CHAPTER 3

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESES
Stress is inevitably involved, to some extent, in the execution of any job, but individuals differ in their perception or experience of its intensity. What is highly stressful to one may not be of that magnitude to another owing to varied factors like differences in organizational sector, job level, age, job attitudes, personality dispositions etc. Accordingly individuals differ in their stress coping styles. Organizations under the public, private and cooperative management show variance in their structure, administration policies and processes etc. Glaring differences in the employee participation and productivity of the three sectors speak of the effect managements. With job security not contingent upon their performance, employees in public sector may have a lenient attitude towards their job. Employment in public sector may thus be perceived as less stressful compared to the prevailing to job insecurity close supervision while on duty and insistence on productivity etc., in private and cooperative sectors.

Review of psychological literature shows that job involvement is one of the crucial factors associated with job satisfaction and experience of job stress. A person with high job involvement may experience high job satisfaction and low job stress, and its reverse may also be
true in some cases. Several studies emphasised the existence of positive relations among the three factors and some denied it. Individuals' perceptions of their, organizational climate to some extent influence their job attitudes and job behaviour. However, studies exploring these relationship are not many in the available literature. Age is found to be another factor that brings in differences in the perceptions and job behaviour of the young adults who are amidst various initial problems of familial and vocational adjustments. For the work centered, experienced and mature middle aged, work may not be highly stressful in contrary to that of an young incumbent. Similarly their coping reactions may also be different. Middle aged employees may be expected to show more appraisal and problem focused rather than emotion focused behaviour in their coping to stress. Several studies tried to relate age and job behaviour of the incumbents but not many studies attempted to relate age with coping styles to stress among incumbents in different job levels from different sectors.

Are there differences in the level of job involvement, job satisfaction, experience of job stress and coping styles of employees in different job levels? The documented evidence in psychological literature is inadequate to explain this especially as far as the Indian scenario is concerned.
Apart from one's level of job involvement and derived job satisfaction there is another factor, namely, the personality disposition of the individuals that plays a vital role in the experience of occupational stress and coping styles. It may be argued that individuals with internal orientation may perceive their job as less strenuous owing to the faith in their own capacities than those with external locus of control. On the other hand it may also be said that internals may experience more stress if the stressors embedded in the job situation are beyond their control. Under such conditions external orientation may have a buffering effect in saving the individuals from the grip of organizational stress as they are likely to seek shelter under the camouflage of fate, luck, destiny or any other external agent and thus insulate themselves from stressors. In the Indian subcontinent where Hindu religious belief plays a dominant role in the lives of the individuals, externality has its strong roots. In this context a study of job involvement, job satisfaction, occupational stress and coping styles of the young and middle aged samples of an Indian population would be interesting.

Against this backdrop, to fill the lacunae in the existing literature pertaining to the Indian scenario a modest attempt was made to study the occupational stress and coping styles in relation to job involvement, job satisfaction, organizational climate and locus of control.
among public, private and cooperative sector executives, supervisors and workers in two age groups, i.e., 20-39 and 40-59 years. Thus, the present investigation was planned in these lines as a study of correlates of occupational stress and coping styles among employees in different sectors.

Objectives of the Present Study:

1. To examine whether there are any differences in the extent of occupational stress experienced and coping behaviour manifested by the young and the middle aged incumbents in different job levels from the three sectors viz., public, private and cooperative.

2. To find out whether differences in incumbents, job involvement, job satisfaction, perceptions of organizational climate and locus of control are related to their experience of occupational stress.

3. To study whether coping styles of the incumbents are related to differences in their organizational sectors, job levels, age, job involvement, job satisfaction, occupational stress, perceptions of organizational climate and locus of control.

In addition to the above, though it does not form part of the major objectives of the thesis, in view of the intercorrelations reported in the related literature among
the variables of the study, it was felt useful to formulate the following objective.

4. To examine whether there are any significant differences in the level of job involvement, job satisfaction and perceptions of organizational climate of the young and the middle aged employees in different job levels from the three sectors.

To realize the objectives of the study the following hypotheses were formulated.

Organizations under different managements, viz., public, private and cooperative, differ in several respects like administration policies and processes etc., resulting in differential job behaviour among the incumbents. Research studies identifying the influence of sector on job involvement are meagre. Sporadic incidences of studies involving sector as one of the variables do not provide any conclusive evidence in this regard. Some studies contended that conditions in public sector employment contribute to extrinsic need satisfaction while those in private sector contribute to employees intrinsic need satisfaction. Therefore it may be anticipated that private and cooperative sector employees may show more job involvement than their counterparts in public sector. However, this assumption was not supported in the studies of Choudary (1988) and Kumar (1987). They found no significant differences between the
public and private sector employees in their job involvement. In view of such non-conclusive evidences regarding the effect of differences in organizational sectors on job involvement, it was selected for testing in the present study (Hypothesis la).

