CHAPTER - III

Stress Management
an Over Review
CHAPTER - III

STRESS MANAGEMENT AN OVER REVIEW

The physical body denies co-operation to fulfil the inner ambitions of achieving maximum. Time stress has far-reaching consequences and has per collated in to all aspects outlines. Anything that causes a change in life is stress. Be it a good or bad change, both are stress. Early in the century, medical students were taught that “if you know Syphilis you know medicine that is because of all pervading effects of the disease the same can be said about stress. Since it can contribute to or mimic just about any symptom one can think or stress as an unavoidable consequence of life.

The conflicts of one’s value and self concepts with the requirements of the organisational role. The conflict between the organisational role and other role. Stress is due to the conflicts of not being able to share his time between work and family demands.

The lack of clarity about expectation of others from the role or lack of feedback on how ones performance is regarded by other. Lack of knowledge skills, or adequate preparation to be effective in a stress.

Definition of stress

“Stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics an / or psychological process, that is consequence of any external action situation,
or event that place special physical and or psychological demands upon a person" - Ivanecih and Atteson

"Job stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning" by Beer and Newman

The concise Oxford dictionary defines stress in three different ways. The first definition is that "Stress is a constraining a impelling force" and one example used is "under the stress of poverty". The second definition treats as an "Effort or demand on energy as in subjected to great stress". The third definition offered talks of it as "A force exerted on a body" (Toxcox 1978).

The Penguin medical Encyclopaedia sees stress as any influence which disturbs the natural equilibrium of the body, and includes within its reference physical injury, exposure, deprivation, all kinds of disease and emotional disturbance (Marshall Jan Copper 1979).

Concept of features of stress

In 1936, Hensley introduced the concept of stress in social science at the general adaptation syndrome. He view stress as the non-specifically induced change within biological system.

It is non specific because any adaptation to a problem faced by the body, irrespective of the nature of the problem is included.
Stress is defined as any influences, which disturb the natural equilibrium of the body, and includes within its reference physical injury exposure deprivation all kinds of disease and emotional disturbance.

It is also important to point out what stress is not

**Stress is not simply anxiety:**

Anxiety operates solely in the emotional and psychological sphere, whereas stress operates there and also in the physiologically sphere. Thus, stress may be accompanied by anxiety, but two should be equated.

**Stress is not simply nervous tension:**

Like anxiety, nervous tension may results from stress, but the two are not the same. Unconscious people have exhibited stress, and some people may keep it “bottled up” and not reveal it through nervous tension.

**Stress is not necessarily something damaging, bad or to be avoided:**

Eustress is not damaging or bad and is something people should beak out rather than avoid. The key of course, is how the person handles the stress. Stress is inevitable; distress may be prevented or can be effectively controlled.

**Causes of stress:**

There may be numerous conditions in which people may feel stress. Conditions that tend to cause stress are called stressors. The various stressors can be grouped in to four categories, individual, group, organizational and extra organizational.
Individual stressors

There are many stressors at the usual level of individual which may be generated in the content of organizational life or his personal life they are.

Life and career changes

Stress is produced by several changes in life and career. Research studies show that in general, every transition of stress. Any change in life of an individual puts him an disequilibrium state of affair and he is required to bring a new equilibrium. In this process he experience stress life changes in career in the form of promotion demotion transfers and separation.

Personality type

Personality characteristics also become sources of stress. Some people are always in hurry and show behaviour of always moving, walking rapidly, eating rapidly, talking rapidly, doing two or more things at a time, measuring success in term of quantity move aggressive and competitive and feeling boredom during leisure period. These people experience more stress.

Role characteristics:

There may be role stress either because of role conflict or role ambiguity. Role conflicts arise because of incompatibility between job task resource, rule and policies and other people.

Factors influencing job stress

The factors influencing job stress are grouped and classified under the following headings.
Factors in work relate and stress

Each type of work has several aspects that cause stress. They are called stressors. Some of the causes of stress at work are pointed out here.

Quantitative overload

Quantitative overload refers to too much work to be done in a stipulated time. Overload seems to be greatly stress producing, which also results in other bad effects or illness.

