CHAPTER – 7
RESEARCH DESIGN

For any good research the methodological part must be sound enough. It is only the methodology which gives due credence to the research and the researcher as well. In this work an effort was made to access and examine time orientation in detail. The time orientation of the senior executives of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA-one of the most promising public sector turned private sector organization. The main aim of the research work was to access each and every major organizational activity, with a focus to their time management. In this work the researcher tries to get some answers of the basic mental queries in this field like why is it that some people, no matter how many time management courses they undergo or how much help they receive, never seem to get any better at managing their time? And there are people who seem to take over more and more work and also get it done. Is there any relationship between competence and time management practices?

The research work was undertaken to access the factors and parameters which affect time orientation of the individuals for doing three parameters which affect the time orientation of the employees. The following three major factors are the prominent variables which effect the time orientation of the executive. On the basis of these factors following hypothesis are formed:

The three factors are:

(1) Managing the work
(2) Managing the people
(3) Balancing the life
1. MANAGING THE WORK

The attitude and nature of the individual about the work, whether he or she is organized, determines how time efficient he or she is. It depends upon three depending variables:-

1.1 Attitude of the employees

How an employee views, his or her work or life. Attitude of employee will have enormous impact on his or her ability to achieve desired goal. Organizational support available is crucial in managing his or her time effectively.

Attitude to manage the time is largely determined by one’s experience combined with his expectations and habits. In N.L.P. (Neuron Linguistic Programming) terms a mental map is created.

Adjustment Function: Attitudes often help people to adjust with their work environment. When employees are well treated, they are likely to develop a positive attitude towards management and the organization. When employees are berated and paid poorly, they are likely to develop a negative attitude towards the firm and its owners. These attitudes help employees to adjust with their environment and are a basis for future behavior. For example, if employees, who are well treated, are asked about management or the organization, they are likely to say good things. Just the reverse may be true for the berated are poorly paid employees.

Ego-defense Function: People often form and maintain certain attitudes to protect their self-image. For example, workers may feel threatened by the employment or advancement of minority or female workers in their organization. These threatened workers may develop prejudices against the new workers. They may develop an attitude that such newcomers are less qualified, and they might mistreat these workers. Such an
ego defensive attitude is formed and utilized in coping with a feeling of guilt or threat. Unless this feeling is eradicated, this kind of attitude will remain unchanged.

Ego defensive attitudes may be aroused by internal and external threats, by frustrating experiences, by sentiments which were earlier suppressed by the build-up of pressures previously repassed, and by suggestions or directives from an authoritarian source. Ego defensive attitudes are difficult to change because of the misdirected nature of the impulses associated with them. For example, an employee encounters a frustrating experience at work and feels offended as a consequence of the hurt to his or her ego. However, the employee displaces his or her wrath by directing it at a completely different target such as a member of the family. Though ego defensive attitudes are difficult to change, it is possible to remove the threats to the attitudes through therapeutic means in a supportive environment by giving individuals insight into the dysfunctional parts of their defense mechanism.

**Nature of the Employee:** Every employee has his nature of specialty about his work. His nature of past, slow working habits, view about his anxiousness, temperament and style of work has an enormous impact on his ability to be effective and positive thinking about managing the time.

**Task oriented:** Sometimes a person can abort for his priority job but task leading to the job is not properly designed. Such tasks cannot save time and the activities are not appreciated. However, it depends on an employee how effectively he is managing and implementing the system that supports in making best use of his time.

**Priorities:** Time orientation of any employee depends upon his own priorities about his job and working style, if any job comes within his priority
the employee may become more time effective: Tayler, D.A. says “if an employee has enough information to make right decision, the work may involve lesser time. Moreover good decision on clarity about the job role, responsibilities and key result areas, priorities drive people are more time efficient and can take sound decision as well”.

**Expressive Function:** This attitudinal function contains three main aspects:

(i) It helps in expression of the individual's central values and self-identity. Consumers express their values in the products they buy, the shops they patronize, and the life style they exhibit.