Organizational sector may be expected to exert its influence on employees job satisfaction also. Some studies in the available literature reported that public sector employees were experiencing more job satisfaction than their counterparts in private sectors (Bhushan and Jagadish, 1983; Bhushan and Sinha, 1987; Grupp et al, 1975; Gakhar and Suchdeva, 1987) while Srivastava (1985) reported higher job satisfaction among private sector employees. Inconsistencies seen in the results of the studies may be owing to different types of samples and tools used. However, non-availability of conclusive data specially regarding the public, private and cooperative sector employees job satisfaction in industrial settings prompted to test and verify the same in the present study (Hypothesis - 1b).

It may be anticipated that varied management policies and processes in different sectors would exert different amounts of stress among employees. Some studies available in the literature conducted by Ahamad (1985), and Chandraiiah (1993) on Indian samples showed no significant differences in this regard. However, in the absence of ample empirical
evidence in this aspect it was taken up for testing on the present sample of the study (Hypothesis - 1c).

Individuals manifest many kinds of behaviour in their efforts to cope with the strenuous conditions embedded in the job situation. The probability of success of each coping style in easing their stresses and strains determines its frequency of occurrence. As such it may be assumed that conditions in each organizational sector may reinforce and strengthen different coping styles among its employees. Supporting this assumption Dhillon and Geetha (1987), indicated that private sector managers employed extrapersonal type of coping more often than those in public sector. Lack of adequate conclusive evidence suggested empirical verification of the same in the present study (Hypothesis 1d).

In similar vein, incumbents' perceptions of their organizational climate could be expected to depend upon the prevailing administrative procedures and processes in their concerns. Therefore, employees in different sectors may perceive their organizational climates differently. Findings of Balgir (1990), Pratap and Srivastava, (1985), Mishra (1989) and Rajendran (1987) lend support to this assumption. However, non-availability of adequate documented evidence on sample similar to the present in this regard suggested empirical verification of the same in the present investigation (Hypothesis 1e).
The foregoing appraisal of the related studies available thus prompted to hypothesize for testing that:

Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences among individuals in different sectors in their:

a. Job involvement;
b. Job satisfaction;
c. Occupational stress;
d. Coping styles; and
e. Perceptions of Organizational climate.

Involvement in job need not be related to the incumbents' job level or cadre in the occupational hierarchy. Nevertheless, certain positions with their scope to satisfy several of the incumbents needs do influence their involvement in job or otherwise. Supporting this view Choudary (1988), Pathak and Pathak (1987), Sharma and Sharma (1978) found significant relation between the job level and job involvement. But Anantharaman and Begum (1982) and Singh (1987) reported contradictory results. In the light of non-conclusive evidence in the available literature variance in job involvement of employees in different job levels was selected for empirical investigation in the present study (Hypothesis 2a).

Review of related literature show ample evidence of increasing job satisfaction with increasing occupational
levels (Grupp et al. 1975; Rajendran, 1987; Singh and Srivastava (1975); Tandan and Dhawan, 1981; Weaver 1974). However, there were studies reporting results contradicting the above (Kavanagh and Halpern, 1977, Porwar, 1987; Starcevich, 1972; and others). In view of lack of clear evidence in this regard the relation between the two variables was set in the present investigation for empirical verification (Hypothesis 2b).

Each increment in job hierarchy might be associated proportionately with increased duties and responsibilities causing difference in the incumbents experiences of occupational stress. However, very few studies like Drory (1980) and Ratson (1986) in the available literature focussed their attention on this aspect. Therefore, expecting that executives, supervisors and workers would differ in their experience of occupational stress the same was hypothesized for testing with the present sample of the study (Hypothesis 2c).

Perhaps owing to differences in their educational qualifications, job specific experiences, etc., incumbents in different job levels might differ in their coping behaviour (Madhu and Preetam, 1988). But again lack of sufficient evidence to support this assumption in the available literature it was set for empirical testing in the present investigation (Hypothesis 2d).
In tune with the hypothesized experiences of varied levels of job satisfaction among individuals in different job levels (hypothesis 2b) it might further be anticipated that those in higher job levels, in view of their feasibility to gratify greater magnitude of their need hierarchy, might perceive their organizational climate more positively. Studies in the literature obtained contradictory findings in this regard. Some studies reported positive relation between job levels and perceptions of organizational climate (Churchill et al 1976 and others) while others like Rao (1972) and Srivastava (1987) obtained no significant relation between the variables. Thus in view of the inadequacy of conclusive evidence available it was set to verify the same empirically with the present sample (Hypothesis 2e).

In the light of foregoing assumptions regarding the job levels and other variables the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Individuals in different job levels differ significantly in their:

a. Job involvement;

b. Job satisfaction;

c. Occupational stress;

d. Coping styles; and

2. Type of organizational climate.
Many Indian and Western studies reviewed in psychological literature show that job involvement enhances with age (Aldag and Brief, 1975; Khandelwal and Preetam, 1980; Koch and Steers 1978; Rabinowitz and Goodale 1977). But McMahan (1977) and Mitchell, Baba and Epps (1975), reported no relationship between the variables. However, there were studies like Lefkowitz (1974), Taylor and Thompson (1976) reporting negative relationship between the two variables. In an attempt to clear the inconclusiveness as far as it was related to the present sample the two variables were selected for empirical examination (Hypothesis 3a).

