.
- Controlling the staff (subordinates).
- To train your staff and take work from them.
- Support you receive from your boss, colleagues and juniors.
- Excessive work pressure.
- To meet out deadlines.
- To give new results.
- To produce new publications if you are in research area.
• Working overtime and on holidays.
• New work hours.
• Promotion or you have not been promoted or your junior has superseded you.
• Argument or heated conversations with co-workers or boss.
• Change of job.
• Work against will.
• Harassment.
• Sexual molestation.

(iii) Other Causes of Stress

• Fear, intermittent or continuous.
• Threats: physical threats, social threats, financial threat, other threats.
• Uncertainty.
• Lack of sleep.
• Somebody misunderstands you.
• Setback to your position in society.

1.5 IMPACT OF STRESS

Stress is the "wear and tear" of the human bodies experience as they adjust to their changing environment; it has physical and emotional effects creating positive and negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can compel people to action; it can result in a new awareness and exciting new perspective.

As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression, which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, stomach upset, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

Short-term arousal due to stress can be life-saving, but long-term arousal can be damaging to health as the body’s strength is continually drained at a higher rate than normal and no time to recoup energy is given. Long-term depression
and feelings of being unable to cope, which may result from prolonged stress, produce slightly different changes and it is thought that they may have greater potential to be damaging.

Some degree of stress is a normal part of life and provides part of the stimulus to learn and grow, without having an adverse effect on health. When stress is intense, continuous or repeated, as is often the case with occupational stress, ill health can result (Kriti et al., 2012).

The experience of stress can affect the way individuals think, feel and behave, and can also cause physiological changes. Many of the short and long term illnesses caused by stress can be accounted for by the physiological changes that take place when the body is placed under stress.

From the documented evidence, it is clear that as far as work life is concerned extreme stress is so aversive to employees that they will try to avoid it by withdrawing psychologically (through disinterest or lack of involvement in the occupation). Excessive stress can destroy the quality of life and also affect family life.

In jobs where work overload is the cause of the stress, the workers find that they have to take time off to deal with the stress, only to return to work to find that the already unmanageable workload has substantially increased in their absence, thereby increasing the source of the stress and fuelling a vicious cycle which may ultimately lead to a complete breakdown in health (Selye, 1976).

Research studies exploring the interrelationship between the behaviour, immune system and the nervous system, called Psycho Neuro Immunology (PNI), have clearly demonstrated that the immune system is affected by neural process that in turn are influenced by mental process. If we are depressed it affects our neural processes, and this situation may weaken the immune system or vice-versa.
To Maier, Watkins and Fleshner (American Psychologist, 1994), Stress can influence the immune system by down regulating it, that is, by causing physiological changes. The effects of student examinations, work battles, lack of social support, and sleep deprivation are well known in altering the immune system.

Kalimo (1987) has carefully delineated some of the effects of chronic work stress. Some of these are non-specific in nature. The most notable among these are vague aches and pains, disturbed sleep, apprehension and anxiety, along with mild forms of depression. If these dysfunctions go unattached over a period of time, they could lead to health impairment and a clinically definable disease state.

1.6 STRESS AT WORK

Occupational stress has become a common problem throughout the industrial world. Over the years its prevalence has increased, thus affecting the individual's mental health and well-being. Occupational stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations.

Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Selye [1936] defines stress as “a dynamic activity wherein an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand”.

Work plays a powerful role in people's lives and exerts an important influence on their well-being. Since 1960’s, paid work has occupied an increasing proportion of most people's lives. Although employment can be an exciting challenge for many individuals, it can also be a tremendous source of stress. Consequently, as work makes more and more demands on time and energy.
Individuals are increasingly exposed to both the positive and negative aspects of employment. The relationship among work, mental and physical health may also contribute to career adjustment as well as to the productivity and economic viability of companies.

Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyles. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. They have touched almost all professions. Kids of kindergarten, boys of school, students of university and colleges, and everyone in the academic field experiences stress every day. All office goers experience stress of one or the other kind. Entrepreneurs and labourers experience a different kind of stress. Homemakers also experience stress in managing their home affairs.