(ii) The expressive function also helps individuals to define their self-concept, and facilitates the adoption of sub-culture values considered important. For example, teenagers may dress and behave in a certain way in order to foster their status in a group.

(iii) The expressive function helps on individual to adopt and internalize the values of a group they have recently joined and as a consequence, they are better able to relate to the group. An individual who has joined an ecology group may now express values manifest in the purchase and use of a bicycle and the recycling of plastic.

**Knowledge Function:** People need to maintain a stable, organized, and meaningful structure of their world in order to prevent chaos. Attitudes provide the standards or frames of reference by which an individual judges objectives or events, and attitudes that provide consistency in our thinking are particularly relevant. The knowledge function of attitudes is observed more in consumer behaviour.
Attitudes predispose purchasers to prefer a particular brand of car, and they do not have to reexamine their values, habits, and lifestyle prior to the decision to 'buy. However, if existing attitudes are inadequate in resolving a particular issue, then the acquisition of new knowledge could bring about a change in attitude. Buyers are generally information-seekers; they have a need to know and this drives them to gain information that gives meaning to their social world. But sometimes, individuals take the easy option and rely on stereotypes to simplify reality.

1.2 Priorities

Time orientation of any employee depends upon his own priorities about the job or the life. If any job or activity comes within his own priority the employee may become more time effective.

According to D.A. Tylen “if the employee has enough information to make right decision, he can make it in lesser time. Moreover good decisions about priority areas are highly dependent on clarity about the job role, responsibilities and key result areas. Priorities driven people are more time efficient and can take sound decisions as well.”

1.3 Task

Sometimes a person can abort for his priority job but the task leading to that job is not properly designed. It will not as time saver activities. In other words how effective the employee is in managing and implementing the system that support in making best use of his time.

2. MANAGING PEOPLE

Managing the people and meeting them is time consuming. The things someone thinks that he is good and successful while dealing with the people might be perceived or viewed differently by others. The people's perception is
formed by the behaviour shown by the managers. To be effective at dealing with the people in a time effective manner one needs some basic skills.

2.1 Meetings

Meetings are the place to get together to exchange the views and discuss the problems resulting in saving of the time. Meetings are one of the most important segments in managing the people. For many individuals work involves attending meetings only but some other people wonder why we are attending meetings? Because they are sheer time wasters.

2.2 Interruptions

Interruptions are unavoidable part of life. It may be due to various reasons i.e., tension, temperament, interruption in work by others, wrong filing system, unnecessary number of desk trays, family involvements etc. If not handled effectively they can disrupt the best laid time management plans. Sometimes these interruptions are situation specific and sometimes individual specific.

3. BALANCING THE LIFE

Managing time is not only guided by prioritizing the task or running tight meetings. It is not just about the work someone needs to manage time outside the work. One should be sure to have sufficient time for his family, friends and for himself. The balance determined by him between life and work is crucial to manage the time effectively.

3.1 Managing the stress

Stress again is the part of life both at work and home. The ability to manage the stress at work and home is key to achieve a balanced life, and being more effective at work.
Stress factors arise in a state of mind lower than the normal. The normal state is a state of balance between wanting and becoming, and between desire and achievement. The mind that seeks more than it can get is lower than normal, hence subject to stress factors. There is another dimension of stress which can be understood from the medical point of view. According to this, when the state of mind is lowered on account of poor blood circulation, as often happens to those with low blood pressure, the consequential stress can be said to have arisen on account of the heart, the source of blood supply.

Stress occurs when the environment is so demanding that it threatens to exceed the person’s capabilities and resources for meeting it.

Stress is invariably related with tension as it is the anxiety of mind or the uneasiness caused due to continuous failure in achieving something. Today, we are all living under stress. Rather, it has become a part of our lives. If we are not in a state of stress or tension, we feel as if we are not living a normal life. Stress to a certain extent is healthy. It helps us to perform well. But when it goes beyond a particular limit, it affects our health, mind, body and also the people around us.