Akin to job involvement, job satisfaction was mostly reported to be increasing with age (Altimus and Tersin, 1973, Lee and Wilbur, 1985; Tandan and Dhawan 1981, some studies reported no or negative relation between the two variables. In order to seek clear evidence regarding the effect of age on job satisfaction of the sample it was chosen for empirical study in the present investigation (Hypothesis 3b).

Gerontologists identified middle age as highly productive and satisfactory as far as the vocational life of individuals is concerned. It is the age at which majority of them would be free from their major responsibilities of family and able to stand firm and progress in their career.
As such, younger employees might be expected to experience job situation as more strenuous than middle aged. Several Western and Indian studies reported similar findings (Chandraiah, 1993; Pearlin and Lieberman, 1977; Reddy, 1990). However, in the present investigation it was sought to test empirically the relationship between the variables in the present Indian sample (Hypothesis 3c).

As individuals age, accumulation of experiences requires them to review and restructure or strengthen their unique coping styles to adverse job situations. Therefore, it might be expected that older employees would show more mature coping behaviour compared to the younger. Several studies in the literature (Gutmann, 1970; Hyerlee et al. 1984; Irion and Blanchand, 1987; Keyes et al. 1987; Pfeiffer, 1977; and Reddy, 1990) identified significant influence of age on coping behavior. However, there were also studies with the findings contradicting the above (Billings and Moos, 1981; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980). Therefore empirical testing of the above relation in the Indian context was also included in the present study (Hypothesis 3d).

Attempts to relate age and perceptions of organizational climate might appear to be far fetched. However, keeping in view several gerontological reports that age influences one's perception, attitudes and general outlook, it could be expected that with increasing maturity of
personality one would perceive organizational climate as highly congenial or otherwise, paying little attention to the intricacies involved in it. Very few studies in the available literature attempted to test this relationship (Ganesan, 1981; Payne and Mansfield, 1978). Paucity of adequate evidence in this regard thus suggested empirical verification of the relation in the present sample (Hypothesis 3e).

In the light of the foregoing assumptions the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals in different age groups differ significantly in their;

a. Job involvement;
b. Job satisfaction;
c. Occupational stress;
d. Coping styles; and
e. Perceptions of organizational climate.

A spate of studies, both Indian and Western, in the literature indicate the interrelationship between occupational stress and job involvement; and job satisfaction. High occupational stress is found to be related to low job involvement (Hammer and Tosi, 1974; Keller, 1975; Madhu and Harigopal, 1976) and low job satisfaction (Abdul Halim, 1982; Burke, 1976; Rizzo, House and Lirtzman, 1970; Srivastava and Parmar, 1977).
Contradicting the above it may be argued that a person may be highly involved in job and deriving high job satisfaction but he may be experiencing high occupational stress too. The work may be eliciting much of job involvement yet rewarding and yielding high satisfaction. Perhaps owing to these reasons several other studies reported positive Baltis 1978; Gannon and Hendrikson 1973; Porat 1979; or no relation of job involvement and or job satisfaction with occupational stress (Howell et al 1987; Bedeian and Armenakis 1981). Such contradictory results suggested to take up these aspects for empirical verification in the present study (Hypothesis 4a and 4b).

Individuals experience of job as stressful or otherwise influence their perceptions of organizational climate. Under the conditions of high stress they are more likely to perceive it negatively. Empirical evidence in these area is scanty in the available literature. Therefore it was felt important to test the relationship between the two variables empirically in the present study (Hypothesis 4c).

An external would hold external agents responsible for his present conditions whether pleasant or unpleasant while an internal would accept personal responsibility for initiating such activity. As such it would be expected that internals would experience less occupational stress compared to externals. Most of the research studies available in this area do support the assumption therefore it was set to
test empirically whether the same could be true with the present sample (Hypothesis 4d).

In view of the foregoing assumptions the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 4: Individuals' experience of occupational stress is positively related to their:
   a. Job involvement;
   b. Job satisfaction;
   c. Perceptions of their organizational climate; and
   d. Locus of control.

Individuals are unique in their coping behaviour. Reinforcement value of behavior strengthens each style of coping. A person with high job involvement and high job satisfaction may cope in a particular manner to the stressful job situation than those with low job involvement and low job satisfaction. Similarly individuals experiencing high stress may show different coping styles than others with low occupational stress.

If one's perception of organizational climate is positive perhaps it may influence his coping strategies to be much more positive and mature. It may also be argued that an individual with great confidence in his own initiative may differ in his coping styles from those who take someone or something else to shoulder the responsibility of their
deeds. However, research evidence pertaining these assumptions is meagre and far from conclusive. Therefore, it was chosen to verify these assumptions empirically in the present study and thus the hypothesis 5 was formulated.

Hypothesis 5. Individuals coping styles are related to their:

a. Job involvement;
b. Job satisfaction,
c. Occupational stress;
d. Perceptions of organizational climate; and
e. Locus of control.