CHAPTER - 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 STRESS:

Canon (1914, 1929)\(^1\) laid the scientific groundwork for an understanding of how various emotional states affect physiological functions and disease, by describing the "Fight or Flight" response. This response, evoked by potentially dangerous situations, include elevated heart rate and blood pressure, a redistribution of blood flow to the brain and major muscle groups and away from distal body parts, and a decrease in vegetative function. Perhaps equally important, Cannon (1932, 1935)\(^2\) pioneered the concept of physiological homeostasis and developed the use of an engineering concept of stress and strain in a physiological context. In particular, Cannon (1935) proposed the notion of critical stress levels, which were capable of producing strain in the homeostatic mechanisms. Although he used the term somewhat casually, it is clear the Cannon, like Selye, conceived of stress as involving physical as well as emotional stimuli.

Life Events as Sources of stress

Holmes and Rahe (1967)\(^3\) asked individuals to assign 0 to 100 points to life events according to the degree of readjustment these people required, with 100 points indicating most readjustment. Topping off the eventful list of stressful effects was the death of a spouse (100 points), followed by divorce (73 points) and marital separation (65 points).
The study of occupational stress (as opposed to other sources of stress) was given tremendous impetus in the early 1970’s, by the establishment of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) by Public Law 96-596 (Occupational safety and Health Act of 1970). The stated goal of this agency is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for America’s working men and women. NIOSH is the principal Federal agency in the United States engaged in research aimed at the recognition and control of job related hazards. The behavioral and motivational factors had an important bearing on the attainment of this objective was clearly acknowledged in certain research provisions of the NIOSH Act (1970). For example, Sections 20(a)(1) and 20(a)(4) explicitly directed NIOSH to include psychological, behavioral, and motivational factors in researching problems of worker safety and health, and in developing remedial approaches for offsetting such problems. Job conditions were broadly interpreted to include those of a psychological nature, consisting of undue task demands, work conditions or work regimens which apart from, or combined with, exposures to physical and chemical hazards may degrade workers’ physical or mental health (Cohen and Margolis, 1973). Since its inception, NIOSH has not only sponsored but conducted a large number of research studies which have helped to shape the course of job stress research in the United States.

On the basis of experience and research, NIOSH favour the view that working conditions play a primary role in causing stress. According to NIOSH, exposure to successful working condition can have direct influence on workers health and safety.
A Model of Job Stress and Health:

Over the past twelve years, a paradigm of stress was developed by research psychologists at NIOSH to guide efforts at examining the relationship between working conditions and health consequences. The model builds upon frameworks proposed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau (1975)⁵, Cooper and Marshall (1976)⁶, and House (1974). In it, job stress is viewed as a situation which some working condition (called a stressor) or combination of conditions interact with the worker and results in an acute disruption of psychological or behavioral homeostasis. These acute reactions or disruptions, if prolonged, are thought to lead to a variety of illnesses. The most commonly researched of these job stress-related illnesses have been hypertension, coronary heart disease, alcoholism and mental illness.

Stress has been defined as a stimulus and also as a response. Stress stimuli or stressors are of three major types (Lazarus & Cohen, 1977)⁷: major changes or events (e.g. getting married, death of a family member) that affect one or a few; and daily hassles or incidents in daily living which irritate or distress one. However, describing stimuli to be stressors would depend on the response elicited by the stimuli, this then refers to the relation between the stimulus (stressor) and person, emphasizing the person-characteristics. The stimulus-response approach to stress is circular as it asks what (stimulus) elicits a stress response and what (response) indicates a particular stressor. Psychological stress then is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.
This reiterates French et al., (1974)\textsuperscript{8} concept of person-environment misfit occurring as a result of the environmental demands which are made on the person and being appraised as a threat, thus leading to stress and affecting his or her well-being. Stress may be operationalized and measured by physiological measures like blood-pressure, GSR, hormonal assays. Psychological measures include inventories of major life events, role stress, life change, occupational stress, environmental stress, daily hassles and so on.

Richard Lazarus (1966)\textsuperscript{9} has been perhaps the most effective proponent of the need to consider stress. He argued that areas not from life events themselves but an individual’s appraisal of these events are to be considered.

Hans Selye (1907-1982)\textsuperscript{10} an American Physiologist and an extremely influential stress researcher defined stress in terms of a combination of a typing event and a reaction to the event.

Another American Physiologist Walter Cannon (1871-1945)\textsuperscript{11} was one of the first researchers to conduct systematic studies of stress. According to Cannon, physical or psychological threats produce generalized emotional reactions accompanied by psychophysical responses, specifically the general arousal of the sympathetic nervous system.

The multifaceted effects of stress and the problems inherent in this field of research makes the estimation of the costs of occupational stress virtually impossible. Kearns (1986)\textsuperscript{12} suggests that 60\% of absence from work is caused by stress related disorders and that in UK alone 100 million working days are lost each year because people cannot face going to work.
Cooper (1986) presented financial statistics indicating that 1.3 billion per annum is lost as a result of alcoholism in industry, and that American Employers spend some $700 million per year before retiring age due to incapacity of employees to work. Some practitioners believe that instituting better work practices, essentially better management would probably reduce the problem (Stone, 1985) as would redesign jobs to increase either group an individual autonomy.

Many large companies are investing money to help reduce stress problems for their employees (Cooper, 1986; Fletcher and Hallm, 1984) which is probably a significant indicator that they believe it is important that mental health is improved.

In a random sample of 3077 British adults 14% of Men and 19% of Women reported having stress for at least half of weekdays. 44% of full time employed men and 28% of similar women attributed the cause of the stress to their job – the single most important cause. People who reported pleasure yesterday generally attributed the cause to themselves and not to their job. In the same study 15% of men and 20% of women have suffered stress for more than one month. (Paine, 1982 a.)

In a longitudinal study of coping behaviour in young engineer (Newton and Kneenen, 1985) it was observed that 35% employees had suffered stress incident at work within two weeks. Whilst most individuals tried to cope in a positive way (e.g. 30% talk to others, 18% took direct action resolution) a significant proportion (30%) either expressed helplessness or withdrawal behaviour.
High stressed jobs have also been associated with higher rates of nervousness. In a comparison of high-risk jobs (Johansson; Anorson and Lindstrom; 1978) observed that 'Slight nervous disturbance' was reported by 36% of the people.

A number of studies have examined the prevalent rate of stress in large work organisations. (Zalezink et.al 1977), report that results of an analysis of 2131 employees in the middle and high occupational ranks of the large company. 24% reported suffering insomnia, 21% restlessness and agitation, 19% fatigue, 16% felt their work adversely affected their health, 13% felt the need to withdraw, 11% were worried of having nervous breakdown.