Qualitative overload

Qualitative overload means not too much work within too short time but to perform a task that rather too complex or too difficult for one's capacity or ability. If the job is not easily manageable, it results in stress to the employees.

Work under load

Too little or too easy work leads to boredom, monotony and lack of stimulation, which in terms creates stress and dissatisfaction.

Changes

When the stability of the working condition is disturbed by sudden or necessary new changes, there is greater stress. Naturally a change of supervisor, or manager of company or methods of working or transfers, prospects of learning new skills or obeying new rules etc are the changes which are stress producing for workers.
Role conflict

When two opposing motives clash and demands their simultaneous fulfilment, conflict arises and creates a stressful situation. So conflicting demands over lapping responsibilities results in tension, threat and dissatisfaction.

Working condition

The environmental condition in which work is done can also produce stress; it is also dangerous to health. Exercise heat, noise smokes, unclean and over stacked work place also contributes to stress.

Relationship at work

The critical relationship at work is one of the important factor that influence stress in workplace that is relationship with superiors and co-workers.

Relationship with superiors

When the relationship between an employee and his sub ordinate is unhealthy it leads to frustration and produces anxiety.

Relationship with co-workers

Stress among co-workers arises due to competition, jealousy, aggressions and intolerance of other views, ideas and values since most of the time is spent at the work spot, the employees need social support. Otherwise, it leads to a huge amount of stress.
Career development

Lack of job security, retirement fear of abundance and performance appraisal also create stress and stress. If an employee reaches the career ceiling or is promoted to higher position he may experience stress.

Job security

Career progression is very important in an employees life. After some time, when the growth or progress is slowed, the employees may be disgruntled and it created stress and dissatisfaction.

Organisational stressors

The major organizational stresses are as follows

Organizational policies

Organizational policies provide guidelines for action. Unfavourable and ambiguous policies may affect the functioning of the individual adversely and they may experience stress. Thus unfair and arbitrary performance evaluation, unrealistic. Job description, frequent reallocation of activities, rotating work shifts, ambiguous procedure, inflexible rules, in equality of incentives.

Organization structure

Organization structure provides formal relationship among individuals in an organization. Any defect in organization structure like lack of opportunity of participation lack of opportunity for advancement; high degree of specialization, excessive interdependence of various departments, line and staff conflicts etc
work as stressors as relationship among individuals and groups do not work effectively.

**Environmental Factors**

Just as environmental uncertainty influences the design of an organization's structure, it also influence stress levels among employees in that organization. Changes in the business cycle create economic uncertainties. When the economy is contracting, for example, people become increasingly anxious about their job security. Political uncertainties don't tend to create stress among north Americans as they do for employees in countries like Haiti or Venezuela. The obvious reason is that the United states and Canada have stable political systems, in which change is typically implemented in an orderly manner. Yet political threats and changes, even in countries like the United states and Canada, can induce stress. For instance, threats by Quebec to separate from Canada and become a distinct, French-speaking country increase stress among many Canadians, especially among Quebeckers with few or no skills in the French language. Technological uncertainty is a third type of environmental factor that can cause stress. Because new innovations can make an employee's skills and experience obsolete in a very short time, computers, robotics, automation, and similar forms of technological innovation are a threat to many people and cause them stress. Terrorism is an increasing source of environmental-induced stress in the twenty-first century. Employees in Israel, for instance, have long faced this threat and have learned to cope with it. For Americans, on the other hand, 9/11
opened the door to new terrorism-related stresses—such as working in skyscrapers, flying, attending large public events, and concern about security.

**Organizational Factors** There is no shortage of factors within the organization that can cause stress. Pressures to avoid errors or complete tasks in a limited time, work overload, a demanding and insensitive boss, and unpleasant co-workers are a few examples. We've categorized these factors around task, role, and interpersonal demands; organizational structure; organizational leadership; and the organization's life stage.

Task demands are factors related to a person's job. They include the design of the individual's job (autonomy, task variety, degree of automation), working conditions, and the physical work layout. Assembly lines, for instance, can put pressure on people when the line's speed is perceived as excessive. Similarly, working in an overcrowded room or in a visible location where interruptions are constant can increase anxiety and stress.

