CHAPTER - 1

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS- A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

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CHAPTER - 1

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS- A CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter includes various aspects related to ‘Stress’ in general, ‘Occupational stress’ and stress among the employees serving in the field of education. The chapter also gives an introduction on the research methodology followed in the current research study. The chapter reveals a rationality and significance of the study. This research will be very helpful in understanding the levels of stress, types of stress, sources of stress, symptoms of stress, impact of occupational stress and the coping techniques for occupational stress.

Right from the time of birth till the last breath down, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. It is a concept borrowed from natural sciences. Derived from the Latin word ‘Stringere’, stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person. (Pestonjee, 1999)

1.2 KEY WORDS:

The key words depicted in the title of this research study are explained as under.

1.2.1 Occupational Stress: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (1999) defined Occupational stress 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.
1.2.2 Technical Institutes: For this research study, the ‘Technical institutes’ means the educational institutes which provide the educational courses like M.E. (Master of Engineering) / M. Tech. (Master of Technology), B.E. (Bachelor of Engineering) / B. Tech. (Bachelor of Technology), M.C.A. (Master of Computer Application) / P.G.D.C.A. (Post Graduation Diploma in Computer Application), B.C.A. (Bachelor of Computer Application), Bachelor of Architecture / Bachelor of Design, Diploma Engineering / Diploma polytechnic.

1.2.3 Management Institutes: For this research study, the ‘Management institutes’ means the educational institutes which provide the educational courses like M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration), P.G.D.B.M. (Post Graduation Diploma in Business Management) and B.B.A. (Bachelor of Business Administration).

1.2.4 Employee: For this research study, ‘Employee’ means the person serving for either teaching or non-teaching job profile in either technical or management educational institutes which provide the educational courses like M.E. (Master of Engineering) / M. Tech. (Master of Technology), B.E. (Bachelor of Engineering) / B. Tech. (Bachelor of Technology), M.C.A. (Master of Computer Application) / P.G.D.C.A. (Post-Graduation Diploma in Computer Application), B.C.A. (Bachelor of Computer Application), Bachelor of Architecture / Bachelor of Design, Diploma Engineering / Diploma polytechnic, M.B.A. (Master of Business Administration), P.G.D.B.M. (Post Graduation Diploma in Business Management) and B.B.A. (Bachelor of Business Administration).

1.3 CONCEPT OF STRESS:

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Dr. Hans Selye in 1936. It is a concept borrowed from natural sciences. Derived from the Latin word ‘Stringere’. Stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person. The popularity of this concept has dwindled in the physiological field where it was first introduced but the use of stress terminology continues to flourish in psychological and social sciences. (Pestonjee D., 1999)

Dr. Hans Selye, the father of stress research, believes that under stress we use up a special fuel source, what he calls ‘adaptation energy’. (Robert L. Veninga, 1981)

Dr. Hans Selye described the General Adaptation Syndrome as having the following three stages.

- Alarm reaction, where the body detects the external stimuli.
- Adaptation, where the body engages defensive countermeasure against the stressor.
- Exhaustion, where the body begins to run out of defenses. (Santhnam, 2007)

1.3.1 What is Stress?

Some definitions of stress are as under.

- McGrath (1970) defines stress as occurring when there is an imbalance between the perceived demand and the perceived response capabilities of the organism.
- Glimer (1970) defined stress as a general term to describe tense situation and reactions to them.”
- Frost (1971) says, “Stress is a state in which the natural homeostasis (equilibrium) of the body is disrupted.
- Selye Hans, (1974) defined stress as “the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it”. 
- Beehr and Newman (1978) has define job stress as a condition arising from interaction of people and their jobs and is characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.

- Stokols (1979) has defined stress as a state of imbalance within an organism that (a) is elicited by an actual or perceived disparity between environmental demands and the organism’s capacity to cope with these demands and (b) is manifested through a variety of physiological emotional and behavioral responses.

- According to Chaplin (1982) Stress is a state of strain whether physical or psychological.

- Whiten (1983) defines stress as any circumstances that threaten or perceived to be threat a wellbeing and thereby tax our adaptive capacities.

- According to Lazarus (1984) "It is internal state of individual who perceives threat to physical or mental state.”