Fraser (1947) worked with 3500 workers who showed that 13% men and 18% women had suffered a definite disabling physical illness causing seven days or more absence in six months. A further 24% of men and 22% of women had suffered more minor physical illness due to stress environment.

In an international co-operative study of some 8841 Dutch male employees over 39 years old (Reeder, Schrama and Dirken, 1973) found that 14.3% of the work forces showed abnormal electrocardiograms and 23.3% had cholesterol level in excess.

Other studies of specific occupational groups have also been made, which (Cooper, Mallenger and Khan; 1978) reported that 16.7% of their sample showed ECG abnormalities. Marmot et.al (1978) reported that 12.6% of administrative grade civil servants had elevated cholesterol levels. Zaleznik et.al (1977) in their study of managers, found that 8.4% of them reported having 10 days or more off recently due to cardiovascular problems.
In addition, 8% reported presently having rapid heartbeats and 7% having suffered previously due to the ever increasing stress in work.

The overall effect of stress has got number of variables like heart rate, cardiovascular disease, blood pressure, ulcers, risk behaviours such as smoking, drinking etc. People face depressed mood and lowered self esteem and behaviour like absenteeism which reflect job dissatisfaction (Cooper and Marshall, 1978; Kasl 1978). In some of researches it has been estimated that blue collar workers are ‘at risk’ in terms of health (Cooper and Smith; 1985). There are more deaths and illness in working population among blue collar and unskilled workers than among white collar and professional groups.

Surveys of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD):

The Framingham Heart Study (Haynes and Feinleib, 1980) found that among the Males in a sample, clerical and sales workers had the lowest incidence, professionals and Managers had the highest, with blue collar workers had CHD in between the two.

The Tecumseh Study (Houe et.al, 1986) reported no occupational differences in health for men, but found female clerical and sales workers had twice the prevalence of CHD that other woman had.

Studies of Occupation Grouping and Stress:

A major study of the relationship between stress of 23 blue collar and white collar occupations was reported by (Caplan et.al. 1980) and (French et al. 1982). Occupations, which were classified as unskilled blue collar, were highest on job dissatisfaction, boredom, depression, and somatic complaints.
Skilled blue-collar employees and white-collar non-professionals did not differ from professional white-collar groups.

French et al. (1982) analyzed some of the data from this study to test the P-E fit model. Correlation between strains and income and education showed that (a) too little income was associated with increased strain and (b) strains (Job dissatisfaction, boredom and somatic complaints) increased primarily when the person had more education than was typically required to perform the job.

Prevalence of 'Risky' Personalities at Work:

It has been thought for many years that some individuals have personalities, which particularly predispose them to the effects of occupational role stress.

One such individual difference that has been examined in some detail is Type ‘A’. Type ‘A’ behaviour is characterized by sustained drive towards poorly defined goals, preoccupation with deadlines, competitiveness and desire for advancement and achievement, mental and behavioural alertness or aggressiveness, chronic haste and impatience.

Such behaviours are seen as being promoted by environmental factors (Friedman and Roseman, 1974) and it is from this perspective that the work environment may be important. More than 50% of workers would be classified as type ‘A’. In a study of managers from 12 different companies (Howard, Cunningham and Rechnitzer 1976) report that 60% were Type ‘A’, High growth companies also tended to have more type ‘A’ Managers – upto 76% in one company.
In a massive study of 2,70,000 employees of Bell Telephone Company, (Hinkle et al, 1968) report, the results of a three year study in which 6347 events of disability or death were due to coronary heart disease.

The rates of disability per 1000 were 1.85 for executives, 2.85 for general area Managers, 3.91 for local area Managers and Supervisors, 4.52 for foremen and 4.33 for skilled manual workers. In this study educational level played a very important role. Those at the lowest level (workers) were still about twice as likely to suffer a coronary heart disease, compared with executives. This study clearly indicated the importance of educational factors in affecting the likelihood of a person suffering a Coronary Heart Disease, which was approximately 30% lower among educated college men than among non-college men. Education played a very important role in the organization to overcome role stress.

Research in the area of stress has typically focused on common causes of stress in the work environment and their effect on personal and organizational outcomes (e.g. Beehr and Newman, 1978; Cooper and Marshall, 1976). More specifically, studies have examined the impact of stress on three major response categories; psychological, behavioural and physiological, all these studies have been done considering the variables such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism and turnover as symptoms of stress (Fried et.al, 1984).

In recent studies various organization variables and their effects on work stress have been studied.
These include factors intrinsic to the job (e.g. Boredom, overload, time pressure etc), role in the organization (role conflict, role ambiguity etc.) Career development (under promotion, over promotion, lack of security etc.) and organizational climate (lack of participation etc) as examples of role conflict among professional employees, in research conducted in many organizational settings.

Most of these studies are consistent with the thought of Khan et.al. (1964) and Mall and Lawer (1970), who define role conflict as the opposition of any confirmation of role pressures.

**Job Stress And Health:**

Stress is a resulting state, which itself falls short of a medically recognized illness: pressure can cause stress, which in turn can cause recognized illness. Therefore while pressure can be good, stress (a negative reaction) is bad.

In the U.S., experts at the Centre for Disease Control and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are dedicated to studying stress. They have found:

Stress is linked to physical and mental health, as well as decreased willingness to take on new and creative endeavors. Job burnout experienced by 25% to 40% of U.S. workers is blamed on stress.

More than ever before, employee stress is being recognized as a major drain on corporate productivity and competitiveness.

Depression, only one type of stress reaction, is predicted to be the leading occupational disease of the 21st century, responsible for more days lost than any other single factor.
$300 billion, or $7,500 per employee, is spent annually in the U.S. on stress-related compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, health insurance costs, direct medical expenses (nearly 50% higher for workers who report stress), and employee turnover.

According to encyclopedia of occupational safety and health. The following conclusions were made:

A. **Cardiovascular Disease**: Many studies suggest that psychologically demanding jobs that allow employees little control over the work process increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.

B. **Musculoskeletal Disorders**: Nearly 40% stressed people develop back and upper – extremity musculoskeletal disorders.

C. **Psychological Disorders**: Several studies suggest that differences in rate of mental health problems (such as depression and burnout) for various occupations are partly due to differences between occupations.

D. **Workplace Injury**: Stressful working conditions interfere with safe work practices and set the stage for injuries at work.

E. **Suicide, Cancer, Ulcers & Impaired Immune Function**: Studies suggest a relationship between stressful working condition and health problems, like suicide, cancer etc.

