CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY
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….People are disturbed not by things, but by their perception of things….  
- Epictetus

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Stress dynamics is a growing problem that results in substantial cost to individual employees and work organisations around the globe. Stress dynamics (Oldenburg, Osipow 1988) is a complete dynamical system which causes of stress and the influence of organisational climate over employees and organisations. This domain explains the proportionate relationship between objectives of organisational climate, social factors and quantum of stress among the employees. In all the industries, causes of stress are generally identified as work environment, but it is the objectives of organisational climate which triggers stress among the employees. Stress dynamics systematically observes the origin of stress, influencing factors of climate, efforts of organisation to manage the stress and total output of the successful stress management. It also explores the perception of employees about stress mechanism and the respect of stress dynamics on individuals and organisational efficiency.

The changing nature of work has placed unprecedented demands on employees, and fuelled concerns about the effect this change is having on the well-being and health of employees and their work organisations. In many large organisations, a period of dramatic downsizing, outsourcing, and globalisation raised the stress dynamics to get its full momentum. Although the changes in the organisations have led to greater mobility and more flexible work arrangements for some employees, for others they have raised concerns about employment security, increased work demands, and the loss of ‘connectedness’ result in the move towards less secure forms of employment. In many organisations, these changes have also been coupled with rapid technological change, and a strong push for greater efficiency, increased competitiveness, and improved customer services.

Recent industrialisation and globalisation are changing the Indian occupational morbidity drastically. Traditionally labour-oriented markets are on change towards
more automation and mechanisation, at the same time general awareness about occupational safety, occupational and environmental hazards were not spread in the society. Occupational research is seen as a more complex issue in India. Indian employees are increasingly experiencing the economic transition; occupational research approach should balance between understanding the modern industrial exposures and health risks associated with it. All around the world, countries are undergoing rapid, fundamental changes in almost every aspect of life. In some of these countries, this has created great social stress, whereas others seem to have managed to maintain the relative stability needed for long-term, beneficial transformation processes to flourish. Major determinants of these transformations are the globalisation, computerisation and mobilisation of the production and provision of goods and services. Organisations are becoming flatter, if not smaller.

1.2. JOB STRESS

Work stress is recognised world-wide as a major challenge to workers health and the healthiness of their organisations (see for example, ILO 1986; 1992). Workers who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. The organisations are less likely to be successful in a competitive market. Stress can be brought about by pressures at home and at work. Employers cannot usually protect workers from stress arising outside of work, but they can protect them from stress that arises through work. Stress at work can be a real problem to the organisation as well for its workers. Good management and good work organisations are the best forms of stress prevention. As the pace at which our society operates increases, the pressures for every member of society to keep up with this pace also increase. Many of these pressures affect people through their jobs. Stress has become the "buzzword" that many people use to describe the impact that these pressures cause. In the short-term, stress can enable individuals to meet high levels of demand or pending deadlines. Prolonged stress, however, has been shown to cause illness and other conditions that can have detrimental effects on an employer's workforce.
Conventional wisdom suggests that it is this climate of continual change that is placing many employees under pressure and creating the types of work organisations that will produce high levels of occupational stress. This places a premium on being able to understand the causes and consequences of occupational stress, so that appropriate policies and practices can be developed to ameliorate these concerns. We live in a much faster-paced world that we used to and most people accept and expect stress in their lives as they strive to balance the demands of their work and home lives. Deadlines to meet, changing priorities, longer working hours, e-mail commuting makes most of the employees put under pressure to handle situations that are not life-threatening but nevertheless provoke stress signals. These can lead to a range of unpleasant and debilitating feelings and symptoms, such as headache, backache, stomach upsets, anxiety, attacks and lethargy. This in turn leads to lack of productivity, burn-out and long-term illness if not prevented.

1.3. EFFECT OF JOB STRESS

Stress has been identified as one of the most common work-related perils of modern times. Previously, it was considered to be limited to the developed countries, but with the turn of the century, it emerged as a global syndrome. Many organisations have also realised the causes and impact of employee stress and have initiated steps to combat workplace stress. Some organisations have gone beyond the workplace and have been trying out innovative methods of handling employee stress caused by extra organisational factors too.