- According to Bloom et al. (1985) “Stress is a condition in which there is marked discrepancy between the demand made on organism’s capability to respond.”

- Skinner (1985) defined Stress as a cerebral reaction of a particular individual to a stimulus event.

- Lazarus &Folkman (1986) defined stress as a particular interaction between the person and the environment, appraised or evaluated by the person as being taxing or exceeding his or her personal resources, and, as a consequence, disrupting his or her daily routines.

- Jonathan et.al. (1986) suggested that stress is naturally accepting mind-body response to demanding and / or emerging situations either of chronic or episodic nature.

- Kagan and Segal (1988) defined stress as the body’s reaction to anything that threatens to damage the organism.
“Stress is a person’s adaptive response to excessive psychological or physical demands caused by some stimulus”. Fleet Van (1991)

Darley (1991) defined stress as a state that occurs when people are faced by demands from environment that requires them to change in some way.

According to Humphrey, (1992): In essence, stress can be considered as “any factor, acting internally or externally, that makes it difficult to adapt and that induces increased effort on the part of the person to maintain a state of equilibrium both internally and with the external environment.”

University Durham (1992) defined stress as a process of behavioral, emotional, mental, and physical reactions caused by prolonged, increasing, or new pressures that are significantly greater than the availability of coping strategies.

Chrousos (1992) defined it as an internal state of disharmony or threatened homeostasis.

Carson and Butcher (1992) said that stress refers to the internal responses caused by application of a stressor.

According to Jerry and Jerry (1995): “Stress is a state of tension Prudence by pressure or conflating demands with which the persons cannot adequately cope.”

According to Levi, (1996): “Stress is cost by a multitude of demands (Stressors) such an inadequate fit between what we need and what we capable of, and what our environment offers and what it demands of us.”

Herbert and Cohen (1996) described stress as a process in which external or internal demands are interpreted by persons in relation to their own resources, values and goals. It occurs if demands are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person’s abilities or resources to cope with those demands.

According to Bernik, (1997): “Stress designates the aggression itself leading to discomfort, or the consequences of it. It is our organism’s response to a challenge, be it right or wrong.”
Julian Melgosa (1997) in his book 'Less Stress!' Defined Stress as: being subjected to external forces or pressures, and can be either positive or negative depending upon the effect of the external force.

Stress can refer to experiencing events perceived as endangering one’s physiological, physical or psychological wellbeing or a combination of these and when there is excessive pressure its intensity and chronic nature can lead to mental and physical ill health including depression, nervous breakdown and heart disease (Quick, Nelson and Hurrel, 1997).

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint etc. Pestonjee and Pareek (1997)

According to Bowman, (1998): “Stress is the body’s automatic response to any physical or mental demand placed upon it. When pressures are threatening, the body rushes to supply protection by turning on ‘the juices’ and preparing to defend itself. It’s the ‘flight or fight’ response in action.”

Varca (1999) defines stress as a gap between environmental demands and personal resources to meet those demands.

Stephen Robbins (1999) defined stress as “a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he / she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.”

According to Ellis (1999) “stress is defined as a feeling of tens that is bulk emotional and physical. It can occur in specific situation. Different people perceive different situation as stressful.”

Aamodt (1999) defined stress as the psychological and physical reactions to certain events or situations (called stressors) in life.

Schafer (2000, p. 6) defines stress as ‘arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them’.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2001) define stress as the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them.
Jones and Bright (2001) used the term stress as an umbrella term which includes a range of potentially demanding environmental stimuli and responses and other variables such as personality factors that influence the relationship between the two.

According to Denise Allen, (2002): “Stress is a feeling we experience, when we lose confidence in our capability to cope with a situation.

Anderson, Litzenberger and Placas (2002) define stress as ‘the response of an individual to the self-perceived imbalance between the demands of the situation presented, and the resources one has at one’s disposal to respond successfully.’

Stress is the dysfunctional, psycho-physiological response to excessive emotional challenges or inordinate instinctual demands (Juniper, 2003).

Looker and Gregson (2003) described stress as the mismatch between perceived demands and the perceived abilities to cope.

Weber (2003) reported stress as un-avoidance characteristic of life and work. It is a generalized non-specific response of the body to any demand made on it.

