CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSIONS

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS
CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Stress is an inherent and inescapable part of modern society all over the globe. Stress can wreak havoc on both your body and your mind, contributing to everything from irritability, heartburn, and tension headaches to chronic depressions, heart disease and possibly even cancer. While you can’t eliminate all stress, you can get rid some of it and you can certainly learn to better control your physical, mental and emotional response to the rest.

What makes this factor particularly dangerous is that we generally accept stress as an integral part of our professional life and do not even think of taking any steps to minimize or eliminate it. Everybody feels that he is too strong and capable to handle the stress perfectly well and nothing physical or mental damage can happen to him.

There are certain demographic and psychographic factors and other attributes which affect the stress level of an individual. Every individual is an unique personality in himself. What is stressful to one person may be refreshing challenge to another depending upon individual’s perception of the situation as well as his own ability to cope with that situation. Even though a situation is perceived as demand or threat, it may still not mobilize a stress response if the individual thinks that he is able to cope with it adequately either on his own or with the help of external resources or support from other people in his life.

Personality or behavior traits are critical in the chain of events which lead from excessive stress to the development of specific stress-related disorders. When life events cluster and this level of stress score is high, these personality or life long behavior patterns are important determinates of how that stress is likely to manifest itself.
Personality of a person is the most dominating factor which influences the way he or she responds to all events and situations. In personality, we include values, attitudes and behavior patterns that make up the uniqueness of an individual and ultimately make him more or less vulnerable to stress.

The origin of much personal stress lies within our perception or our concept of self. Low self esteem can lead to number of stress inducting problems, inability to adapt, willingness to place excessively high demands on our self and lack of assertiveness. It can also lead to poor self expression, so that we harbor negative emotions such as anger, fear, aggression and anxiety rather than giving vent to them.

Those with high self esteem handle stress with ease since a high self concept and confidence in their abilities allows them to develop positive attitudes towards the management of stress and enables them to deal with stressful situation with calmness and clear thinking.

For the investigative purposes related to the research study, certain important demographic factors have been studied in detail. The demographic factors like age, gender, annual family income, working spouse, number of children studying in higher classes and nature & type of occupation have been deeply studied to understand the psyche of the respondents and varied effects on them under different situations.

To arrive at a meaningful conclusion, this comprehensive study has been conducted in public and private insurance sectors. The various demographic and other factors are accountable for wider dispersion in the responses.

The parameters on which the study has been conducted include the extra organizational factors, organizational and social factors. The political, economical and technological changes have direct bearing on the attitude of a person. Similarly various organizational factors which include job related factors like role or job ambiguities, tense
inter-personal relations at the work place equally affect the behavior of the person. Social factors include the responsibility towards family and society is important aspects affecting the state of mind of the person.

This review has highlighted the fact that costs associated with stress in the workplace and claims for psychological injury are spiraling. As a result, occupational stress and workplace health have become issues of great concern over the last decade, both internationally and nationally.

The purpose of this review was to synthesize the vast array of literature that exists on the topic of work stress and draw some relevant conclusions regarding (1) the factors that are believed to contribute to the occurrence of stress and/or a claim for psychological injury and (2) the management strategies that are currently adopted in response to occupational stress. The review also aimed to identify areas where further research was necessary and the methodological flaws in existing research that needed to be addressed in that research.

To fully understand the phenomenon of work stress, the review first documented the process that most commonly occurs for workers who experience work stress. In identifying this process, a plethora of contributory and exacerbatory factors were identified. These factors included individual vulnerabilities, job demands, the organisational climate, the person-environment match, the appraisal and perceptions of the worker, human resource management practices, the medicalisation and legalization of stress and some rehabilitation practices
Researchers remain unclear about the types of relationships that exist between stressors and outcomes. This information about processes may be more useful in informing interventions as it instructs researchers about ‘how’ variables change, rather than simply indicating ‘if’ they change.

The work stress process is a complicated, multi-dimensional, systemic and temporal process that is difficult to encapsulate in quantitative, empirical terms. Effort may be wasted in trying to simplify and fully understand such a complex phenomenon, rather than accepting its complexity and developing the most useful combination of management strategies.

While personality characteristics show the greatest propensity to predict stress outcomes, they offer little in the way of foci for intervention and management activities.

Probably the most significant conclusion to be drawn from this review is the fact that the entire area of work stress is plagued by methodological difficulties. Some of these difficulties are not easily addressed, particularly those in relation to the measurement and conceptualization of stress. Clearly, formed and standardized measures of stress in the workplace are required if research in this area is to advance. The Stress and Support Survey (Gutierrez, 1999) represents one attempt to develop an international tool. However, while this tool has been validated in many countries, it is necessary to conduct large studies on normative populations. With standardized population data, it is possible to benchmark organizations and plot their progress against international criteria. With such an instrument, researchers can begin to identify
healthy and unhealthy organizations, allowing the implementation of primary prevention.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS:

1. There are different hierarchical levels in the Life Insurance Companies. Among the different Hierarchical levels stress is found to be highest in case of Middle Level Marketing Executives. It is also quite high in case of Marketing Executives. Middle Level Marketing Executives are the backbone of this sector. They feel they have great pressure of work. So, they feel more stressed.

2. Individual factors causing stress in Middle Level Marketing Executives are lack of time for leisure activities, lack of time for family, work on weekends and holidays and working more than normal hours.

3. Organizational factors causing stress are found due to inadequacy of raw (promotional etc.) materials, late promotions, organizational and political pressure, noisy environment and work overload.

4. In the private sector insurance organizations, stress is the highest, whereas in the public sector also they feel stressed but not of the level of their private sector counterparts.