When stress helps us to perform in order to meet a deadline, that is, when a certain amount of anxiety is needed to do a job, it is a positive situation. This kind of stress is known as eustress. But, when stress crosses a limit, the person becomes too tense and is unable to perform. He then suffers from symptoms such as blackouts, nervous breakdowns and frustration, leading to distress.

Now it is clear in our mind that stress is a state of psychological or physiological imbalance resulting from a disparity between situational
demands. The relevant factor is an individual's ability and/or motivation to meet those demands.

### 3.2 Symptoms of Stress

Stress cannot be generalized with a single yardstick. A particular situation may cause anxiety and tension in a person leading to stress; but the same situation for another person may have no effect at all. Therefore, stress is alarming only when it affects the quality of life.

Stress can also be defined as a non-specific response of the body to any demand. In some respects, every demand made on the body is unique—heat, cold, joy, sorrow, drugs and hormones elicit highly specific responses. For instance, heat produces sweating, cold produces shivering; muscular exertion affects the muscles and the cardiovascular system. But all these have one thing in common—they increase the demand for the readjustment of the performance of adaptive functions, which establishes normalcy.

The non-specific adaptive response of the body to any agent or situation is always the same, regardless of a particular stimulus. What varies is the degree of the response, which in turn depends only on the intensity of the demand for adjustment. So, it is immaterial whether the stressors are present or absent.

Some people say that stress is like a fire, or more precisely embers—we can either control them and enjoy their glow or fan them into huge fires. Not knowing better, most of us let stress get out of control. As a matter of fact, stress can be seen as an anxiety of the mind, an uneasiness caused due to continuous failure in achieving something.
3.3 Response: The Real Meaning

It has been seen that stress is caused by a stimulus, physical or psychological, and it is up to the individual in what manner he responds to it. In this way, stress becomes an adaptive response of a person to a stimulus which places excessive psychological or physical demands on him.

As a writer one never feels satisfied unless one is convinced about the readers' understanding of what he has written. Therefore, an attempt has been made to repeat a concept till it matches the wavelength of the readers. To summarize, one can say that stress always relates to an imbalance between demands made on us from external sources and our capabilities to meet these demands. This imbalance can, and does, lead to physical, psychological, physiological and mental consequences which threaten our happiness on the one hand, and create conditions for physical diseases on the other.

3.3.1 Game between Expectation and Reality

Everyone experiences stress from time to time, which is perfectly normal but normal does not necessarily mean healthy, nor is it inevitable. Stress has always been present and will continue to be present, regardless of gender, age, social class, wealth, profession and the times in which we live. Stress is not necessarily harmful. It can be an asset as long as it is tolerable, as it creates healthy competition among individuals.

For the most part, however, stress leads to unpleasant consequences which cannot be avoided. That is why it is important that individuals manage stress and stressful situations adequately. If stress is identified with pressures, then the important task is to know how to react to these pressures.

Stress is a game of expectations versus reality. Whenever expectations exceed reality, we do not reach a balance and experience stress. For instance, in the case of work if we expect that it is going to be a challenging experience
but find that it is more often routine and boring, the situation gives rise to stress. In another case, if you expect that you will be able to utilize all your education, training and professional skills while performing a task and, much against this expectation, you observe that in reality all that you have learnt is not of practical use in your job or you are not being able to exploit your talents, then it becomes a cause for stress. Similarly, if you are in a senior position you expect that you will be able to utilize your abilities and intelligence while taking decisions, but if the people still senior to you do not allow you to take decisions in real terms, you feel stressed.

Having said that when it comes to stress two individuals cannot be alike, it is not surprising to accept that stressors do not always lead to stress. In fact, to understand the nature of stress we need to understand a stress cycle, commonly known as a *maladaptive stress situation*. Generally, a continued presence of stressors leads to an experience of stress, and this experience may have long-lasting behavioral, psychological, emotional and cognitive effects on the individual. If these effects are allowed to last long they become stressors for further stress experiences. As a result, the affected person remains constantly engaged in a position which is called *dysfunctional* or a *maladaptive cycle of stress*.