There is a rapidly growing body of research on the management and control of workplace stress. Some of it has attempted to categorise the types of stress management initiatives organisations can undertake. These categorisations often include the ideas of prevention at source, providing individuals with skills which help them deal with stress problems, or treating those who have been harmed. One approach which has gained in popularity and which may help organisations determine the kind of stress intervention to undertake has been to try and measure workplace stressors through the use of self report interview schedule. In effect, this review is concerned with the measurement of workplace stressors. Throughout the document the term ‘psycho-social hazards’ is used to refer to work characteristics which could equally be termed ‘stressors’ or ‘sources of stress’. Why then use ‘psycho-social
hazards’? The rationale has three parts: ‘Stress’ is generally acknowledged to be a broad umbrella term for a wide range of different experiences and conditions. It is generally accepted to be a vague concept consistently beset by problems of definition. In contrast the focus of this study is very clearly that of the psycho-social aspects of work that have the potential to adversely impact an individual’s mental and physical well-being. Stress tends to bring with it a plethora of sometimes unhelpful ideas and expectations about stress management, whereas the legislation which governs psychological health at work and the requirements it places on employers is concerned specifically with risk assessment and the monitoring and control of hazards.

1.4. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Stress dynamics is drawing more and more attention nowadays, particularly in the corporate context. There is no such thing as a stress-free job. The employees in their work are exposed to tension, frustration, and anxiety as she gets through the duties assigned to them. The “Human Resources” is the intersection of the two organisational dynamics, human exchange and systemic change that accounts for the challenge and performance of the organisation the employees in any work place. As so many forces are working upon the employees in the modern age, it is extremely difficult to cope under so much pressure.

The stress is called the "disease of civilization." Stress has been called “THE INVISIBLE DISEASE”. It is a disease that may affect the organisation and any of the people in it; it is indispensable to study the stress dynamics composed of causes of stress, stress management and outcome of stress-free work environment. In today’s world, every one faces stress on a daily basis, which results from failure to effectively manage with various activities. Occupational stress is regarded as both a serious public health concern and a major impediment to organisational success. In human terms, chronic job stress is associated with a range of physical, psychological, social and behavioural health problems. In any organisation, occupational stress can contribute to a number of outcomes which are critical to organisational success, including absenteeism, labour turnover and job performance. The human and economic costs of job stress strongly suggest that the employees and employers
involvement as well as efforts are essential to build healthier and less stressful working environments.

1.5. OUTCOMES OF STRESS

Doctors and health officials have come to realize how heavy a toll stress is taking on the nation's well being. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, two-thirds of office visits to family doctors are prompted by stress-related symptoms. At the same time, leaders of industry have become alarmed by the huge cost of such symptoms in absenteeism, company medical expenses and lost productivity. Everybody knows what stress is all about. It is a common feature of modern life. Most people are exposed to daily pressures in both the workplace and outside, and are used to coping with moderate amounts without suffering any major ill effects. The nature of work and the workplace has changed significantly over the last decade, with major consequences for the experience of work stress. Two of the most significant forces in recent years have been globalisation of the economy and the rapid development of information technology. These forces have created an organisational climate that is characterised by increased pressures and demands for productivity. In the search for competitive advantage within the economy, work is being outsourced or conducted in virtual workplaces by a temporary workforce\(^\text{10}\). Employees often find that they have multiple roles in organisations, leading to role conflict\(^\text{11}\). Further, they must contend with constantly changing co-workers, poorly defined tasks, and job insecurity. At the same time, workloads have increased in response to greater demands for productivity and the increased speed with which communication can occur in the workplace\(^\text{12}\). Stress is on the increase everywhere and nowhere more so than in the workplace. Pills are not the answer. Prevention is better than cure. And bargaining is better than suffering. This concludes with an assessment of potential leadership interventions designed to reduce stress or enhance well-being.