It is interesting to note that, stress has two faces. It is a good servant, but a bad master. In other words, it can be one’s best friend or worst enemy. A certain amount of stress is necessary to achieve success, but undue stress causes distress. Although we tend to think of stress as caused by external events, events in themselves are not stressful. Rather it is the way in which an individual interpret and react to events that makes them stressful. Stress is received by different people differently. If two people experience the same amount stress or pressure, one may take it as positive or healthy types or the other may accept it as negative.

Stress is often referred to as having negative connotation. The calamitous consequences of stress can affect an individual in three ways i.e. physiological, psychological and behavioral.

*Mental stress* may be accompanied by anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness, irritability, tension and boredom. *Physical stress* is accompanied by high blood pressure, digestive problem, ulcers and indigestion, palpitation, chest pain, skin disorder muscle tension, head ache, loss of appetite, restlessness, ulcers, shut
down of menstrual cycle, impairment of fertility among male and depletion of vitamin C, B and D in the body. Behavioral Stress may be symptomized in the behaviour such a overeating or under eating, loneliness, sleeplessness, absenteeism, alcohol consumption, increased smoking and drug abuse.

Further the stress can affect either positively or negatively to employee performance. Positive qualities are those in which the individual may feel more excited and agitated and perceive the situation positively as a form of challenge (Selye, 1956). Stress is also described as posing threat to the quality of work life as well as physical and psychological well-being (Cox, 1978). A high level of occupational stress, not only detrimentally influence the quality, productivity and creativity of the employees but also employee’s health, well-being and morale (Cohen and Williamson, 1991). Further, job related stress tends to decrease general job satisfaction.

Stress can be either temporary or long term, mild or severe, depending mostly on how long it continues, how powerful they are and how strong the employee’s recovery powers are. But major stress problems are sustained for long period. If one does not react to the stress, it may create some other Trauma. It is another severe form of stress. The nature of loss may have an effect on the individual’s perception of the stressful events as well as the avoidance, intrusion and hyper arousal symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

The specific stress experienced by people, often depends on the nature and demands of the setting in which people live. Thus, teachers, engineers, doctors, managers and people in other professions experience different types of stresses to different degrees.

Stress disturbs the equilibrium of the body. It affects physically, emotionally, and mentally. When individuals experience stress or face demanding situation, they adopt ways of dealing with it, as they cannot remain in a continued state of tension. How the individual deals with stressful situations is known as
‘coping’. There are two major targets of coping: changing ourselves or changing our environment. Coping refers to a person’s active efforts to resolve stress and create new ways of handling new situations at each life stage (Erikson, 1959).

The goals of coping include the desire to maintain a sense of personal integrity and to achieve greater personal control over the environment. Then he modifies some aspects of the situation or the self in order to achieve a more adequate person-environment fit. Coping thus, is the behaviour that occurs after the person has had a chance to analyze the situation, take a reading of his or her emotions and to move to a closer or more distant position from the challenge.

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. Occupation related stress among working population is drastically increasing worldwide. Stress at work has become an integral part of everyday life. In 1992 the United Nation identified job stress as a ‘20th century epidemic’. The World Health Organization called it a ‘worldwide epidemic’. In the USA, approximately one- quarter of the working population suffer from work related stress. The figures for India are not readily available but there is no much doubt that occupational stress affects a significant number of workers and costs heavy financial losses, human sufferings and mental illness.

Occupation related stress comes in many shapes and forms. HSE (2004) defines Occupational stress as “The adverse reaction people have excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.” Occupational stress may have harmful physiological and psychological effects on workers. Various studies have showed that workers suffering from stress exhibit decreased productivity, absenteeism, larger number accidents, lower morale and greater
interpersonal conflict with colleagues and superiors (Cranwell & Alyssa, 2005; HSE 2004).

A survey conducted by India’s industrial body Assocham has revealed that “the menace of stress and mental fatigue has intensified in recent times at the top and middle positions of sectors comprising construction, shipping, banks, insurance, government hospitals, trading houses, electronic and print media, courier companies, small-scale industries, retail and card franchise companies.”