Schafer (2004) encapsulated stress as a phenomenon made up of many connected responses, experiences and outcomes, influenced by various circumstances or events. It can be inferred from review of literature that stress is a provocation of body and mind responding to demands made upon them.

The Dictionary of Psychology (2008) described stress as, “a condition typically characterized by symptoms of mental and physical tension or strain, as depression or hypertension that can form a reaction to a situation in which a person feels threatened, pressured etc.”

1.3.2 Episodic Versus Chronic Stress:

The pattern of high degree of stress followed by an interval of relief is referred to as episodic stress. We endure anxiety, cope with the challenges, and then relax. An elevated
level of stress is necessary during crisis situations as it creates a sense of readiness to fight or flee followed by a period of relaxation and renewal. Unfortunately the patterns of stress people face because of job insecurity, cost of living, deadlines, and poor relationships are continuous. These types of situations produce what is known as chronic stress in which a person can neither fight nor flee. (Singh, 2013)

1.4 TYPES OF STRESS:

Mostly, stress is referred as the following types.

1.4.1 Eustress:

Stress need not be bad all the time. Stress affects us positively also. Eustress is a positive stress. It is basically a desirable form of stress which is healthful and gives a feeling of satisfaction. Eustress affect our activities positively. Eustress provides motivation to keep moving forward with an activity or project.

1.4.2 Distress:

Distress affects us negatively. This arises when the normal routine is constantly adjusted and altered. Distress creates feeling of discomfort and unfamiliarity. Distress weakens our body and makes us exposed to fatigue and illness. Distress affects one’s performance badly. (H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)

1.5 THE CONCEPT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:

Occupational stress is that which derives specifically from conditions in the work place. These may either cause stress initially or aggravate the stress already present from other sources. In today’s typical workplace, stress is seen as becoming increasingly more common. People appear to be working longer hours, taking on higher level of responsibilities and exerting themselves even more strenuously to meet rising expectations about occupational performance. (Rajesh, 2010)
1.5.1 What is Occupational Stress?

Some definitions of occupational/job/work/role stress are as under.

- Role stress means anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual (Kahn and Quinn, 1970).
- Beehr and Newman (1978) has defined job stress as a condition arising from interaction of people and their jobs and is characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.
- Okebukola and Jegede (1989), defined occupational stress as “a condition of mental and physical exertion brought about as a result of harassing events or dissatisfying elements or general features of the working environment.”
- Kagan et al. (1995) observes occupational stress as the emotional, mental and behavioral reaction. Vulnerability caused by elements in job environment that are in large part out of the awareness of the worker.
- According to a discussion document presented by United Kingdom Health and Safety Commission, London, (1999), “Stress is the reaction people have to, excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.
- NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) (1999) defined Occupational stress 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.
- Occupational stress describes physical, mental and emotional wear and tear brought about by incongruence between the requirement of the job and the capabilities, resources and needs of the employee to cope with job demands (Akinboye et al, 2002).
- Occupational stress is any discomfort which is felt and perceived at a personal level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed a person’s coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately (Malta, 2004).
- Occupational stress can be defined as a disruption of the emotional stability of the individual that induces a state of disorganization in personality and behaviour (Nwadiani, 2006).
WHO (World Health Organization) (2011) described work-related stress as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

1.5.2 Levels of Occupational Stress:

Considering its intensity, stress can be classified into three levels. When stress occurs due to occupation, it can be considered as occupational stress. The levels of stress are as below.

- **Moderate:**
  Moderate level of occupational stress motivates person towards better performance. Occupational Stress has positive impact on person’s job performance and health at this level. As stress increases up to certain manageable limit, it results into increased job performance.

- **High or Excessive:**
  High stress adversely affects the person’s job performance and health. This is a level of occupational stress at which a person feels more stress than the moderate level of occupational stress of his/her concern. This much occupational stress causes ill impact as at this level of occupational stress, person finds lots of short or long term discomfort.