In such a situation, the person feels more and more distressed. The symptoms of distress are both short-term and long-term. The short-term symptoms include overreaction, excessive consumption of alcohol, high blood pressure, excessive anxiety, anger, and lack of concentration. The long-term effects are more dangerous. The symptoms for these are chronic alcoholism, heart diseases, mental disorders, loss of memory, sleeplessness, etc.

The most significant aspect of this *dysfunctional* or *maladaptive stress cycle* is that in some cases these short and long-term effects become stressors leading to stress experiences. The fear of blood pressure itself may lead to
high blood pressure or the thought of loss of sleep may become a matter of concern for sleeplessness.

Apart from the above symptoms is another situation, which is adaptive in nature. Environmental conditions are inevitable in everyone's life, though these are strong stressors. Some individuals can cope with them well or in an adaptive manner. This situation characterizes adaptive stress. The adaptive style of facing stressors speaks about people who respond to the same stressors in different ways. When faced with stressors these people may plan their schedule in a systematic manner. They may become more assertive by way of structuring the situation cognitively or they may go in for physical structuring. The positive aspect of the situation is that some of the people who face stress situations may find themselves successful in overcoming these stressors and in the long run may feel more confident, resistant to illnesses and even to facing future stressor.

3.3.2 Job Causes Worry

Now come the events relating to our work life. These are important when we deal with the causes of stress. When we study organisational stress, the first and foremost thing that comes to mind is the job. It becomes very easy for an individual to identify jobs vis-a-vis different stress levels. Look at the jobs of fire fighters, racing car drivers, astronauts, surgeons, football players, city police officers and air-traffic controllers. All of them are in high-stress jobs. A person believes that in case he chooses any of these jobs, he would suffer stress. Again, it would not be correct to generalize because some people may not feel any stress while performing these jobs.

There are other jobs which are normally categorized as low-stress jobs like that of a librarian, pharmacist, medical record technician, musical instrument repairer and typist. When we discuss these jobs under the
categories of high stress and low stress, we must understand that there is a basis for this categorization. High-stress jobs involve stressors in the form of time pressures, difficulty in meeting productivity standards, physical risks, etc. Low-stress jobs, on the contrary, have stressors in the form of technical problems such as equipment breakdown, inadequate supervision, low salary and the like.

3.3.3 Job Analysis

The most important cause of stress related to one's work life deals with the job profile of a person. It is a misnomer that managers in white-collar jobs are more exposed to stress as compared to workers engaged in blue-collar jobs. Still, there is a belief that top executives experience more stress due to more responsibility. But this statement is not correct because the reason for their stress is that they do not know their responsibilities, their role and other factors.

The physical strain also becomes a cause for stress for a blue-collar employee but it is not long-lasting if it is not a daily affair; in which case it will attract more stressors for causing long-term stress.

To understand the concept of job stress it is necessary to discuss the organizational characteristics and processes which include organizational policies such as problems arising out of work overload and under load, role conflict, rotating work shifts and an ambiguous job description. Then come the problem areas of organizational structure which mainly comprise division of labour, excessive specialization, size of the organization, centralization, and a lack of participation in decision making. The organizational processes are also responsible for generating job-stress. Some of these factors are poor communication, conflicting goals, ineffective delegation, etc.).
The above mention factors—managing the work, managing the people and balancing the life—are the three prominent variables which affect the time orientation of the executives or the individual on the basis of these three factors, various sets of hypothesis are formed, research design is developed, various set of questionnaire are designed and ultimately the conclusion are drawn.

4. HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

The following sets of hypotheses were framed to study the research:

\textbf{Ho1:} Attitude of an executive towards time management, within stipulated time schedule is key factor of managing the work.