1.6. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Job stress in organisations is widespread. About half of all workers feel the pressures of job-related stress. Extensive research shows that excessive job stress can adversely affect the emotional and physical health of workers. The result is decreased productivity, less satisfied, and less healthy workers. This study will first discuss the
symptoms and causes of stress and then explore ways in which managers might reduce stress in themselves and their subordinates\textsuperscript{13}. It has been known since the beginning of the century that the experience of stress can have quite serious effects on health. However, because we all respond to stress differently, “stress-related disease is not easily predictable from objective measures of environmental stressors\textsuperscript{14}” It is also found that “the more life stress a person experiences, the greater the likelihood of developing a physical disorder like heart disease, infection, allergies, even cancer\textsuperscript{15}”. It is further ascertained\textsuperscript{16} one of the ways the ego sometimes responds to stress is dissociation, where whole blocks of memory are repressed and forgotten. In stress dynamics very stressful experiences can lead to psychological trauma, which, in turn, can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder\textsuperscript{17} many researchers considered stress to be essential for the birth and growth of the ego. They found that, “the ego seems to arise in the first place from the collision between the somatic factor and the environment, and, once established as a subject, it goes on developing from further collisions with the outer world and the inner”. Thus, some degree of stress is essential for a healthy growing ego. A problem arises when the ego is presented with more stress than it can adequately handle. This is also true for stress in the workplace\textsuperscript{18}, as noted by researchers who point out that moderate stress often fosters productivity.

\textbf{1.7. STRESS IN TVS COMPANY}

TVS Lucas is one of the successful growing automobile manufacturing industries established in the year 1962. Developments in TVS are causing paradigm shifts in human existence today. Emergence of global village is the outcome of advances facilitated by TVS. It has a crucial role to play in rapidly transforming Indian economy and reaping its benefits. Potential for growth, employment and revenue generation are the reasons behind the government’s intervention in the form of special incentives. The bulk of revenue contribution with respect to India comes from Automobile industry. The Automobile Industry capturing much of the market locally and internationally is totally knowledge driven and has been in the limelight. TVS employees are always spending their official life in the midst of competition and heavy work load. These reasons lead to the enormous amount of stress among them.
The globalisation of economy and introduction of new high speed information technology, increased global competitiveness, and reduced staff level. TVS employees have less job security. They are carrying heavier workload and working longer hours in an attempt to keep their jobs. A marked increase in stress levels at work is being experienced on a universal scale. There are two ways of tackling work stress: Identify sources of stress in their job and try to make appropriate changes. The employees often blame themselves for their problems at work, rather than questioning the job itself. The need for studying stress dynamics and its importance for prudential benefits has acquired good momentum in the present scenario.

1.8. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growth of the TVS Company is drastically influenced by the vital factor stress dynamics, as the availability of skilled and trained talent pool is imperative. Stress management strategies followed by the TVS Company are designed to attract and retain the professionals and are formulated to meet the challenges and to increase productivity.

Organisations formulate strong HRD practices along with effective strategies to accomplish goals of creating a stress free atmosphere. It is important to utilize human resources to the optimum extent. There has been a tremendous change in the HRD policies and practices to leverage the current TVS workforce in a stress free atmosphere. There is no serious research to ascertain the various elements of stress dynamics in TVS Company in Chennai. The present study generally encounters three research problems of determining predominant factors leading to stress among TVS employees and how effectively the management of TVS Company takes measures to overcome stress in an organisational environment. It also tries to answer the question dealing with total effectiveness of stress management as well as stress free atmosphere. The study aims at examining the dimensions of employees’ perception of the stress factors, stress management factors and its outcome in TVS Lucas Indian Service Limited, Chennai.
1.9. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the various factors causing stress viz., Organisational culture, climate and interpersonal relationship;
2. To analyze the physical, behavioural and emotional responses of TVS employees with regard to stress management techniques of the study unit;
3. To ascertain the stress management techniques adopted by the organization;
4. To measure the effectiveness of stress management techniques and its impact on individual and organisational efficiency; and
5. To offer suggestions and recommendations to TVS management and employees for emphasising a stress-free work environment.

1.10. HYPOTHESES

1. Physical, behavioural and emotional responses of TVS employees to stress do not differ significantly.
2. There is no significant impact of organisational culture, climate and interpersonal relationship in creating stress among the employees.
3. Stress management techniques are highly successful in removing stress from the employees.
4. Stress management techniques in TVS Company do not predict individual and organisational efficiency.