Work-related stress and mental fatigue is mainly blamed on expectations of better performance, deadlines and competition which is taking a toll on Indian employees in sectors like construction, banking, Insurance, media, shipping and small-scale industries.

The sectors like the business process outsourcing (BPO), call centers and information technology (IT) companies because of deadlines, demand for high performance, shortage of staff and threats from competitors are becoming high stress zones. Working conditions are also a factor which contributes to the stress level of employees, the survey shows.

The survey of nearly 200 Indian employees revealed that top executives such as civil engineers, architects, contractors, marketing managers, quality controllers, editors, reporters and copy writers bear stress and take home its adverse impact. While professionals like chartered accountants, lawyers, tax consultants and those in sectors like automobiles, infrastructure, advertising and NBFCs enjoyed better working conditions, others were not so lucky.

In the case of construction companies, employees have to execute their work in a scheduled period, keeping in mind cost and time factors. Those working in the banking sector and insurance (i.e. both public and private) are tend to get stressed as they have to attract a large pool of customers for various schemes besides ensuring timely recovery of loans. Government hospitals in India face
acute shortage of trained staff and professionals, coupled with large inflow of patients, which cause stress to the employees. Employees of media organisations work under pressure for long hours, causing insomnia and other stress related-problems, the Assocham survey has found. Employees of small scale industrial units in India have to work 15-16 hours, adversely affecting their mental health and leading to depression. However, the stress level among the employees in ministries, central and state government offices, institutions and bodies funded by central and state governments is very low owing to limited working hours, surplus staff, and lack of competition. Perhaps now more than ever before, job stress poses a threat to the health of workers and, in turn, to the health of organizations. Stress in general and organizational stress in particular is a universal and frequently disabling human predicament and this concept has been a part of vocabulary of every man for a considerable time. The issue has gained currency in recent times pertains to the role of behavioural scientist in understanding and identifying correlates of stress related behaviour in order to ensure general well-being and human contentment. In this connection, the psychological and organizational characteristics of the personnel where they are placed may induce stress, which in turn has determinant consequences for performance and quality of work life in organisational context.

Stress management has become a very critical aspect of human resource management of late. But do the companies take employee stress as seriously as it needs to be? Every year in Japan around 30,000 deaths occur because of Karoshi (over work). In a study conducted by Delhi based NGO - Saarthak in 30 Indian companies, it was found that 50% of the employees suffered from stress related problems. Further, in the studies conducted in the US and UK, it was found that more than 60% of employees complain to be stressed out in their jobs. Stress has been identified as one of the most common work-related perils of modern times. Previously it was considered to be limited to the
developed countries, but with the turn of the century, it emerged as a global syndrome.

1.7 ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

Since the early 1960s, researchers have been examining the psychosocial and physical demands of the work environment that trigger stress. Research has identified many organizational factors contributing to increased stress levels: (a) job insecurity; (b) shift work; (c) long work hours; (d) role conflict; (e) physical hazard exposures; and (f) interpersonal conflicts with co-workers or supervisors. Reciprocally, elevated stress levels in an organization are associated with increased turnover, absenteeism, sickness, reduced productivity and low morale.

To have a balanced approach to understand the work stress, it is necessary to recognize the rewards provided by the employment that are both internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic), (e.g., skill development, self-esteem, money, variety from domestic surroundings, social contacts, and personal identity). Although increasing rewards of work can offset its stressful aspects, the physical environment should accommodate with the psychosocial conditions of employment. These can have deleterious effects on workers' mental and physical well-being. Reasons for stress can either be organizational (occupational) or extra-organizational (personal). The first category refers to work-related and work-place related factors. The second category refers to personal issues like the ill-health of a family member. Whatever might be the reason but the basic fact is that stress can impact with an individual's personal as well as professional life.
1.8 SYMPTOMS OF WORK STRESS

Defining a clear link between occupational causes, and the resulting symptoms is much harder for a condition. Because many of the symptoms of stress are generalized such as increased anxiety, or irritability, it is easy for them to be ascribed to a characteristic of the worker, rather than to a condition of the work.