5. Working conditions also have an impact on the level of stress found in marketing executives. The respondents from the private insurance sector are of the view that they have to work under adverse conditions.

6. Stress is found to be lowest in finance & office organization. Unlike marketing department, the executives working in this organization do not have much
workload or deadlines to meet. It has no direct dealing with the consumers. The work is concentrated almost at one place. Executives working there seldom have to work on weekends and holidays. That’s why stress is lowest in some of the departments.

7. Stress is found to be highest in the marketing executives below the age of 40 years. Younger employees due to late promotions or due to under or over utilization of their capacity feel more stressed.

8. Of the many role stressors, the main stressor causing stress in marketing executives in insurance sector is inter-Role Distance. This shows that they have to perform more than one role and there may be conflict between these roles.

5.2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made to reduce the stress level among marketing executives in insurance sector:

1. There are different types of role stressors which have been found to be causing stress. Inter-Role Distance is the main stressor causing stress among marketing executives in insurance sector. It is experienced when an individual usually performs more than one role and there exists a conflict between these roles. The organizations should endeavour to give the specific roles to executives according to their job. Proper job specifications should be formed. There should not be contradictory demands from the role played by individuals/executives.

2. Another stressor causing stress is found to be Role Erosion. It is experienced when there arises a feeling that some important functions of a role occupant have been given to others. The organizations should assign a specific job to each employee explaining his rights and responsibilities clearly. There should be challenging
functions to be performed by marketing executives in insurance sector, so that they do not feel that their job functions are shared by others.

3. In the insurance companies another major stressor causing stress among executives is role Stagnation. It is experienced when an individual feels that his roles are not changing and growing. The companies should adopt suitable promotion policy to remove stagnation. The jobs of marketing executives in insurance sector should be challenging so that they become motivated to work. Promotions should be on time and there should be advancement in the roles performed by marketing executives in this sector. There should be quick promotions.

4. Other stressors causing stress mainly among marketing executives in insurance sector are Role Overload and Resource Inadequacy. They attend every kind of client complaint in any regard. They feel over burdened with work and lack of support required to perform their functions further adds to their problem. There should be a suitable arrangement to supply adequate assistance required by the marketing executives in insurance sector.

5. Another factor causing stress among marketing executives in insurance sector is Inadequacy of salary, which is mainly felt by middle level executives. Suitable policy of remuneration according to job demands should be adopted by these companies to manage stress.

6. It is also found that working more than normal hours and working on weekends and holidays are also causing stress among the executives. They do not get enough time for their families and leisure activities. The organizations should take immediate steps to reduce work overload or make extra payment for the time
spent by the employees after normal hours of duty, so that they do not feel stressed.

7. There are many other causes found to be causing stress which include political and organizational pressure, problem of recognition, and non-involvement in decision-making process. The companies should find ways to keep political and organizational pressure away from the employees. Excellent job performers among them should be awarded suitably. They should be more involved in the decision-making process.

There are different hierarchical levels in life insurance companies as in the various service sector organizations. The stress level also varies among the employees at various levels. Individual & organizational factors causing stress among the marketing executives in these type of companies are lack of time for leisure activities, lack of time for family, work on weekends and holidays, working more than normal hours, security of the job, too heavy workloads, role ambiguity, high expectations of the superiors, low personal growth, sometimes over qualification as related to present job, promotion policy of the organization, impossible standards/quotas, working in the change circumstances etc. It has been also found that the marketing executives working in private sector life insurance companies experience these problems more than the public sector counterparts. However, these problems do exist in public sector organizations also, now-a-days.

Working conditions also have an impact on the level of stress found among the marketing executives. The respondents recognize that they feel that they are stressed out from their behavior in general, e.g. overreact and get frustrated with people, more arguments, having less energy than usual etc. It has also been found that some of the respondents have suffered from number of diseases in the recent past like headache, high blood pressure, ulcer etc. The emergence of stress among the executives is also due to
shift work, inadequate break times, unsocial hours of working, unfair distribution of work, under utilization of skills etc. The general stress generators like poor relations with superiors and peers, discrimination/harassment etc. also exist in the list of the reasons/causes of occupational stress among the marketing executives in the life insurance companies.

The above discussed causes have a great impact on the efficiency of the marketing executives working in the life insurance companies. The causes no doubt have more impact on the private sector respondents. The various coping up mechanisms and techniques advocated by the respondents are that the organizations should provide an open environment and share in the decision making process when ever required. The adequate training to the employees should be a regular feature in the organization along with other stress-relievers like improving diet of employees, exercise, yoga, meditation etc. The persons should be equipped with the powers to utilize the financial and other resources of the organization up to a certain level freely whenever they are required. The employees should be given a free holiday package with their families, so that they can rejuvenate their energy level when they come back to the work. The working conditions and schedule must be fixed as accordance with the employees needs.

Hence we can conclude that there are a number of individual and organization factors causes stress among the marketing executives in the life insurance companies, which has a high level and huge impact on the employee efficiency. These factors are present in both types of the industry, but more in the private industry as there is a cut-throat competition in this sector. These stressors could be managed well through a proper and scheduled manner, which is again more possible in the private sector organizations than in the public sector organizations. There are a number of techniques available to
address this problem as listed above. But the use of these will depend upon the situation and the nature of the work and employee.

The implications for the future research could be that the studies can be conducted to analyze the effect of each coping up strategy/technique/method on the stress of an individual employee in the organization e.g. the role of yoga etc. to address the problem of stress among the modern employees. Various methods need to be developing to address the modern stress as it is different from the traditional stress factors and also varies from individual to individual. The technique to determine the level of the stress among the employees should be developed. The role of the modern social pattern, changed lifestyle, new working environment etc. in developing the stress among the employees can be researched further.