\textbf{Ho2:} Sating of the priorities, do’s & don’ts and following the plan of work may be the other component of work management preferred by executives.

\textbf{Ho3:} It is assumed that the executives may prefer to following standard techniques in handling the tasks.

\textbf{Ho4:} Dealing with different groups of people may not be taken as the specified function of the executives.

\textbf{Ho5:} Organizing, conducting and participating in the meetings may not be taken as a useful task with the job profile of the executives.

\textbf{Ho6:} Interruption during work is never accepted by the executives.

\textbf{Ho7:} It is always difficult to maintain the balance in between professional and personal life.

\textbf{Ho8:} Most often the executives of an organization do not cope-up with the work stress.
5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE & SAMPLE

As the research objective implies that present study is essentially an exploratory research to explore the impact of activities over the time orientation of the employees. Developing an appropriate research design had been the first step towards solving the research

**Problem:** The present study has used the cross section design as a frame of references, for collection of primary data from the senior and the middle level executives of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA.

The available research already carried out on topic, has been reviewed extensively to develop a clear suitable and relevant questionnaire set, discussion with several authors, organizational behavioral scientist and psychologist has been made and personal contacts were utilized for finalizing the questionnaire.

Professional in the field of consulting business were also interacted to get an incite of the field of research. This helped greatly in finalizing the contents of questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered personally to thirty executives for the pilot study and was coded for analysis of result.

Finalizing contents of the questionnaire post pilot study had been the next crucial step. Correction and revision were incorporated in the questionnaire used for the pilot study on the basis of suggestions made by the respondents and limitations highlighted by the preliminary testing of the instrument. The final questionnaire included “Debra Allock Tyler” (2004-Alchemy, London) index of measuring time management practices of the senior executives. The final questionnaire was administered to 100 executives working at the office of the DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA.
It is perceived that the employee of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA especially after disinvestment may have enjoyed better conditions of work and hence time was perceived to be managed in a better way. The lessons drawn from these studies can be applied to other similar industry also.

6. OBJECTIVES AND THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to explore the time orientation among the executives of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA, particularly the senior and the middle level and find out the impact of the identified factors (managing the work, managing the people, balancing the life)in explaining the time orientation of the employees since time orientation of the individual is the result of the interplay of situational and personal variables. It has also been an objective of the present study to examine the significance of attitudes, priorities, task, family life and stress, all of which are the important factors affecting the time orientation of the individuals have been selected for this purpose in the study. The research problem for this purpose has been formulated as:-

1. The thought process of the employees very important in developing the time orientation of the activities?
2. How does the individual priority affect the time orientation of the employee?
3. How does the physical fitness affect the time orientation of the employee?
4. Do the working relationships with the boss affect the time orientation of the employee?
5. Does the attitude of the employee also affect time orientation?
The study is expected to create new possibility of learning more about the importance of time and analysis of the activities of the executives in the perspective of managing the time. Result of the study will also be relevant in comparing the levels of job and time orientation. The study also attempt to establish relationship between the job satisfaction and the time orientation of different activities.

7. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The success of any research depends upon the quality of the questionnaire. The quality of the question depends upon the factor that “it must measure all the things which it intends to measure “and secondly it must motivate the respondents to answer without fear, biases and prejudice. The questionnaire design for this purpose was developed keeping in view the three important factors which affect the time orientation of the executives viz. managing the work, managing the people and balancing the life for all these three factors the dependant variables were also identified in managing the work. Three dependant variables identified were attitudes, priorities and task. While the second factor managing the people was dependant upon three variables viz. people, meetings and interruptions. The third factor balancing the life had two depending variables viz., balance in life and stress. In all there were three factors and 8 dependent variables. Total 78 questions were developed. In the questionnaire 5 points measuring scale was developed. A general weakness observed in majority of the questionnaire is that the respondents generally tick the option having the highest score either too enhance the self image or due to the fear of the top management reaction. The beauty of this questionnaire is that while responding the respondent doesn’t know which option carries the weightage of 5 and which option carries the weightage of 0 or 1. The weightage of every question is mentioned in a key specially designed for the purpose. Secondly in all the questions all
the five options were not given. In some question three options are given in some questions four options are given and in some questions only two options are given. In those questions where only 2 or 3 options are given, the respondents don’t know the weightage & it is mention on the key only. For example in a question if there are only two options one option can carry 0 marks and another option can carry 5 or 3 marks.