However, there is mounting scientific and medical evidence that certain types of work and work organization do have a measurable and verifiable impact on the health of workers. The range of symptoms includes physical symptoms, mental health symptoms, psychological symptoms, asthma, irritability, smoking, ulcers, depression, heavy drinking, heart disease, anxiety, eating disorders, diabetes, burn out, increased sickness, thyroid disorders and low self-esteem.

Employee stress can be managed more effectively if identified and tackled at an early stage. It has been observed that when an individual experiences stress, there would be visible changes in his physical health and also in his emotional behavior. Some of the common signs of stress are listed as follows:

- Increased irritation
- Depression
- Loss of interest in the job/ feeling of boredom in the job
- Frequent fights with the colleagues
- Withdrawal from social life
- Increased number of mistakes in any work done
- Frequent headaches
- Disturbed sleeping and eating patterns
- Aggravated health disorders such as - Asthma, ulcers, skin allergies and cardiac problems
1.9 IMPACT OF WORK STRESS

The effects of stress have been found to be fairly wide-spread, implicating changes in behaviour, moods, capacity to perform mental tasks (such as thinking, logical reasoning, problem solving and decision-making) and neurophysiological functioning.

Psychological stimuli operate on persons each of whom is equipped with an individualized psychobiological programme for reacting to any type of internal or external stimulation. These programmes are propensities conditioned by a vast array of genetic and earlier environmental influences. When the environment fails to meet personal demands or becomes overtaxing the outcome is stress. Such stress brings in its wake a host of pathogenic mechanisms which may be cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and / or physiological. While under normal circumstances of non-stress, the above mechanisms form carefully and systematically orchestrated whole, stressors essentially cause them to go into disarray. The discussion here focuses on the problems brought on by work.

General Impact

The general symptoms of stress are the warning signals of stress are like, feeling unable to slow down or relax, explosive anger in response to minor irritation, anxiety or tension lasting more than a few days, inability to focus your attention, fatigue, sleep disturbances, tension headaches, cold hands or feet, aching neck and shoulder muscles, indigestion, loss or increase of appetite, diarrhoea or constipation, ulcers, heart palpitations, allergy or asthma attacks.

Physical impact

There are different manifestations of physical stress; it’s obvious that people think that they are coping up with stress, but not really. The physical signs or symptoms that take heed of one’s body’s messages and warnings. There are
some of the warning light that reveals your physical stress, viz., Muscle tension or pain, nail biting, lack of appetite, bowel abnormalities, dry mouth, fatigue, tiredness, exhaustion, headache, migraine, sexual dysfunctions, insomnia, sweating, restlessness, tingling in body, feeling bloated, breathlessness or palpitations, nausea, lack of co-ordination/clumsiness, anxiety in stomach/cramps, foot of leg aches, increased breathing rate, twitching of hands/legs/face, shaking, red skin blotches, flushes.

It has been found that poor working conditions at the workplace result in physical stress among employees. The physical stressors include - poor lighting, improper ventilation, high level of humidity, unsuitable temperatures at workplace etc. In addition to the physical comforts at the workplace, excessively long working hours, excessive work load, deadline pressures and stringent rules and regulations also exert the employees and have a very harmful impact on them.

Further, when employees are denied short-breaks during their work hours, they tend to feel more stressed up. One would be mistaken if he/she understands that physical stress at the work place is limited to a manufacturing or a field job scenario. Computerization at the workplace has brought in many computer related health hazards to desk jobs. It has been observed that individuals working in the IT industry are more susceptible to ailments related to muscles, eyes etc.

Extensive usage of computer leads to various muscle related ailments in employees, especially those in the IT industry. Musculoskeletal disorders are caused by overuse of muscles, tendons and nerves. While working on computers, we tend to overuse our fingers and wrist, which lead to these problems. However most of the employees do not know the real reason behind the inflammation and pain in the muscles related to the fingers and wrist. Further, improper chairs and incorrect height of tables might also lead to pain
in the back and the neck of the employees. Employees working on computers are also prone to disorders related to eyes and vision.

**Psychological impact**

Physical stressors impact an individual even psychologically. For instance, long working hours without the required breaks would make a person tired and demotivated and a sense of helplessness creeps in. This would lead to frustration and eventually, psychological stress. Psychological stressors include – unfriendly work environment, monotonous job, problems in the social/external environment, job insecurity, problems with colleagues or immediate superiors, lack of proper balance between work and home, external factors in the industry, unsuitable work culture in the organization etc.