- **Low:**
  This is a level of occupational stress at which a person feels less stress than the moderate level of occupational stress of his/her concern. This condition develops the indifference and carefree behavior in a person. People with lower level of stress generally don’t perform as well as expected. (D. R. Patel, 2009-2010)

1.6 Causes of Occupational Stress:

There are some stressors which are responsible for the excessive level of occupational stress. A stressor may be defined as any demand made by the internal or external environment that upsets a person’s balance and for which restoration is needed” (Herbert, 1997; Larson, 2004) Job stressors may refer to any characteristic of the workplace that
poses a threat to the individual (Bridger et al., 2007) (Ahlam B. El Shikieri, 2012).

Pareek (1981) on the basis of theoretical speculations and statistical analyses has identified following situations related to role stress.

- **Inter-Role Distance:**
  Individual occupies more than one role at a time. His occupational role may come into conflict with family or social roles. These conflicts among different roles represent.

- **Role Stagnation:**
  This kind of stress is the result of gap between demands outgrow of previous role to occupy new roles effectively. With advance of an individual his role also grows and changes. With this change in role, the need for taking his new role becomes crucial. This is the problem of role growth. This becomes an acute problem especially when an individual enters new roles after occupying a role for a long period.

- **Role- Overload:**
  When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant members in his role set, he experienced role over load. There are two aspects of this stress; quantitative and qualitative. The former refers to having ‘Too much to do’ while later refers to ‘Too difficult to do’.

- **Role-Isolation:**
  This situation of role stress arises from psychological distance between the occupant’s role and other roles in the same role set. The main criteria of role isolation are frequency of interaction with other roles on the role set.

- **Personal Inadequacy:**
  Role stress also arises when the role occupant feels that he does not have the necessary skills and training for effectively performing the function accepted from his role.

- **Self-Role Distance:**
  The role stress also occurs when there is incongruence between personal attributes of an employee and the requirement of his job role.
• **Role Ambiguity:**
  Role ambiguity arises when the individual is not clear about various expectations people have from his role.

• **Resource Inadequacy:**
  This type of role stress is evident when the role occupant feels that he is not provided with adequate resource for smoothly performing the functions expected from his role.

• **Role Erosion:**
  This type of role stress is the function of the role occupant’s feeling that some functions which should properly be the part of his role are transferred to or being performed by some other.

• **Role Expectation Conflict:**
  This type of stress is arises when two or more members of one’s role set impose opposing expectations on the role occupant.(Srivastava, 1999)
Some typical sources of stress in organization are as under.

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<tr>
<th>Source of Stress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downsizing</td>
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<td>Strict rules and regulations</td>
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<td>Too much Centralization and formalization</td>
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<td>Autocratic leadership style</td>
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<td>Use of appraisals for punishment</td>
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<td>Crowded work area</td>
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<td>Excessive noise at work place</td>
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<td>Excessive heat at work place</td>
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<td>Excessive cold work place</td>
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<td>Pollution at work place</td>
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<td>Strong odour at work place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsafe condition at work place</td>
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<td>Poor lighting and ventilation work place</td>
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*(P. Subba Rao, 2012)*
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job related travel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Long and/or Irregular hours</td>
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<td>Too little work- or too much work</td>
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<td>Repetitive work</td>
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<td>Job insecurity</td>
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<td>Incompatible Managers</td>
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<td>Low pay</td>
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<td>Jobs with heavy emotional demands</td>
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<td>Harassment at work place</td>
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<td>Discrimination at work place</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack of employee participation</td>
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<td>Working alone</td>
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*(H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)*
Lack of personal control

Differences between organization’s and employee’s values

Poor quality of supervision

Work overload

Time pressures

Inadequate authority to match responsibilities

Role conflict and role ambiguity

Change of any type especially when it is major and unusual

(Newstrom, 2006)

As per researcher’s opinion, rotational shift work and unhealthy interpersonal relations are also sources of stress in organization.

The sources of stress in organization may differ from organization to organization as the fields of organisations are different and resultantly the stressors are also different. One factor which is associated as a stressor in one organization may not found in other.

1.7 SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:

One can be aware whether he/she is having excessive level of stress or not by observing some symptoms. Various symptoms of stress are as under.
### 1.7.1 Physical Symptoms:

Physical symptoms refers to some signs observing which one can predict about mental stress. Some of the Physical symptoms are as under.

