Executive Summary

With technological changes, escalating materialism and Pandora of opportunities opening up, the modern age can well be termed as the era of stress. Many among us have started breathing and thriving on stress, surprisingly without even being aware of it. Stress levels have been related to the traces of the hormone cortisol found in the strands of hair from bodies dug up from different archaeological sites, which suggests that historically stress in human beings was found thousands of years ago also.

Productive stress helps the human beings to function better and help improving efficiency but the non-productive stress easily has an adverse impact on efficiency, health and quality of life. What is worrying and disturbing is the way stress is increasing in our lives. It affects the emotional intelligence and therefore affects interpersonal dealings and also the productivity at the workplace. People differ in their interpersonal needs and skills and therefore it is interesting to discover a relationship between these needs and abilities and the stress that affects them at the workplace, which in the study has been termed as role stress.

The researchers have listed ten types of role stress, categorizing them into role space conflicts which are more individual oriented and the role set conflicts which are linked to the job or the function. The participants were chosen from three different types of pharmaceutical companies – Indian, Multinational and the Startups. To be able to find the role stresses that are common among all the three types of companies and also to discover the role stresses that are specific to each category of the companies was an insightful gain.

People differ in their ways to deal with the stress that they experience and therefore to study if there is something common as method to deal or cope with the stress, was also one of the important aspects of the study. The ‘approach’ is a more responsible behavior that includes initiative to bring in change within and also in the environment whereas ‘avoidance’ is more to ignore or deny the cause of stress. How an individual deals with stress in varying situations is quite intriguing though a little complex but a simpler classification of ‘approach’ and
‘avoidance’ has been used to identify the ‘constructive’ or ‘passive’ response among the three categories of the companies.

The study attempts to arrive at better understanding of what impact the work environment has over the role stress the individuals undergo and their style and ability to cope with stress. The study can be useful for the HR professionals specifically in pharmaceutical industry and other various industries in general, to bring forth changes in the work norms for the people working as sales executives and managers. The training and development departments can design programs and workshops to bring in modifications in emotional intelligence, behaviour and thereby bringing down stress levels and also sharing with professionals the methods to cope with stress to make life better and more productive.