**Psychological Response to Stress:**

Psychological Response to Stress are quite varied. Individuals can respond to stress in personal growth by decrease in psychological well-being or without any noticeable psychological change (Dohrenwend 1978).25
What determines, in part, how an individual responds are moderating factors such as one's personal characteristics and one's social resources. A moderating factor is considered to be operative, when, if in its presence, the relationship of stress to illness (mental or physical) is weaker than in its absence (Bloom 1988).26

Model of Job Stress and Health:

Job Stressor and Their Consequences

Various job conditions can produce psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions in workers and they have been well documented (see Baker, 1985: Holt; and Hurrell and Colligan, 1982 for reviews).
In general, these conditions or stressors fall into three very broad categories; Job/Task Demands, Organisational Factors, and Physical conditions. Examples of common stressors in each category are discussed below.

**Job/Task Demands:** Work is a feature of occupations that is easily recognized as "stressful" and has therefore received substantial empirical attention. Working excessive hours or holding more than one job (or both), for example, has been associated with coronary heart disease (CHD), morbidity and mortality (House 1974; Jenkins, 1971; Theorell and Rahe, 1972)\(^{27}\). Studies show a correlation between workload and serum cholesterol levels (French and Caplan, 1972; Friedman, Rosenman and Carroll, 1958)\(^{28}\), which also seem to suggest a CHD/workload relationship.

Recent evidence, however, has suggested that the amount of work does not seem to be as critical to health as the control the worker has over the work rate and related work processes. Karasek et al. (1979, 1982),\(^{29}\) for example, have used large-scale databases to examine the relationship between workload, work pace and degree of worker control. Their findings indicate that workers in jobs with higher workload and packing demands, and lower control over these demands have increased risk of coronary heart disease, higher blood pressure, and smoke more, than employees in jobs without these characteristics.

Shift work is another job demand thought to have health and safety consequences.
There is substantial converging evidence that night and rotating shift schedules, in particular, can lead to sleep disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, emotional disturbances, and increased risk of occupational injury (Colquhounm Knauth, Rutenfranz and Ghata, 1977: Tasto, Colligan, Skjei and Polly, 1978; Smith, Colligan, Frockt and Tasto, 1979).30

The primary mechanism responsible for these effects appears to be disruption of biological rhythms resulting in physiological and biochemical disturbances. Shift work also has behavioral effects that can impact health, including altered sleeping patterns, increased alcohol and tobacco use, and altered eating habits.

Organizational Factors: Numerous job stress studies have examined the psychological and physical effects of roles within work organizations. These studies were given original impetus by an investigation conducted in the early 1960s by Robert Kahn and his colleagues at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan. In this nationwide survey, Kahn et al. (1964)31 found that men who experienced role ambiguity (i.e. lack of clarity about objectives associated with the work role, expectations concerning the work role and about the scope and responsibilities of the job) experienced low self-confidence, higher job related tension and lower job satisfaction. Likewise, workers who experience more job related tension, report less job satisfaction. A recent meta-analysis of 96 studies (Jackson and Schuler, 1985) has not only confirmed these relationships between role conflict, ambiguity and affective reactions, but has suggested that these role stressors are also related to absence and poor job performance.
Role ambiguity and conflict have also been shown to be related to psychological responses such as increased heart rate and blood pressure (Caplan and Jones, 1975; French and Caplan, 1972; Ivancevich, Matteson and Preston, 1982).32

Various management styles, such as the allowance of little or no participation in decision-making, lack of effective consultation, restrictions on behavior, etc are organizational features that also have been viewed as potentially stressful (see Beehr and Newman, 1978).33

Of these, lack of participation in decision making has received the most research attention. Early field studies demonstrated that greater participation in decision-making led to greater job satisfaction, lower turnover, better supervisor-subordinate relationships, and increased productivity (Coch and French, 1948; French, Israel and Aas, 1960). Moreover, in a nationally representative sample of nearly 1,500 workers, nonparticipation at work was found to be significantly related not only to low self-esteem and low job satisfaction but to overall poor physical health, escapist drinking, depressed mood and absenteeism (Margolis, Kores and Quinn, 1974).34

Factors related to career development have also been linked to health consequences. These include over promotion, under promotion, status incongruence, lack of job security, fear of redundancy, obsolescence or early retirement (see Beehr and Newman, 1978). One of the most potent of these stressors appears to be ambiguity about one's job future.
For instance, uncertainty about continued employment has been found to be related to low job satisfaction, low life satisfaction, low self esteem, escapist drinking and overall poor physical health (Margolis et al, 1974).

Relationships at work with one's colleagues, supervisors and subordinates have been identified as sources of job stress (see Davidson and Copper, 1981; Beehr and Newman, 1978). For example, the most common sources of stress for a sample of 5,000 managers included inadequate support by supervisors, ineffective performance by supervisors, and conflict and ambiguity about what's expected.

**Physical Conditions:** Adverse environmental conditions appears to be associated with health disorders in a synergistic way by exacerbating the overall job demands placed on employees, thus lowering work tolerance to other stressors and decreasing worker motivation, inadequate lighting and ergonomic design deficiencies have been associated with employee physical and psychological health complaints and with attitudinal and behavioral problems (Caplan et al. 1975; Cooper and Marshall, 1976). It is also no coincidence that outbreaks of mass psychogenesis illness typically occur in workplaces which employees view as physically uncomfortable (Colligan and Murphy, 1979).

**Moderating Factors:** As alluded to earlier, there are a number of personal and situational characteristics that seem to lead to difference in the way individuals exposed to the same work context perceive and/or react to the situation.
These "moderators" are depicted in the Figure in the blocks labeled "Individual Factors", "Non-work Factors," and "Buffer Factors," and are discussed separately below.

**Individuals Factors**: The most widely discussed personal characteristic contributing to stress at work has been the coronary prone Type A Behavior Pattern (TABP) characterized by intense striving for achievement, competitiveness, time urgency, excessive drive and over commitment to vocation or profession. In the past decade alone, many investigators have reported the Type A pattern to be independently associated with coronary artery disease. There is also extensive evidence that Type A person shows more severe and widespread coronary arteriosclerosis on coronary arteriography (Copper et al., 1981).

While static measurements have shown no difference in heart rate and blood pressure between Type A's and their opposite Type B personality type, Type A's upon exposure to various laboratory stressors, have been shown to exhibit more pronounced cardiovascular response (Dembroski, MacDougall, Shields, Pettito, Lushine, 1978; Lovallo and Pishkin, 1980). Such findings have been suggested by a number of authors (e.g., Ivancevich and Matterson, 1984) that an interaction between various job stressors and Type A characteristics may produce reactions which ultimately lead to heart disease.