- Headaches
- Colds
- Weight change
- Appetite changes
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Teeth grinding
- Indigestion
  
  *(K. Aswathappa, 2012)*

- Burning sensation in chest
  
  *(Rani, 2011)*

Stress affects human’s physiology. If the above such physical symptoms of stress are seen then one should immediately try to get one’s level of stress managed.

### 1.7.2 Emotional symptoms:

Not only physiology but person’s psychology also gets affected by Stress. Some emotional signs reveal stress. Some such emotional signs are as under.
| ✓ Less interest in hobbies, familiar fun activities |
| ✓ Upset by the unexpected |
| ✓ Sudden shifts in mood |
| ✓ Frequent and/or recurring nightmares |
| ✓ Vague feelings or uneasiness, restlessness |
| ✓ Feelings of being swamped, overwhelmed |
| ✓ Feelings of anger, resentment |
| ✓ Intolerance, irritability with others |
| ✓ Frustration |
| ✓ Increased fear of failure |
| ✓ Feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, hopelessness |
| ✓ Changed interest in sex, either more or less |
| ✓ Apathy, dissatisfaction |
| ✓ Desire to cry |
| ✓ Reduced confidence |
| ✓ Fear that everyone except you is doing fine |
| ✓ Worry that you are asking for too much help or too much time from others |
| ✓ Frustration |
It is natural with many people that they face unusual emotional status while under stressful situation. People can even know such changes in their emotional world by introspection. Sometime we can assume about a person’s stressful status of mind by noticing such emotional signs.

1.7.3 Behavioral Symptoms:

A person under stress may behave in some particular manners. The behavioral symptoms may include change in diet, sleep, usage of alcohol, habits etc.... Some such behavioral symptoms are as under.

- Eating too much or too less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Loss of temper: yelling, throwing, and kicking
- Increased nervous habit, such as nail biting or hair twisting
- Increased use of alcohol, drugs, coffee, tobacco
- Change in general activity level
- Increased recklessness, risk-taking
- Isolating self from others

| ✓ Boredom |
| ✓ Forgetfulness |
| ✓ Stuck in past |

(K. Aswathappa, 2012)
* Bossiness or inflexibility with others

* Grinding teeth

* Stuttering

* Sudden outbursts of crying, Laughing, or anger

* Slumped posture-

* Change in sexual activity, either more or less 

(K. Aswathappa, 2012)

♦ Deliberate belatedness,

♦ Increased absenteeism and slowness

♦ Tendency to direct attention to unimportant things

♦ Indecisiveness

♦ Becoming illogical

♦ Mechanical reading or doing same thing

♦ Reduced zest

♦ Loss of interest and initiative

♦ lack of interest in caring and sharing

♦ becoming more and more undisciplined

(Rani, 2011)
Under stressful situation, person may demonstrate some unusual behaviour. Sometime we can assume about a person’s stressful status of mind by noticing such behavioural signs. If person gets such unusual behavior caused by stress then he or she should cure it.

### 1.7.4 Intellectual Symptoms:

Under stressful situation, person’s intellectual may also get affected. Intellectual Symptoms may refer to the problems related to thought process, concentration, judgement, understanding, memory, decision making etc…. Some intellectual symptoms are as under.

| △ Having difficulty remembering recent information or details of recent situations |
| △ Less able to make decisions |
| △ Difficulty in concentration |
| △ Attention span shortens |
| △ Continually thinking particular thoughts |
| △ Misunderstanding what others tell you |
| △ Increasingly poor judgment |
| △ Thoughts of escaping, running away |
| △ Racing thoughts |
| △ Unable to slow down thought process |
| △ Loss of objectivity |

(K. Aswathappa, 2012)
A person who is affected by excessive level of stress may face the problems as mentioned above and resultantly person finds it very difficult to cope-up with daily activities. If someone finds self under such situation, he or she should try to overcome this situation so that he or she can cope-up with the daily activities smoothly.

1.7.5 Some other noticeable sudden changes as symptoms:
Some sudden changes may happen with person under stressful situation. Some such sudden changes are as under.

| → Careless person working hard |
| → Miser individual spending money generously |
| → Liberal person behaving stingy |
| → Extravert social person preferring seclusion |
| → Working conditionally |
| → Behaving dishonestly |
| → Deceiving unethically |
| → Person otherwise voluntarily accept responsibilities now shunning away from duties. (Rani, 2011) |

Symptom if exists in any case is very important to recognize to get ourselves alert to not to do something or to do something irrespective to particular matter. After knowing such symptoms, one should try to get back to the normal situation.