It has been found that when employees feel they don't have any control on their job or work they are doing, a sense of helplessness seeps into their mindset, leading to depression. Further, when the relations among employees are strained, it also exerts negative influence on the employees' attitude and their job. One more important factor that puts employees under psychological strain is unrealistic deadlines. The deadlines at work decided by superiors which are unrealistic or beyond the employee's capabilities can put the employee under stress to perform, affecting his or her overall health. Both physical and psychological stressors have a tremendous impact on not only the employees' health, but also the organization's. Some of the impacts of employee stress are absenteeism, loss of judgment, employee conflicts etc.

With the physical symptoms, sometimes there may be justifiable reasons for experiencing certain psychological emotions or thought process. However, as with physical symptoms, there may also be indicators that the person experiencing more than a motivating amount of pressure. The impact may like, blocking off positive emotions or experiences, a downward spiral of feelings, lack of concentration, anger/aggression, anxiety/anxiety-inducing dreams,
confusion, feelings of being unable to cope, frequently wanting to cry, wishing
to escape or run away, indecisiveness/apathy, defensiveness, sexual disinterest,
lack of self-love, low self-esteem, depression, feeling highly emotional; mood
swings, lack of self-control, panic, paranoia, feelings of isolation, feelings of
being betrayed or rejected, feelings of jealousy or envy.

**Behavioural impact**

Some of the common behavioural signs are like wanting to stay in more than
usual, overeating, going without food, increased drinking, increased smoking,
irritability with family and friends, awaking early, fidgeting, tapping of feet, an
inability to manage time effectively and temper outbursts.

At a personal level, work stressors are related to depression, anxiety, general
mental distress symptoms, heart disease, ulcers, and chronic pain. In addition,
many people are distressed by efforts to juggle work and family demands, such
as caring for sick or aging parents or children. Therefore, any exploration of the
relationship between work conditions and mental distress must take into
account the individual factors such as sex, age, race, income, education, marital
and parental status, personality and ways of coping.

Both physical and psychological stressors have a tremendous impact on not
only the employees' health, but also the organization's. Some of the impacts of
employee stress are:

* (a) *Absenteeism*

One of the grave impacts of employee stress is absenteeism. Employees
under stress do not feel motivated to work and therefore take more
number of leaves citing different reasons. As more and more employees
cite ill health as the reason, the cost would all be added to the
organization as medical reimbursements. Employees might be absent
from work to use it as a coping mechanism against stress. Frequent
employee absenteeism not only costs millions to the organizations, but it also affects the overall productivity.

(b) Loss of Judgement
A stressed out employee loses focus on his work. Due to this, the employee misses out vital information signals leading to ineffective decision making. Further, various research studies have proved that stress also slows down the thinking process. According to researchers, the enzyme - endorphins released under stress, slow down the ability to think and affect the ability of judgement in an individual.

(c) Employee conflicts
Stress also might have an impact on the interpersonal relationships at workplace. A person under stress tends to be easily irritated leading to troubled relationships with his colleagues.

(d) Workplace Accidents
Stress results in poor concentration and pre-occupation of the mind leading to workplace accidents. It is generally reported that in their drive to attain deadlines and accomplish tasks, employees tend to ignore safety rules leading to accidents.

According to a research conducted by Workers’ Occupational Health Services conclude workers under stress are thirty per cent more likely to be involved in accidents than those experiencing low levels of stress. In addition to all the above mentioned problems, organizations would also face high turnover rates of employees, high replacement costs, loss of intellectual capital and increasing grievances. Many organizations have realized the serious impacts of employee stress and have started taking steps to combat it. The responsibility of making a workplace employee friendly and healthy lies with both the employer and the employees.
1.10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN INDIA

Information technology (IT) industry in India has played a key role in putting India on the global map. IT industry in India has been one of the most significant growth contributors for the Indian economy. The industry has played a significant role in transforming India’s image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. The industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy.