The hardy personality style is another individual characteristic that mediates the stressor-illness relationship. Hardy persons are believed to possess various beliefs and tendencies that are very useful in coping with stressors.
These include tendencies toward optimistic appraisals of events and decisive actions in coping (Kobasa, Maddi, and Puccetti, 1982; Kobasa, Maddi Pucetta and Zola, 1985). Hardy persons have been found to report less illness in the face of stressors in both a retrospective and prospective study of executives.

State of career development, while little studied, may also affect the stressor-illness relationship. Extensive work experience, for example, may moderate worker response to negative events at work (Wanous, 1973).

Indeed, several studies (e.g., O'Reilly and Roberts 1975) have shown a positive correlation between age and work satisfaction. This has been interpreted to indicate that worker expectations of what is to be derived from work activity decrease with experience in the working world.

Conversely, however, older workers may be more vulnerable to certain physical and mental job demands. Other personal characteristics may also moderate the effects of stress. Chan (1977) and Baum (1981) postulated that locus of control (internal or external), a sense of helplessness, chronic anxiety and low self-esteem are central personality determinants to stress reactions.

Non-Work Factors: Workers clearly do not leave their family and personal problems behind when they go to work nor do they typically forget job problems upon returning home. Nearly all models of job stress, in fact, acknowledge non-work factors and their potential interaction with work in affecting health outcomes.
However, very few studies have attempted to examine the respective health effects of job and extra-organizational stressors (Bhagat, McQuaid, Lindholm, and Segovis, 1985). While some investigators have incorporated generic stressful life events scales into job stress surveys, these scales provide only rough indications of social, familial and financial stressors. It is quite clear that greater attention needs to be paid to these kind of factors. Interpersonal, marital, financial, and child-rearing stressors as well as other non-work situation can exacerbate existing job stressors to promote acute stress reactions.

Alternatively, the absence of such extra-organizational problems may make a less than satisfactory job situation more tolerable (less stressful) and can impede the development of stress reactions.

Buffer Factors: A number of factors are known to weaken the stressor-acute reaction link and, therefore, reduce the occurrence of ill-health outcomes. Such factors are generally referred to as buffers. One of the earliest buffer variables examined in job stress research was social support. House and Wells (1978) showed that workers who report high levels of social support have fewer health complaints than comparably stressed workers with low social support. The source of support also appears to be important. Social support from one's supervisor or spouse was found by House and Wells (1978) to be more effective than support from co-workers or from friends or relatives. Supports were also found to buffer the effects of stress on some health conditions (e.g., neurosis and ulcers) more than on others (e.g., angina). More recent research (Thoits, 1982) has confirmed the protective role of social support on worker health.
Another potent buffer is coping. A great deal of literature on stress coping exists but little of this knowledge has been included in occupational stress/health formulations until recently. Lazarus and colleagues (Cohen and Lazarus, 1979; Folkman and Lazarus, 1980) have indicated that coping is not a trait or disposition but is a continuous, transactional process which is modified by experience within and between stressful episodes. Further, a specific coping strategy which can serve to alleviate stress in one situation may be mal-adaptive in other situations.

Causes and Nature of Stress at the Worksite:

Job stress can have many roots and causes. Some of these are environmental and arise from annoying physical problems at work such as crowding, noise and air pollution, and possible exposure to potentially hazardous substances. Others may relate to the nature of the occupation.

The common denominator here is often being placed in a situation, which demands considerable responsibility without commensurate authority or decision making capability or not being able to express your true feelings and get things off your chest. Dull, dead-end, assembly line type of work, or having a job which does not permit full use of one’s talents and potential or where constant deadlines do not permit enough time to get the job done to one’s satisfaction may prove particularly stressful for large groups of individuals in middle management positions.

Stress at work can also be due to the individual’s own personality, a good example being the executive with Type A behavior who is continually frustrated by self imposed unrealistic goals that are inflexibly pursued.
Such individuals may themselves be vectors of stress at work as their aggressive and sometimes hostile behavior produces adverse repercussions on co-workers and customers. More often, it is not the individual or the job but rather a mismatch between the two in terms of basic goals, needs, and values that causes continuing problems. Stress at work may also have its real roots outside the workplace because of family or financial problems, which lead to alcoholism, depression, or anxiety that affect activities and performance on the job. Some common factors that contribute to job stress are (Rosch 1984b):

- Inadequate time to complete the job to one’s satisfaction.
- Lack of clear job description or chain of command.
- Absence of recognition or reward for good job performance.
- Inability or lack of opportunity to voice complaints.
- Lots of responsibilities but little authority or decision-making capability.
- Inability to work with superiors, co-workers, or subordinates because of basic differences in goals and values.
- Lack of control or pride over the finished product.
- Job insecurity due to pressures from within or possibility of takeover or merger.
- Prejudice and bigotry due to age, sex, race, or religion.
- Unpleasant environmental conditions because of smoking, crowding, noise and air pollution, exposure to toxic chemicals or carcinogens, or commuting difficulties.
- Concerns related to responsibility for employees.
- Not being able to utilize personal talents or abilities effectively or to full potential
- The FUD factor – fear, uncertainty, doubt
Person-Environment Fit Perspective of Occupational Stress:

P-E perspective of stress proposed by French, Roders and Cobb (1974) well explains the concept of stress. According to this theory, poor fit or misfit between employee and his work and its environment results in stress and psychological and health strains. The theory is based on the assumption that people vary in their needs, expectations and abilities just as jobs vary in their requirements, demands and incentives. When there is poor fit between the characteristics of the employee and of the job, P-E fit theory predicts the employee's well being will be affected.

In this theory the fit is not unilateral. It is rather bilateral fit between employee and his job. Both should satisfy each other's demands and expectations. Poor or insufficient supply from either side would cause stress.

One form of misfit involves the discrepancy between the needs and aspirations of the employee and the supplies in the job and environment to meet his needs and goals. A good P-E fit occurs when the supplies in the environment (i.e., money, support from superiors and colleagues, opportunities to satisfy needs for affiliation, power and achievement) are sufficient to satisfy the motives of the employee.

Ansari (1979) researched on stress with various social parameters like age, family type, marital status, education and urban/rural population. He found that stress increases with rise in age. People's staying in joint family have more stress than people staying in nuclear family. With regard to marital status, unmarried people experience more stress. Stress also increases with increase in educational levels.
Early stress research (Kahn et al. 1964) showed that boundary roles expose job incumbents to role conflict and role ambiguity. More recent research (Miles 1980; Pearce 1981) has increased our understanding of antecedents of role stressors. Parkington and Schneider (1979) proposed that service employees would experience role stress when they perceived management emphasizing system requirements at odds with client needs; that is, the greater the discrepancy between perceptions of management and customer demands, the greater the experienced role ambiguity and role conflict. These role stressors would in turn be related to dissatisfaction with the organization, feelings of frustration, perceived poor customer service and increased propensity to leave the organization.