In the first part (managing the work) total 100 questions were developed. In this part the question was further segmented into three assessments. First assessment was related to the attitudes of the employees (to access the employee attitude towards managing their time). In this assessment five question were asked.

Second assessment was related to the assessment of the individual priority level. Here 8 question were asked. Third assessment was most crucial assessment in which 21 questions were asked which are related to the execution of task. Because methods of doing the task affect the time orientation of the employees.

In the second part (managing the people) the question were developed in three different assessments. First assessment was related to people because the executives spend a considerable time in dealing with the problems of people. In this assessment 8 question were asked.

Meetings constitute very important segment of the overall time of the executives. In the second assessment 9 question were put forward.

Different types of interruptions work as time wasters for the executives. Seven different types of interruptions were identified and seven questions were asked in this assessment.
Third part (balancing the life) was related to access a healthy and self-determined balance between life and work. This is highly crucial to the ability of the employees to manage their time this part has two assessments.

Assessment one is related to balancing the life while assessment second is related to managing the stress.

8. UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE DESIGN

Out of the universe the totals work force of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA a sample of 100 executives, comprising of senior and middle level, were selected. The sampling was purposive and randomly, drawn from Kota only.

9. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical design plays a significant role in representing the collected data in a systematic way and making it easy to understand. By adopting an appropriate statistical design, the results can be presented in brief and precise language and thereby complicated problem can be studied in a very simple way. As the research design is considered to collect the data scientifically, so also the statistical design represents the methods of data analysis whereby inference is drawing and hypothesis testing becomes possible. Hence, in order to facilitate the interpretation of numerical data, an appropriate statistical design is to be adopted. In this thesis the following statistical strategy is applied to interpret the data:

9.1 Mean

The most popular measure for representing the entire data is the arithmetic mean of a set of observations by their number. Arithmetic mean (A.M.) can be either (i) Simple arithmetic mean or (ii) weighted arithmetic mean.
9.1.1 Calculation of Simple Arithmetic Mean

If we represent the individual values of the variable X by X1, X2,..., Xn (n = number of observations). We shall denote by X, (read as X bar) the A.M. of the variable X. Also the symbol- ΣX (read as summation x) denote the sum of X values, i.e.,

ΣX = X1 + X2 +...... + Xn. Then according to the definition

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9.2 Standard deviation (S.D.)

The standard deviation commonly denoted by the Greek letter ‘σ’ (Sigma), is the most widely used to measure of dispersion of a series. It is the square root of the second movement of dispersion and is always calculated froth the A.M. A.M. is chosen because the sum of the squares of deviations is the least. If the deviations are taken from the A.M., It is symbolically expressed as-

\[ \sigma = \sqrt{\frac{E}{\text{E}}} \]

10. LIMITATIONS

The study as in the case with other studies has been conducted under certain limitations. These include the general limitation applied to all organizational behavioral studies as well as sample limited to the executives of DSCL: SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, Kota office only. The study therefore suggested that in future research may be conducted on a larger sample including executives from the major factories located in the different parts of the country to make a comparative study. Although likewise a comparative study can also be undertaken about the time orientation of the executives before the disinvestment and after disinvestment of DSCL:
SHRIRAM FERTILIZER & CHEMICALS, KOTA. Lastly more research can be undertaken in future on the relevance of spirituality and meditation on the time management practices of the executives. Although every effort was made to draw and habits a real picture related to the problem but we cannot ignore the element of human bias in any research all together.