The information technology (IT) and information technology enabled services (ITeS) industry has been one of the key driving forces fuelling India's economic growth. The industry has not only transformed India's image on the global platform, but also fuelled economic growth by energising the higher education sector (especially in engineering and computer science). It has employed almost 10 million Indians and hence, has contributed a lot to social transformation in the country. Furthermore, Indian firms, across all other sectors, largely depend on the IT & ITeS service providers to make their business processes efficient and streamlined. The Indian manufacturing sector has the highest IT spending followed by automotive, chemicals and consumer products industries.

Information Technology has made possible information access at gigabit speeds. It has made tremendous impact on the lives of millions of people who are poor, marginalized and living in rural and far flung topographies. Internet has made revolutionary changes with possibilities of e-government measures like e-health, e-education, e-agriculture, etc. Today, whether its filing Income Tax returns or applying for passports online or railway e-ticketing, it just need few clicks of the mouse. India’s IT potential is on a steady march towards
global competitiveness, improving defence capabilities and meeting up energy and environmental challenges amongst others.

**Market size**
The growth in the Indian IT industry is expected to be around 30 per cent and the overall sales are projected to touch US$ 17 billion in FY 15, according to Manufacturers' Association of Information Technology (MAIT).

The Indian IT infrastructure market - comprising server, storage and networking equipment - is expected to grow by four per cent in 2014 to touch US$ 1.9 billion, according to Gartner.

The IT services market in India is expected to grow at the rate of 8.4 per cent in 2014 to Rs 476,356 million (US$ 7.88 billion), according to International Data Corporation (IDC).

Indian insurance companies plan to spend Rs 117 billion (US$ 1.93 billion) on IT products and services in 2014, a 5 per cent increase from 2013, as per Gartner.

Indian enterprises are enhancing their IT security operations capabilities across departments. The Indian market for security infrastructure and services is expected to grow from US$ 989 million this year to US$ 1.4 billion by 2017, as per Gartner.

**Socio-Economic Impact**
The rapid growth of IT industry as a whole is having a deep effect on the socio-economic dynamics of the country. IT sector has led to the creation of IT workforce which has its distinct forms of work, employment, organisation, and management along with its distinct work culture that have emerged which has its effect on lifestyle, sociality and identity that are taking place within this new global workforce. Lifestyle in the young BPO workers lead to health hazards at the workplace and lifestyle leading to heart attacks and other major ailments.
The alarms on health hazards led the union health minister of India reported to have expressed shock and quoted saying in a newspaper report that "We are, therefore, finalising a blueprint of India's first dedicated health policy for the BPO sector." (Economic Times, Sept. 28, 2007).

With the number of jobs steadily increasing and has resulted in creation of new class of young consumers with high disposable incomes causing changes in lifestyles, forms of sociality, family structure, and self-identity. These changes fuel the rapid upward socioeconomic mobility experienced by employees in this industry. This workforce has been identified as a distinct occupational group, which affects their identity, attitude, interest, colleagueship, collective actions, power, status and work consciousness (Orlikowski & Baraudi, 1989).

The Indian IT industry caters to the global informational economy primarily as a provider of low-end services. This very feature has shaped the nature of the employment that has been created in this sector. Mobility, flexibility, and employee relationship management are the three major characteristics of work and employment in this industry. This sector requires its workforce to be highly mobile and open to travel between locations; India and 'onsite', as well as between jobs; within India and 'offshore'. Within companies, flexibility is maintained through resource management systems such as 'the bench' along with certain variables in computing salary of the employees. The third characteristic of this sector is the employee relationship management, in which a lot of emphasis is given to attraction, development, and retention of the workforce.

**The Young Workforce**

In the IT industry majority of the population, around 81.5% are in the age group between 20 to 25 years and the mean age of the employees is 24 years. The requirement of night shift has been receiving unfavourable media coverage, causing social problems for the employees working in this sector.
These younger generation workers are techno-savvy, aware of market realities and opportunities, they in general have a different mind-set towards job and career. Factors like lack of advancement in career, high workload, employee morale, risk involved in decision making, and organization climate leads to stress among them. They have high aspirations for career, expectations from job and are ready to take risk.