Data collected from a sample of bank branch employees (n=263) from 23 branches of a large commercial bank found that service orientation discrepancy had an indirect effect on employee outcomes through role ambiguity and role conflict, both of which were significantly correlated with the employee outcomes.

Thus, role ambiguity and role conflict served as the psychological mechanisms through which discrepancies in perceived service orientation resulted in negative employee outcome.

Miles and Perreault (1976) examined antecedents and consequences of role conflict among 195 professional level employees. Antecedents of role conflict lay in the objective role requirements of the job incumbent. They identified four role conflict types: person-role, intersender, intrasender and role overload.
Potential antecedents of role conflict included – the importance of selected role activities or role requirements (e.g. integration and boundary spanning activities, personnel supervision and scientific research) and characteristic of the focal person’s role set (e.g. average organizational distance of important role senders, degree of formal authority role senders as a group have relative to the focal person).

Ivancevich (1980) conducted an analysis of Participation in Decision Making among project engineers and role stressors (role conflict and role ambiguity) and individual outcomes related to role stressors (fatigue, physical symptoms, tensions). He hypothesized that project engineers having lower PDM than they would like, would report greater job-related stress.

Data collected from 154 project engineers employed by a large engineering, development and construction firm, showed that decision-deprived project engineers reported greater physical symptoms and job tension but no differences on measures of role conflict, role ambiguity and fatigue. Further, analysis focused on degree of decisional deprivation reported greater role conflict and role ambiguity, greater physical symptoms and more job tensions.

Schuler (1980’s) proposed a role and expectancy perception model of participation in decision-making. He found that participation in decision-making was associated with employee satisfaction when participation reduced role conflict and role ambiguity and clarified performance reward expectancy.
P.C. Sen (1981)\textsuperscript{47} in his study investigated into main role stress experienced by employees. The main objectives were to study the main role stresses experienced by employees in the Banks at different levels, to study coping strategies used by these employees to deal with role stresses, to study difference in role stresses and coping strategies according to the level of management and various demographic variables and to study personal correlates. The study reported negative and significant correlations between role efficacy and eight role stresses. However, it did not find any correlation between role efficacy and inter-role distance.

In a survey conducted by an extensive mail and telephone survey to study occupational stress reduction programs for non-managerial employees (Neale, Singer, Schwartz and Schwartz, 1982; Singer, Neale, Schwartz, and Schwartz, 1986).\textsuperscript{48}

Stress, according to corporate respondents, was primarily a question of maladaptive personal lifestyles and poor "person-environment fit". Alternatively, labor representatives portrayed stress as the product of organizational conditions that promoted loss of control, work overload, or underload.

In practice, these definitions often led management and labor to take quite separate paths in stress reduction programs. The corporate approach placed responsibility for managing stress on the individual, who was encouraged to relax, exercise, diet, and modify "Type A" behavioral patterns. Virtually all of these corporate stress management programs were linked to medical departments or to organization-wide health promotion campaigns, reflecting additional corporate priorities to reduce health care costs and to improve productivity.
Labor's response to stress emphasized strong health and safety contract language and active health and safety committees to enforce written agreements. Any effort, including organizing, grievance procedures, or employee involvement, that effectively increased the worker's control and autonomy at the shopfloor or office level was considered a stress reduction strategy.

A systems perspective, drawn from research in bio-feedback and psychophysiology [Schwartz, 1982 (a)(b)] as a potential integration of these diverse definitions of stress points to a hierarchical organization of biological, psychological, and social systems, or levels, each possessing unique resources demands, and constraints. These systems are interrelated such that disharmony or change at one level of the hierarchy almost inevitably influences behaviour at other levels.

With respect to the work setting, the most obvious interaction takes place between an individual and the organization. In the literature on stress, French, Rogers, and Cobb (1974), Khan, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snoek (1964), and Harrison (1978) have described this interaction as an issue of "person-environment fit". However, a system orientation would also include other levels at which the fit of demands and resources might be out of balance (i.e., a specific work group and its physical setting, management policies and the entire organization, the organization and its relationship to assessment concerns itself with individual perceptions of strain, but also looks at pressures and changes in work groups and organizations over time).
In this view, exclusively corporate or labour definitions of occupational stress place a narrow focus on selected levels of the systems’ hierarchy. The corporate stress reduction effort might be successful at helping the employee to exercise but, if it does nothing about toxic fumes in the physical environment, it may make little difference. Similarly, a union representative who wins a reduction of overtime hours for an employee and then stands by while he or she uses the new free time to increase his/her drinking, also does a partial job.

To promote comprehensive and collaborative assessments of occupational stress by corporations and unions, we proposed a system-driven assessment device, the Occupational Stress Evaluation Grid (OSEG)\(^{49}\). The OSEG is a seven-by-three matrix that orders stressors and responses to stressors in a hierarchy going from physical dimensions to socio-cultural levels of analysis.

It enables us to plot the types of stressors operating at each level of system, as perceived by those involved, and the impact of various stress reducers. Additionally, by separating interventions into formal and informal categories, the OSEG allows us to gauge the amount of personal and organizational control inherent in each of these potential adaptive reactions.

The levels of intervention mentioned in the table is at Socio-cultural, Organizational, Work Setting, Interpersonal, Psychological, Biological and Physical / Environmental Levels. The stressors at each of these levels are also mentioned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>Grass roots</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>Lobbying</td>
<td>organizing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ecological shifts</td>
<td>Political action</td>
<td>Petitions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Economic downturns</td>
<td>Public education</td>
<td>Demonstrations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Political changes</td>
<td>Trade association</td>
<td>Migration</td>
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<td>Military crises</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>Hiring policies</td>
<td>Corporate decision</td>
<td>Social activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plant closings</td>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>Contests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Layoffs</td>
<td>New management model</td>
<td>Incentives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>Management consultant</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Automation</td>
<td>reorganization</td>
<td>involvement &amp; ties with workers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Market shifts</td>
<td>Retraining</td>
<td>Continuing education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Retraining</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Moonlighting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organizational priorities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Setting</td>
<td>Task (time, speed, autonomy, creativity)</td>
<td>Supervisor meetings</td>
<td>Slow down</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supervision Co-workers</td>
<td>Health/safety meetings</td>
<td>Speedup</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ergonomics</td>
<td>Union grievance</td>
<td>Redefine tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participation in decision making</td>
<td>Employee involvement</td>
<td>Support of other workers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality circles</td>
<td>Sabotage, theft</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Job redesign</td>
<td>Quit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td>Change jobs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Seek social support / advice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separation Marital discord Conflict with family/friend</td>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td>Seek legal / financial assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Leave of absence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Illness in family</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intergenerational conflict</td>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Insurance plans</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Financial difficulties</td>
<td>Family therapy</td>
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<td>Early parenthood</td>
<td>Loans / Credit</td>
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<td>Unions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Day care.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>Employee assistance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cognition or Behavior</td>
<td>Counseling.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ineffective coping skills</td>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor self-image</td>
<td>Supervisory training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor communication</td>
<td>Stress Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Addictive behavior</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seek support from friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Disease Disability</td>
<td>Pre-placement screening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sleep/Appetite disturbance</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemical dependency</td>
<td>Medical treatment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Biochemical imbalance</td>
<td>Health education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>Employee assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maternity leave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical/Environmental</td>
<td>Poor air/climate</td>
<td>Protective clothing / equipment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Noise exposure</td>
<td>Climate control</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Toxic substance exposure</td>
<td>Health/safety committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor lighting</td>
<td>Interior decoration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor equipment design</td>
<td>Union grievance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad architecture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change sleep/wake habits</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bag lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-medication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>Consult physician</td>
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Lee & Schuler (1982) replicated and extended these findings in a study of employees in a medium sized service organization.