Role demands relate to pressures placed on a person as a function of the particular role he or she plays in the organization. Role conflicts create expectations that may be hard to reconcile or satisfy. Role overload is experienced when the employee is expected to do more than time permits. Role ambiguity is created when role expectations are not clearly understood and the employee is not sure what he or she is to do.
Interpersonal demands are pressures created by other employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can cause considerable stress, especially among employees with a high social need.

Organizational structure defines the level of differentiation in the organization, the degree of rules and regulations, and where decisions are made. Excessive rules and lack of participation in decisions that affect an employee are examples of structural variables that might be potential sources of stress.

Organizational leadership represents the managerial style of the organization’s senior executives. Some chief executive officers create a culture characterized by tension, fear, and anxiety. They establish unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run, impose excessively tight controls, and routinely fire employees who don’t “measure up.”

Organizations go through a cycle. They are established, grow, become mature, and eventually decline. An organization’s life stage—that is, where it is in this four-stage cycle—creates different problems and pressures for employees. The establishment and decline stages are particularly stressful. The former is characterized by a great deal of excitement and uncertainty. While the latter typically requires cutbacks, layoffs, and a different set of uncertainties. Stress tends to be least in the maturity stage during which uncertainties are at their lowest ebb.
Stress and heart disease

The linkage between stress and heart disease is well established. If stress is intense and its hormones are not 'used up' by physical activity, our raised heart rate and high blood pressure put tension on arteries and cause damage to them. As the body heals this damage, the artery walls scar and thicken, which can reduce the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart.

This is where a fight-or-flight response can become lethal: Stress hormones accelerate the heart to increase the blood supply to muscles; however, blood vessels in the heart may have become so narrow that not enough blood reaches the heart to meet these demands. If you experience this and you are lucky, you will in turn experience chest pains, will stop doing what you are doing and immediately seek medical help. If you are not lucky, you will suffer a fatal heart attack.

Other effects of stress

Stress has also been found to impair the immune system, which explains why we are more prone to infection (including colds and flu) when we are stressed. It may intensify symptoms in diseases that have an autoimmune component, such as rheumatoid arthritis. It also seems to affect headaches and irritable bowel syndrome, and there are now suggestions of links between stress and cancer.
Stress is also associated with mental health problems and, in particular, anxiety and depression. Here, the relationship is fairly clear: the negative thinking that is associated with stress also contributes to these.

The direct effects of stress in other areas of health are still under debate. In some areas (for example in the formation of stomach ulcers), diseases traditionally associated with stress are now attributed to other causes.

**Stress management**

Stress should be increasingly recognized as a disease so that people recognize it and seek treatment and lifestyle changes. This should not be interpreted as admission of guilt or weakness or inability to cope. It is a way to identify the problem and plan measures to overcome this.

The A-B-C strategy is often used by psychologists for effective stress management. The beauty of this strategy is that it can be used by the layman as a form of self-help tool for making the necessary modifications in his life.

**A for awareness**

Be aware of the various factors internal or external which increase your stress levels. When you are feeling under pressure next time, make a note of what caused it and how you could have coped with this situation better. Talk to your trusted colleagues or friends and get their perception of you as a person. Are you too aggressive or do you come across as rude or intolerant towards others. Do you treat your colleagues and subordinates with respect. Finally, be
truthful to yourself and ask yourself whether whatever you do and the means to achieve your ends are justified. Here, is the tricky part and needs honesty to identify your behavioural defects and mindset.

**B for balance**

All stress, as we have already discussed, is not bad. Without stress, we would be uncompetitive and lose out in the real world. This is what spurs us to achieve and progress and gives us milestones to measure our success and worth. Still, a balance has to be achieved between the positive and the negative stresses. It is okay to take on additional responsibility during times of need such as financial or family pressures inspite of the stress which you suffer, but if this is prolonged and taking a toll of your mind or your body, it is better to reduce things or do them in moderation. Learning to say "no" is important.

**C for coping and control over your life**

This is where you learn to make those changes in your environment or yourself to cope better and combat the negative stressors. These include stress management techniques and include changing or modifying your thinking, your behaviour and your lifestyle:

**Reframing or emotionally-oriented approach**

If you do not have the power to change a situation, then you may be able to improve things by changing the way you look at it, and feel about it by using an emotionally oriented approach. These are often less attractive than action-
oriented approaches in that the stresses can recur time and again; however, they are useful and effective in their place.