Similar to workforce in other sectors salary is still one of the prime drivers for switching jobs. The average starting compensation given to IT professional in India is around Rs. 10,000 per month, which is high compared to other sectors. The salaries and career advancement are by market dynamics of demand exceeding the supply of skilled workforce. Employees tend to build career by job hopping, which leads to high level of attrition rate averaging 30-40% in the industry (Bhatt & Verma, 2008). Most of the work in this sector continues to be low-end, creating a high level of job dissatisfaction as many employees who believe they are over-qualified for the job.

1.11 STRESS IN IT INDUSTRY

Stress is inescapable part of modern life, work place is becoming a volatile stress factory for most employees and it is rightly called as the Age of anxiety. Stress has becoming significantly with the result of dynamic social factors and changing needs of life styles. Stress is man’s adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical mental and behavioral changes.

In the 1990s India emerged as a major player in the field of software engineering, information technology services and Web-based services. Presently the Indian information technology industry employs a little more than half million people and provides indirect employment to over a quarter of a million people (NASSCOM). In today’s world, the degree of stress increased owing to urbanization, globalization that results into cut-throat competition.
The workforce in IT faces its unique challenges. The technological advancements in this sector come up in short span of time with significantly high efficiencies, putting them apart from technology previously/currently in use. The movement to new technology puts a lot of pressure on employees and organizations, demanding more immediate and direct changes across all functions. This sector is very volatile and faces the problem of lack of job security and constant up-gradation of skills to remain marketable. The working conditions in the Information System profession is becoming very stressful with average working hours extended to 50 hours per week, working on Saturdays and Sundays and not being able to take leave when sick (King, 1995).

According to ComPsych Corp. survey (2014), more than two-third of the employees feels 'high stress' in their jobs. Around 78% of the cases are related to anxiety, stress, and neurotic disorder. In another survey of Information technology professionals, 95% of all senior managers, 90% of all middle level managers, and 80% in the rank and the file describe their day as stressful (Graner, 1997). The present working style has also contributed to stress.

The human-computer interaction factor also has an effect on work exhaustion (Rajeswari & Anantharaman, 2003). The widespread nature of stress in IT has given rise to the term 'techno-stress', which is used to explain the phenomena of stress arising due to usage of computers. Craig Broad in early 1980's coined the term techno-stress and defined it as a 'modern disease of adaptation caused by the inability to cope with new computer technologies in a healthy manner; (Ennis, 2005).

Thus, there is a strong need for systematic research on stress among Information Technology professionals.
1.12 COPING STRATEGIES

The theories such as job design, goal setting, organizational behaviour modification, group dynamics, management of conflict, communication skills, political strategies, leadership styles, organization processes and design, decision making skills, control techniques, management of change, and organization development techniques suggest ways to manage more effectively cope with stress. These are all even overall theories being developed on coping with stress. Taking time to manage time suggests some simple techniques such as time management that can be used to cope with stress. However there are two major approaches to dealing with job stress.

Fred Luthens (1995) pointed out that there are the individual strategies, which tend to be more reactive in nature. That is, they tend to be ways of coping with stress that has already occurred. Some individual strategies, such as physical exercise, can be both reactive and proactive, but most are geared toward helping the person who is already suffering from stress. The second general approach is to develop a more proactive set of strategies at the organization level. The idea behind these organizational strategies is to remove stress for individual jobholders.

**Individual Coping Strategies**

Today, self-help remedies, do-it-yourself approaches, weight-loss clinics and diets, health foods, and physical exercise are being given much attention in the mass media. People are actually taking responsibility, or know they should be taking responsibility, for their own wellness. Individual coping strategies for dealing with stress make sense. In other words, most people do not have to be convinced of the value of taking charge and actually making a change in their lives.
Some specific techniques that individuals can use to eliminate or more effectively manage inevitable, prolonged stress are: Exercise, Relaxation, Behavioural self-control, Cognitive therapy and Networking.