More recently, Richard Lazarus and his colleagues added immensely to the study of stress by describing in specific terms how one's perceptions of objective events determine their health valence (see Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)\(^{50}\)
Cognitive appraisal is described by Lazarus as an intrapsychic process, which translates objective events into stressful experiences. The importance of this formulation lies in its recognition that subjective factors can play a much larger role in the experience of stress than objective conditions. Indeed, any given objective event can at once be perceived positively by one person and negatively by another ("One person's meat is another person's poison").

Most formal stress reduction programs concentrate on using various methods to reduce physiological and somatic responses to stress by the use of meditation, progressive muscular relaxation, biofeedback, yoga, exercise, or similar interventions and combinations. Obviously, the ability to identify sources of stress and eliminate or mitigate them, provides a more effective approach to the problem. Coordinating such efforts with instruction in behavioral modification providing coping skills, assertiveness training or taking advantage of other aspects of an overall employee assistance program that deals with other psychosocial problems would appear to represent the most effective and comprehensive approach.

It is important to keep each of these multifaceted aspects in mind when attempting to construct or evaluate stress management training programs for industry. As noted previously, many stress reduction efforts offered by corporations are not identified formally as such but are included as part of larger company policies, programs, and benefits.
This is summarized in the form of an occupational stress evaluation grid, which analyzes and categorizes stressors from such varying viewpoints and highlights strategies which have been developed to deal with them.

Taking cue from the philosophical texts of India, Pandey and Naidu (1986) studied the effort and outcome oriented as moderators of stress – strain relationship. They noted, that the concept of 'detachment' is highly valued in Indian culture. The doctrine of detached action calls upon the individual to serve society by scrupulous performance of one's duties with utmost skill but without desiring the fruits of actions so performed. It is one of the ways in which an altered super-conscious state of self-realization can be attained. Effort orientation, according to this doctrine is 'individual's focusing on task at hand' whereas outcome orientation can be defined as 'advice to focus about the outcomes of that activity.' Further the doctrine emphasis that an effort should be made to maintain emotional stability regardless of the outcome of the effort; be it success or failure.

The authors theorized that the effort and outcome orientations may moderate the stress-strain relationship for three reasons. First, the individual practicing the ideal of detached action would concentrate on most of the activities in which he engages which, in turn would lead to the attainment of higher degree of skills. Second, the practice of being mentally less concerned about the outcomes may help in conserving the physical and psychic energies and hence, the subject would be less affected by mental distracters such as anxiety and fear of failure (which lead to energy dissipation).
Third, it is likely that the person practicing these ideals cognizes the stressful events in relatively more positive terms.

Social resources can also moderate the effects of stress and include, when under stress, one's sense of social support in the community. In fact, the concept of support has received enormous attention in the literature of community psychology. Often individuals and groups learn coping strategies from each other. At a personal level, community members—such as friends, family and neighbours—can assist in supporting each other through difficult times by providing social support. Social support is an exchange of resources (such as emotional comfort or materials goods) between two individuals where the provider intends the resources to enhance the well-being of the recipient (Shumaker & Brownell (1984-1985).\textsuperscript{52}

The concept of stress is enshrouded by a thick veil of confusion and divergence of opinion (e.g. Pestonjee, 1987\textsuperscript{53} Schuleer, 1980: Sharma, 1988a). Stress has been used by researchers as a term for stress-producing effects and conditions (SPECs; McGrath & Beehr, 1992)\textsuperscript{54} that are social psychological rather than physical in nature, and also as a strain variable (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980).

Stress has also been used to label an intervening process, either psychological or physiological, between a SPEC and well-being. Life stress presumably encompasses all SPECs in the workplace i.e., relatively enduring or chronic stressors such as role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, interpersonal conflict with a coworker, and frequently recurring daily hassles at work.
All such situations, circumstances, events or conditions become SPECs for a given person if they produce serious adverse consequences to that individual's well-being / health and welfare. These consequences to the individual, sometimes referred to as strains, may be either physical or psychological

**Effect of Stress:**

Stress effects on individual's health may be of short term or long-term nature. Elevation in blood pressure has been observed in cases of anger and anxiety, stressful interviews, loss of job, and natural disasters (Miller & Valentine, 1969; Kasl & Cobb, 1970; Ruskin, Board, & Schaffer, 1948). Prolonged rise in blood pressure is found in those who faces stress for long periods as was seen in Kasl and Cobb's (1970) study of loss of employment. As the duration of stress gets prolonged the individual's efforts and resources of coping starts diminishing. This leads to psychopathology. (Lazarus, 1977). Methods to cope with stress are varied and mental illness is just one of these (Cochrane, 1983). Similarly, schizophrenia has been found to be often preceded by stress occurring from recent life events (Spring & Coons, 1982). Frequent adjustment to changes in life because of occurrence of life events increases the proneness to diseases as a result of lowering of resistance to diseases (Holmes & Masuda, 1984). Similarly, there are greater number of hassles if daily living also contribute to stress experiences (Kanner et al., 1981).