**Power of positive thinking**

Focusing on your strengths rather than your weaknesses. Make a written list of your strong and weak points (be truthful) – use your strength to your advantage and work on eliminating or strengthening your weaknesses. Constantly look for opportunities to distress. In a hectic job schedule, reserve 20 minutes of your time to take a walk or have lunch with a friend.

**Acceptance-oriented**

Sometimes, we have so little power in a situation that it is all we can do to survive it. This is the case, for example, when loved-ones die. In these situations, often the first stage of coping with the stress is to accept one's lack of power.

**Action-oriented**

To be able to take an action-oriented approach, we must have some power in the situation. If we do, then action-oriented approaches are some of the most satisfying and rewarding ways of managing stress. These are techniques that we can use to manage and overcome stressful situations, changing them to our advantage

- **Be assertive, not aggressive:** Being assertive involves standing up for your personal rights and expressing but not imposing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Do not infringe on the rights of other people though. Assertiveness includes establishing eye-contact but NOT staring. Learn
to use body language effectively, be concise and to the point. Give yourself the right to decline responsibility for other peoples problems. Assertiveness gives you a higher self-esteem and feeling of self-control.

- **Get organized**: Make lists and prioritise objectives and activities. Keep them achievable and enjoyable. Avoid chaos in the workplace.

- **Practise effective time management**: Avoid procrastination, learn to say “no”, delegate responsibility, drop useless pursuits and plan your day in advance.

- **Start writing a diary** to release pentup feelings, talk to a close friend or trusted colleague, appoint a mentor and listen.

- **Use humour** and develop an ability to laugh at yourself. As rightly said, 'humour is the best medicine'. Humour is a good stress reducer, relaxes muscular tension, increases the levels of endorphins or the “feel good factors” in the body and improves breathing and circulation. It also keeps you healthy and feeling younger. Join a laugh club in your area.

- **Diversion and distraction**: In a tense situation take time out to think logically. Walk away from the situation for some time. You will be surprised by the way you feel even 15 minutes later. Practice slow deep breathing to relax your muscles. The age-old remedy of counting till 100 when you are anticipating an explosive outburst of your emotions help effectively to calm you down.

- **Diet control**: Control your diet. Avoid comfort eating when you are stressed. It is a well known scientific fact that if you can beat your
craving for 15 minutes, the craving normally disappears. Use distraction in such situations. Or keep a fruit handy. Avoid smoking at all. Avoid alcohol or drink only in moderation. It is quite easy for a liking to become an addiction in times of stress. Avoid excess caffeine and restrict salt intake. (Refer Table 11 Nutrition Tips)

- **Regular exercise** dissipates pent up energy from the fight-or-flight response. Regular exercise is a good de-stressor which reduces the heart rate and makes the heart beat more effectively, reduces blood pressure, releases endorphins and strengthens our immune system. It also improves one's self-image, increases social contact and promotes good quality sleep. It is recommended that you exercise at least thrice every week for an hour with activities of medium intensity.

- **Sleep**: Scientists recommend eight hours of sleep daily. Try and sleep at the same time daily, avoid heavy meals or exercise just before bedtime. Instead, take a relaxing hot bath and a glass of warm milk to relax you completely. This gives you better ability to cope each day. Avoid sleep deprivation or deficit which causes irritability, easy fatigue and increased stress.

- **Leisure activities**: It provides an outlet for relief and relaxation, improves social contact and reduces aggression. Avoid spending too much time in front of the idiot box. Having at least one meal a day with the entire family at the table is pleasurable and an effective anti-stress agent.
Alternative medicine: As more and more people recognize and seek changes to their faulty lifestyle, many traditionals are making a comeback. Newer therapies are being explored and harnessed to enable people to achieve and yet relax and enjoy their life at the same time. Yoga, massage therapy, acupressure and acupuncture, mediation, aromatherapy, herbalism, reflexology, homeopathy and hypnosis are making a comeback. Pet therapy has taken off in a big way. New counseling techniques and psychotherapy, bic-feedback and modern drugs are being used in the extreme cases with good results.