1.8 IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:
Workplace stress can have a wide-ranging and negative impact on the well-being of the individual and his or her day-to-day functioning. This is observable at a physical level (e.g. exhaustion, headaches, high blood pressure), a psychological level (e.g. depression,
anxiety, low self-esteem), a cognitive level (e.g. absent-mindedness, failure of attention and memory), and a behavioural level (e.g. absenteeism, substance abuse, aggressive behaviour). Occupational stress is now considered to be amongst the top five work related health problems in the USA (Blix, Cruise, Mitchell & Blix, 1994). In the UK, a recent survey of workplace health and safety representatives by the Trades Union Congress (TUC, 1996) has named overwork and stress the primary workplace hazard. (Kinman, 1998)

The moderate level of occupational stress is not harmful to human’s health and it affects job performance positively. The excessive level of occupational stress is harmful to human’s health and it also affects job performance negatively. Some bad impacts of excessive level of occupational stress are as under.

### 1.8.1 Impact on Individual’s Physiology:

In the beginning level of occupational stress, person encounters with some little bit physiological discomfort or hardness which is normally not harmful as it remains for very short time only but if the level of occupational stress goes beyond certain limit and remains for a long time then it may harm human health. Some impacts of occupational stress on individual’s physiology are as under.

<table>
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<th>Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Digestive disorder and ulcer</td>
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<td>Changes in metabolism</td>
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<td>Insomnia</td>
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<td>Poor immunity</td>
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<td>Dry mouth</td>
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</table>
- Eyes with Bloodshot and puffy eyes
- Heart diseases
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Lung disease

(P. Subba Rao, 2012)

- Hair loss or early graying of hair
- Breathing problems
- Disturbed sleep
- Problem related to blood pressure
- Muscle tension and severe muscle pain
- Constant headache
- Feeling tired constantly

(H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)

As per the researcher’s opinion, ‘Backache’ is also one of the physiological problems which may be caused due to occupational stress. As shown above, the impact of occupational stress on individual’s physiology includes minor problems like headache, muscle tension etc. and the severe problems like cancer, heart diseases, lung diseases etc.….
1.8.2 Impact on Individual’s Psychology:

Occupational stress with excessive level may leave bad impact on individual’s psychology. Some of the impact of occupational stress on individual’s psychology are as under.

- Difficulty in remembering
- Sadness
- Loss of confidence
- Lack of self-worth
- Uncertain mindset
- Burnout
- Depression
- Becoming cynical towards others

(P. Subba Rao, 2012)

* Poor concentration
* Seeing only negative side of things
* An urge to get away (isolate) from everyone/everything

(H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)

As shown above, the impact of occupational stress on individual’s psychology may cause various problems related to concentration, memory etc…. 
### 1.8.3 Impact on Individual’s Behavior:

Excessive level of occupation stress not only impacts individual’s physiology and psychology but also impacts individual’s behaviour. Some impacts of occupational stress on individual’s behaviour are as under.

- Over eating or under eating
- Absenteeism at work
- Change of job
- Rude behavior
- Sharp increase in consumption of alcohol/tobacco/drugs
- Violent behavior

(P. Subba Rao, 2012)

- Sudden and unwanted anger
- Getting irritated for the small reasons
- Overreacting to any situation
- Sleeping too much or too little

(H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)

Excessive level of occupation stress may lead to the problems related to person’s day-to-day behaviour associated to sleep, diet, reacting to situation, interaction with others etc....
1.8.4 Impact on Organization:

In case, if employees are facing excessive level of occupation stress, then it may results into the following problems.

→ Organization may face a problem of poor decision by stressed employees

→ Job turnover may go up

→ Disturbance in operations due to absenteeism

→ Poor performance from employees

(P. Subba Rao, 2012)

Employees suffering from the excessive level of occupation stress may remain absent unusually, they sometime cannot pay proper attention to the task assigned to them and the organization may face difficulty as sometime poor decisionis taken by the employeeencountering excessive level of occupation stress.