1.11. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Indian TVS company is operating at high speed having the destination in different metropolis like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai. The study area is restricted to Chennai city as all ranges of TVS Company are having their operations in Chennai. The study covers the various causes of stress, different types of responses of employees to stress, stress management techniques and impact of stress in TVS Lucas. It has become indispensable to create a stress free work environment. The organisations are expected to adapt proper performance measures to retain their employees. The passions of the TVS professionals are kept in mind for designing their responses to stress and strategies to overcome the stress.
1.12. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.12.1. PILOT STUDY AND PRE-TESTING

A preliminary investigation was undertaken by contacting 50 employees working in TVS Company to identify the important variables regarding stress and the factors influencing stress. The responses are obtained from the employees for stress management techniques adopted in the organisations and its direct impact on individual and organisational efficiency. The purpose of the pilot study is to test quality of the items in the interview schedule and to confirm the feasibility of the study. This preliminary investigation is conducted in all levels of the employees. The random sampling method, Cronbach alpha method and Hotellings t-square test are applied. The following table clearly indicates the validity of each statement in the interview schedule.

Table No. 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>No of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
<th>Hotelling T-square</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>01 to 56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>85.317</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is ascertained that the items in part II and part III of the interview schedule are highly reliable and the samples satisfy the normal distribution rationally. Hence, the items in the interview schedule can be used further in the study.

1.11.2. MAIN STUDY

The primary data were collected for the research by serving a well structured interview schedule with 3 sections (see Appendix) section 1 for the interview schedule is framed to obtain the general information about the employees, section II deals with different types of stress due to inter-personal relationship, work environment and organisational culture and climate. The section–I of the interview schedule is designed in optional type, where as the section II is designed in Likert’s 5-point scale, ranging from 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree. The Section-III describes the methods adopted at the individual level. The interview schedule along with covering letter is used to collect information personally to each and every respondent, when the researcher visits them.
1.12.3. SAMPLE SELECTION

The multi-stage random sampling method is applied to collect the primary data of the Universal sampling method justifying the whole TVS Company downsized to employees of the TVS Lucas Indian Services Limited. The second stage is preceded with technical employees within the employees. After these two stages, the random sampling method is applied to obtain the responses from the employees.

1.12.4. SAMPLE SIZE

A sample size of 623 respondents was selected on simple random sampling method. Out of 623 respondents chosen for the study, 510 of them were found usable. The samples of this study encompass all types of employees and it works out to 510.

1.12.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The study has been done on the basis of both primary as well as secondary sources of data. The data collected among the employees through survey constitute primary and information gathered through books, journals, magazines, reports, dailies consisting of secondary data. The data collected from both the sources were scrutinized, edited and tabulated. Further, the processed data were analysed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and other computer packages. The following statistical tools were used in the study to deduce the results about data variables:

1. T-test and Paired t test were applied to ascertain the nature of responses of employees about the causes of stress, stress outcomes, stress management and its impacts.
2. Factor Analysis by Principal Component Method has been used to identify the factors of causes of stress, stress effects, stress management and effects of stress management.
3. K-means Cluster Analysis has been applied to classify the employees of TVS Lucas based on their perception.
4. Discriminant Analysis and correspondent analysis were used for identify the discrimination of factors of various aspects of stress
5. Karl Pearson’s Co-efficient of Correlation was computed to explore the parametric relationship among the various factors of HRD practices and consequences.
6. One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been used to ascertain the significant relationship between various stress management practices and their effects with respect to the organisational and personal variables of employees.

1.13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the perception of employees regarding stress at all levels with TVS Company located in Chennai city only. The study provides a general overview of the stress, causes of stress, effects of stress, stress management and its impact over employees as well as the organisation. The study considers perception of employees of TVS Company, Chennai division only. The study is based on employees’ perception and these perceptions are subject to change in the days to come.

Hence, the employees reflect their current views on the prevailing conditions of stress and its impact on their organisation. The interview schedules were used among technical employees. Since it is a perception study, the results cannot be generalised.

1.14. CHAPTER ARRANGEMENT

The report has been structured into the following chapters:

Chapter-1 Introduction - deals with brief account on causes and effects of stress, need and importance of the study, scope of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses and methodology.

Chapter – 2 Review of literature - highlights the relevance to the present study. Studies on causes of stress and stress dynamics, the research gap, duly highlighted, were identified.

Chapter – 3 Profile of TVS Lucas Indian Service Limited - presents the organisational profile, structure and policy and values of the company.

Chapter 4-Conceptual Framework of Stress Dynamics - highlights the concept of work stress, Stress Dynamics and stress management.

Chapter – 6 Impact of stress management on employees and Organisations in TVS Company- presents an empirical relationship between stress management and its impact on employees and TVS Company.

Chapter-7 Summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion -summarizes the findings along with the suggestions to the management as well as to the employees for framing the strategies of stress management.