The Type A Behaviour Pattern (TABP) has been found to have a cultural validity and predictability of coronary heart diseases (CHD) (Rosenman & Chesney, 1982).
All these studies indicate a relationship between stressors on the one hand and physical and mental illness on the other. This is seen from Figure given below:

![Diagram of relationship between stress and health through individual and socio-cultural variables]

**Relationship between stress and health through individual and socio-cultural variables.**

The stressors in other words are related to physical and mental well-being. There are, however, some intervening variables related to the strengths and weaknesses of individuals, groups, or communities. These may be genetic, congenital, cognitive, motivational, social, and cultural in nature. Therefore, the intervening variables may fall into two major categories, i.e. individual variables, and social and cultural variables, as shown above. This model brings out the fact that the relationship between stress and illness is often mediated or moderated by the two sets of variables, those within and those outside the individual. These are briefly discussed below.
Personality:

Wallance (1972) defined personality as "those ways of behaviour or techniques of solving problems which have a high probability of use by one individual". These comprise the intervening variables between stress and health. Studies on individual variables such as Type A Behaviour Pattern (TABP), Psychosocial competence, and Hardiness have shown a relation with stress.

Type A Behaviour Pattern (TABP)

Rosenman et al. (1964) described this coronary-prone behaviour pattern as being characterized by competitiveness (hard-pushing); multiphasic achievement orientation, that is, wanting to achieve and do more than one thing at a time; chronic activation, that is a tendency to stay active most of the time of the wakeful part of the day; a sense of time urgency, that is speed in almost everything done like eating talking etc., as if time is running out on the person by the seconds; easy arousability and hostility or anger. Hostility/anger dimension is the ‘major’ if not the ‘only coronary-prone element.

Psychosocial competence

The behavioural attributes of psychosocial competence have been described by Tyler (1978) as active coping orientation, high initiative, realistic goal-setting, substantial planning, forbearance and effort to attain these goals and a capacity to enjoy success, suffer failure and benefit from both.
2.2 COPING WITH STRESS:

We can no longer count on “having finished our training”, for our work or on “having arrived at our goal”. In society, nowadays the skills and knowledge demanded by any job, as indeed the goals of society itself are developing (or at least changing) at such an unprecedented rate, that our first objective must be, to learn how to cope with the stress of adaptation to change, both in our work and in our social goals. Only thus, can we hope to succeed in overcoming the distressing loss of stability, while learning how to enjoy the challenge of adjustment to ever changing responsibilities, possibilities and aspirations.

A close perusal of literature reveals that ‘coping’ has been viewed in diverse ways. Dewe, Guest and Williams (1979)\(^60\) consider coping as an attempt to remove the feeling of discomfort. White (1964) defined coping as the process, which involves efforts towards solution of problems. It occurs when a person faces a threatening or dynamic change or problem that defies known or usual ways of behaviour and might give rise to anxiety, guilt, grief and shame and again forms the necessity for adaptation. McGrath (1976)\(^61\) has viewed coping as the covert and overt behaviour by which the organism actively prevents, removes or circumvents stress inducing circumstances.

Cohen and Lazarus (1974)\(^62\) assert that trait measures are poor predictors of coping. Situational oriented research focuses on how people endeavour to cope with specific stressful situations.
A critical and important distinction between the trait-oriented and the process-oriented approaches is that trait approach assumes that coping is mainly a property of the person and variation in stressful situations is of not much significance.

In contrast, process oriented approach assumes that coping is a response to the psychological and environmental demand of specific stressful encounters. Lazarus (1975) has suggested a classification of coping processes, which emphasizes two major categories, namely direct actions and palliative modes. Direct action includes behaviours or action which when performed by the organism in the face of a stressful situation is expected to bring about a change in stress causing environment. The palliative mode of coping refers to those thoughts or actions whose purpose is to relieve the organism of any emotional impact of stress. There is no clear consensus as to which coping strategies or modes of coping are most effective.

Schregardus (1976) proposed two major styles of coping namely repression and sensitization. He also found that patterns of defensive style were related to the perception and experiences of stress and to subsequent patterns of coping and adjustment. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) have suggested that “coping responses are the behaviour, cognitions and perceptions in which people engage when actually contending with their life problems. Coping responses represent some of the things that people do, their concrete efforts to deal with life strains they encounter in their roles. Responses that are directed at modification of the stressful situations are the most direct ways to cope with strain because they tend to eliminate the source of stress itself.
Pearlin and Schooler (1978) differed, they said coping refers to behaviour that protects people from being psychologically harmed by problematic experiences. They have identified three protective functions of coping behaviour i.e. by eliminating or modifying the conditions that give rise to the problematic situation, by perceiving the meaning of experience in such a manner that it neutralizes its problematic character and by keeping the emotional consequence under control.

Irving (1977) has presented a descriptive typology of distinctive patterns of coping that included vigilance, hyper vigilance and defensive avoidance. On the other hand, Robbins (1978) has identified seven patterns of coping viz, seeking social support, dysfunctional behaviour, narcotizing anxiety, problem solving, reliance on professionals; bearing with discomfort and escape. In recent years attention has been given to coping with stressful events of day-to-day life. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) believe that the coping responses which people use are a function of the social and psychological resources at their disposal. Social supports and psychological resources (e.g., mastery and self-esteem) are what people draw upon in developing coping strategies. Research has shown that these resources vary by sex, educational level, and income such that men appear to have more psychological resources than women and use them to develop more effective coping responses. In the same way, the better educated and the more affluent possess more resources and a wider range of coping alternatives. What is more important, aside from what people actually do to cope with stress, is the relative effectiveness of coping responses.
Pearlin and Schooler (1978) considered a coping response effective if it buffered the relationship between stressors and strains. The authors concluded that no single coping response was strikingly protective across life and work areas, but that having a larger and more varied coping repertoire was effective in reducing stressor/strain relationships. In this regard, the effectiveness of problem-focused vs. emotion-focused coping for buffering ill-health seemed to be a function of the controllability of the stressor, coping to any type being relatively ineffective in situations beyond the individual's control (Caplan, Naidu, and Tripathi, 1984; Felton, Reveson, and Hinrichsen, 1984; Fleishman, 1984; Krause and Stryker, 1984).

Particularly important in the present context was Pearlin and Schooler's finding that while various coping responses were effective in the areas of marriage, child-rearing, and household finances, coping was strikingly ineffective when applied to occupational problems. The authors suggested that the resistance of occupation to coping may be due to the impersonal nature of work and the lack of worker control over stressors.