**Organizational Coping Strategies**

Organizational coping strategies are designed by management to eliminate or control organizational level stressors in order to prevent or reduce job stress for individual employees. The organizational stressors are categorized in terms of overall policies and strategies, structure and design processes/functions and working conditions. Each of the specific stressors would be worked on in order to eliminate or reduce job stress. For example in the policy area, attention would be given to making performance reviews and pay plans as equitable and as fair as possible. In the structural area, steps would be taken to back away from high degrees of formalization and specialization. The same would be done in the areas of physical conditions (for example, safety hazards would be removed, and lighting, noise, and temperature would be improved) and processes/functions (for example communication and information would be improved and ambiguous or conflicting goals would be clarified or resolved). In addition, the Association for Fitness in Business estimates that 12,000 Companies today offer stress coping programs ranging from counselling services, lunch time stress management seminars, and wellness publications to elaborate Company run fitness centres where employees can sweat out the tension. There is also evidence that the number of stress management programs is increasing and they are being evaluated more rigorously.

In addition to working on each specific organizational stressor identified in more generalized strategies are: Creation of a supportive organizational climate, Enrich the design of tasks, reduce the conflict and clarify organizational roles and Plan and develop career paths and provide counselling.
To Towers Watson Report’ 2014, Indian employers promote flexible working options (50%), organize stress management interventions (e.g. workshops, yoga, tai chi) (43%) and undertake education and awareness campaigns (41%) to help their employees manage stress and creating a workplace culture that proactively manages stress.

Stress affects not only our physical health but our mental well-being too. To successfully manage stress in everyday lives, individual should learn to relax and enjoy life. The best way to manage stress is to prevent it. This may not be always possible. So, the next best things are to reduce stress and make life easier.

1.13 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now-a-days everyone talks about stress. It is cutting across all socio economic groups of population and becoming the great leveler. Not only just high pressure executives are its key victims but it also includes labourers, slum dwellers, working women, businessmen, professionals and even children. Stress is an inevitable and unavoidable component of life due to increasing complexities and competitiveness in living standards. The speed at which change is taking place in the world today is certainly overwhelming and breathe taking. In the fast changing world of today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is within the family, business, organization, study, work, or any other social or economic activity. Thus in modern time, stress in general and job stress in particular has become a part of the life and has received considerable attention in recent years. Stress has become the core concern in the life of everyone, but everybody wants stress-free life. Stress is a subject which is hard to avoid. Stress is a part of day-to day living. Every individual is subjected to stress
either knowingly or unknowingly. Stress, long considered alien to Indian lifestyle, is now a major health problem / hazard.

Stress is the number one lifestyle risk factor, ranking above physical inactivity and obesity, according to the inaugural Asia Pacific edition of the Staying @ Work survey’ 2014 conducted by global professional services company Towers Watson. While Indian employers lead their regional counterparts in developing strategies to manage work-related stress, only 38% identified improving the emotional/mental health of employees (i.e. lessening the stress and anxiety) as a top priority of their health and productivity programs. This signals a vast scope for improvement in strategic initiatives aimed at tackling stress among Indian employees.

Almost 1 in every 3 Indian employers has instituted stress or resilience management programs in 2013 and an almost equal number plan to follow suit in 2014. With stress being ranked as the #1 lifestyle risk factor in India, this number is likely to grow (Towers Watson, 2014).

During the past decade, the IT sector had undergone rapid and striking changes due to recession, downsizing, and introduction of new technologies. Due to these changes, the employees in the IT sector are experiencing a high level of stress. The implications of these transformations have affected the social, economic and psychological domains of the IT employees and their relations. All the factors discussed above are prospective attributes to cause occupational stress and related disorders among the employees.

Although a lot of studies have been conducted on the psychosocial side of the new policy regime in many sectors, there are only few studies, as far as the IT sector is concerned, while the same sector has been drastically influenced by the recession. In this juncture, the present study is undertaken to address specific problems of IT employees related to occupational stress. This throw light in to the pathogenesis of various problems related to occupational stress
among IT employees. The study will be helpful to identify various stressors in IT sector, its effect and coping strategies adopted by IT professionals which act as a secondary data for further research. Therefore, the researcher attempts to study the occupational stress experienced by the IT professionals and its impact on job satisfaction. Further investigated on the coping strategies followed by the IT professionals to overcome or reduce the ill effects of the stress in their occupation.

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