1.8.5 Impact on Job Performance:

Generally, productivity is considered to be at a peak with moderate level of stress. Performance is (Chandan, 2005)poor at low level of stress as well as at high level of stress. However, the validity of the clear-cut relationship is being questioned and some behaviour scientists believe that performance actually decreases when stress increases from low levels to moderate levels, even though the rate of decrease in performance is less than the rate of decrease when stress increases from the moderate to high levels.(Chandan, 2005)
Following is the figure which shows the relationship between stress and performance.

![Inverted 'U' Shape Diagram]

Figure: 1.1:
Showing the relationship between the level of occupational stress and performance

(Source: Researcher’s work)

As shown in the above figure, the optimum job performance occurs at moderate level of occupational stress whereas the low and excessive level of occupational stress causes the lower performance.

1.9 STRATEGIES TO MANAGE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:

It is very helpful to resort various stress management techniques to get rid of the excessive level of stress. The stress relieving techniques can be categorized into two categories as under.
1.9.1 Individual Techniques:
A person can try to get rid of excessive level of occupational stress through following some techniques which can be implemented by his or her own choice and at his or her convenience. Some individual techniques to get relieved from excessive level of occupational stress are as under.

- **Time management:**
  One has to manage time properly. People have many tasks at workplace, these tasks are supposed to be completed in particular time frame. If people be punctual about time then they can be safe from hastiness and resultantley they can keep themselves safe from the excess level of occupational stress. One has to devide the available time wisely to cope-up with the role smoothly. One of the important causes of the stress is the shortage of time available for the completion of a job. Such stress can be managed through an appropriate time management by a person.

  One should make a list of a day’s activities to give priority to each activity considering their importance and urgency and then should prepare a schedule in terms of time allocation for each activity. Where the efficiency level of a person is higher, e.g. day’s beginning or a time immediately after rest-pause, important activities should be performed in an intensive manner.

- **Physical exercises:**
  Physical exercises are resulting into the change of a work and generally change of work is rest to the mind. Generally following exercises are properly used to relieve the stress. Jogging, swimming, cycling, various type of other physical exercises with the use of instruments.

- **Meditation:**
  Under this method a person is freed from his routine work and develops a mental concentration in something. Meditation relieves a person from a physical fatigue
and mental tension. The popular form of the meditation is TM (Transcendental Meditation). The TM carried out daily for 15 to 20 minutes relieves a person from the stress. Generally TM is carried out as under: peaceful surrounding, physical state of body conducive to meditation, frequent occurrence of a single ‘mantra’, positive attitude of a person.

- **Cognitive therapy:**
  Under this technique, with the help of the qualified clinical psychologist, various counselling sessions are arranged. The clinical psychologist studies the behavior of a person exposed to the stress condition and according counsel him appropriately. He observes a behaviour of a person during frequent session and changes the treatment accordingly. Sometimes physical exercises are also linked to the psychological counselling.

- **Networking:**
  Generally the informal grouping of a person take place based on some common interests, ideology, values, approach towards life etc….. The stress condition of a person can be managed though putting a person in a group of his likings. Generally the informal organization should be studies for forming the networking of such persons. (D. R. Patel, 2009-2010)

- **Practicing deep breathing:**
  Our body cannot maintain the same level of energy without that extra oxygen. Therefore, it is necessary to breathe deeply to get extra oxygen. This releases considerable amount of stress.

- **Delegating responsibility:**
  Management is all about getting things done by others. One should learn the art of delegation of responsibilities to others. If the task is properly distributed to the capable person in the organisation, the considerable amount of stress can be reduced.

- **Getting enough breaks:**
  Working continuously, without break causes monotony, boredom and stress. Therefore, taking break in between helps us to relax, break monotony and reduce
stress. One should get away from the desk and move out for few minutes and resume work.

**Getting enough sleep:**
Stress causes due to lack of sleep also. One should take enough sleep in order to stay fresh and fit to work the next day. Taking proper sleep increases energy level and ability to concentrate.

**Spending more time with optimistic people:**
It is necessary to have a company of people with positive attitude. Negative people will create negative thoughts, leading to a stressful situation. One should also think positively to gain positive energies. Business is not always smooth. It may face ups and down. Keeping our mind calm and cool is essential during such situations. To be cool and calm, it requires that one should practice positive attitude.

**Practicing effective communication:**
Communication is essential for preventing tensions. One should communicate in the language of the receiver. He should be good in both verbal and non-verbal communication. He should also pay attention to co-workers’ gestures, tone of voice and posture.

**Developing good working relationships:**
Trust, respect, understanding and compassion are necessary in any relationship. Co-workers have to function as a team and reach a common goal but they often focus all their attention on their tasks and very little on how they treat each other. Good work relationship will relieve stress. One should spend little time with co-workers to improve interpersonal relationship.

**Doing exercise regularly:**
Aerobic exercise, such as walking and swimming, produces brain chemicals that uplift your mood and mental well-being. Exercise also improves sleep and gives you time to think and focus on other things.
• **Eating healthy foods:**
  One should have proper food at specified intervals. He should never skip meals. It is necessary to take time out for lunch no matter how busy he is. (H. R. Appannaiah, 2010)

1.9.2 Organizational Techniques:

An employer should take actions to keep his/her employees free from excessive level of occupational stress. Following are some organizational techniques to get employees relieved from excessive level of occupational stress. The organizational techniques strive to relieve the stress caused by other organizational or environmental factors. Such important organizational techniques are briefly explained as under.

• **Appropriate selection and placement:**
  Generally people with lower qualification and lack of experience are not able to generate confidence in the job performance. The selection and placement of such persons ultimately results into stress. They prove either unfit or misfit to a job. Sufficient care should be taken in selection, placement of a person. In case of need sufficient back-up training is to be provided.

• **Clarity of goals:**
  Sometimes people perform the duties without understanding that what they are supposed to do. Such situation is created due to perceptual differences or lack of clear-cut communication. Such people do not fulfill the expectation of management even if they do hard work, their work is not appreciated, on the contrary, they are fired and scolded by the management. Such persons face a typical stress condition. A strategic way to develop clarity about goals and targets is to allow participating decision-making supported by interactive discussions or interactive communications.

• **Clarity of roles:**
  The organisational structure and the resultant job assignments sometimes results into gaps and overlaps. Gaps refers to a border line activity which is not clearly
assigned to any other department, while overlaps refers to a situation wherein a same task is assigned to two departments, under such a situation, a stress condition is created among the people working in such departments. Such situation can be eliminated through classifying various jobs into various departments and in linkage to that, proper allocation of roles within the department.

- **Appropriate transfer:**
  Sometimes a person placed on a particular job proves either a misfit or unfit. They do not develop self-confidence in job performance. Such persons should be transferred to an appropriate position where they are best suited and fitted. For such persons, appropriate training needs be identified and due training should be provided before placing on a transferred job.

- **Physical fitness program:**
  Where a job performance needs either the physical characteristics like lifting a weight or moving the parts, then a physically deficient worker faces a stress condition. Similarly where a job performance involves a man-machine integration, then physical characteristics of a person should be adjusted to a machine. The stress condition caused by such factors can be eliminated through organizing physical fitness program at regular time intervals.

- **Creation of supportive organizational climate:**
  Sometimes a stress condition results into organisational conflicts. Such situation arise due to misunderstanding, lack of goal clarity, lack of role clarity, common resources shared by many persons. Under such a situation, people find fault with others in case of failures. Such failures are avoidable and can be managed through supportive organisational climate. Instead of dictatorial leadership of firing and penalty, democratic leadership of help and support should be provided. Such climate will relieve the people from the stress through coordinated and co-operative attitude among the people.

- **Job or task enrichment:**
  Job or task enrichment refers to more authority, freedom and privileges. Where employees are not given sufficient authority in relation to the expected job
performance, they are exposed to an indecisive state which result into stress. Appropriate job enrichment not only eliminates the stress but it also fosters the innovativeness and creativity and resultantly the job satisfaction.

**Provision of career path and personal counseling:**

Growth is incidental to the living system. Human beings being a living resource possess a strong inclination for growth and development. The management should chart out proper organisational ladder and an internal promotion policy. It should also offer the opportunities for training and development. Proper career counseling should also be provided to the career conscious and motivated people. Such situation eliminates and anticipated stress caused by the darkness in the career path. (D. R. Patel, 2009-2010)