According to Silver and Wortman (1980) coping refers to any and all responses made by an individual who encounters a potentially harmful situation. In addition to overt behaviour psychologists have included cognitions, emotional reactions (e.g. anger, depression) and psychological responses (e.g. nausea, insomnia etc) also as types of coping mechanisms. Coping, as Folkman and Lazarus (1980) have defined, is the cognitive and behavioural effort made to master, tolerate or reduce external demands and conflicts.
Coping, according to them, serves two main purposes, the management, change or modification of the source of the stress (problem-focussed coping) and the alteration and control of stressful emotions (emotion based coping). They found in their studies, involving people at work generated more problem focused coping in comparison to the episodes, which involved family members. The context of the episode (e.g., work, family, health related) also influenced the use and outcome of coping mechanism employed. For instance, work was found to be related to higher levels of problem focused, whereas health was related to emotion focused coping. Studies in the field of organizational behaviour showed that coping strategies are viewed as attempts of an individual to respond to the feeling of discomfort with the aim of reduction (Dewe, Guest & Williams, 1979). Some attempts have been made to identify coping strategies among industrial workers. Kahn et al (1964) identified four types of coping strategies viz. work addiction, cynicism, idealization of other's and dependent behaviour, and contrived conflict.

Most approaches to coping distinguish between strategies that are active in nature and oriented towards confronting the problem and strategies that entail an effort to reduce tension by avoiding dealing with the problem. Often individuals and groups learn coping strategies from each other. At a personal level, community members-such as friends, family and neighbours can assist in supporting each other through difficult times by providing social support. Social support is an exchange of resources (such as emotional comfort or material goods) between two individuals where the provider intends the resources to enhance the well-being of the recipient (Shumaker & Brownell (1984,1985)\textsuperscript{67}
Pareek (1983 b)\textsuperscript{68} has proposed two types of coping strategies, which people generally use in order to handle stress, i.e. dysfunctional and functional coping styles.

Coping may either take the form of avoiding the situation (reactive strategy), i.e. dysfunctional style, or confronting and approaching the problem (proactive strategy) i.e. functional style. Combining the two aspects of each of the three dimensions yield eight possible strategies to cope with stress.

1. **Impunitive**: Statements indicating either simple admission of stress or that stress is unavoidable and nothing can be done about it.
2. **Intropunitive**: Statements indicating self-blame or aggression towards one's self for causing stress.
3. **Extrapunitive**: Statements expressing aggression towards or putting self blame on others for a particular stress situation.
4. **Defensiveness**: Statements expressing either denial of stress or rationalization of stress by giving reasons for it.

The four functional styles are:

1. **Impresistive**: Statements indicating that the respondent is optimistic and hopes that time would solve the problem and things would work out well in the future.
2. **Intropersistive**: Statement indicating that the role occupant himself should take action to deal with the stress.
3. **Intrapersistive**: Statements indicating that the person expects someone else would contribute to the solution of the problem or deal with stress.

4. **Interpersistive**: Statements indicating that a solution of the problem can be obtained by joint efforts in which the role occupant and others would be involved.

Folkman and Lazarus (1984) have noted that coping is “a person’s constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p141). This definition implicates that coping is a process involving thoughts and behaviours in a specific context. Also, coping is a function of continuous appraisals and reappraisals of the shifting person-environment relationship.

Evidence from other recent studies suggests that some coping behaviors which workers use actually increase distress. Parasuraman and Cleek (1984) identified adaptive and maladaptive coping responses used in work settings. They found that adaptive coping responses (planning, organizing, and prioritizing assignments, enlisting the support of others) had no buffering effects on self-stress or job satisfaction but were associated with elevated trait anxiety. Mal-adaptive coping (working harder, making unrealistic promises, avoiding supervision) contributed to felt-stress and job tension, indicating that experience on the job did not necessarily lead to better stress coping skills (Dewe, Guest and Williams, 1987).
It is clear from the foregoing that the coping responses which people use, may increase, decrease, or have no effect on stressor/health relationships. Those which increase or decrease stress reactions need to be factored into job stress assessment instruments to increase ecological validity and “fine tune” descriptions of stressor/health relationship. Coping behaviors which have no buffering effect provide insights into the types of stress reduction strategies which are likely to be successful.

Sinha and Misra (1983)\textsuperscript{72} have studied the coping strategies of underprivileged university entrants. They noted that the disadvantaged students used conformity, feeling of inadequacy, withdrawal and ignoring the situation as coping strategies more than the advantaged students. Conformity or changing with the situation was employed by rural students more than urban students. Misra and Ganguly (1984) have investigated coping with stresses resulting from cultural transition among a group of African students studying in India. They found that students with high psycho-social competence used more problem focused coping and less amount of wishful thinking and self blame than their low competent counterparts. In addition, they showed greater amount of positive effect, positive self-perception and less amount of somatic complaints and negative effect than low competence students.

The most comprehensive approach to coping has been developed by Lazarus and his associates over a number of years (Delongis, 1983; Folkman, 1984; Kanner & Folkman, 1980).\textsuperscript{73}
It utilizes the transactional framework in which person and environment are seen in terms of a continuous ongoing relationship of actions which are appraisal and coping processes mediate this transactional relationship. Appraisal is considered as the cognitive process through which an event is evaluated as to whether the event is relevant to his/her well being and in what ways. Coping responses are made after the appraisal of the stress episode. Also, appraisal and coping continuously affect and influence each other throughout the given encounter.

Singh and Sinha (1986) have reported seven dimensions of coping viz. cheerful and optimistic work orientation, yogic recourse, rash reactions, temporary relaxation and quick decision, anger-expression to subordinates and superiors, anger expression to family members, drug addiction and smoking and independent problem solving. They noted that first two strategies are inversely related to strain.

The empirical study of coping with stresses has drawn the attention of Indian researchers only recently. These studies may be briefly examined here. In a study of examination stress Caplan, Naidu and Tripathi (1984) examined the relationship of coping and defense with affective outcomes. Working within the framework of person-environment (P-E) fit model, they found that defense -like measures were associated only with poor objective fit. The defences were associated positively with the negative effects and somatic complaints whereas the coping-like measures were associated positively with positive effect. They also noted that defences moderated the relationship between fit and ill.
They found that prayer, unlike withdrawal, appears to buffer the effects of poor-fit on being ill. The measures of coping like responses were associated with current subjective fit. These effects, however, were weak. The effects of coping and defense, as indicators of being ill, were generally stronger. The defenses were associated positively with positive affect. They also noted that defenses moderated the relationship between fit and being ill. They found that prayer, unlike withdrawal, appears to buffer the effects of poor-fit on being ill. The measure of coping used in this study included diagnosis and mobilization and the measure of defense included resignation, aggression, withdrawal, prayer and cognitive change. Singh and Pandey (1985) examined coping with problems in economic, family, personal, and social aspects of life in a sample of university students.

Using an open-ended measure, they identified five dimensions of coping namely appraisal-focused coping, secondary coping, and collective coping. The use of coping dimensions varied with the nature of problems faced by the individual.

Rajagopalan and Khandelwal (1988), in a sample of 120 engineering executives, found that total role stress had a positive correlation (0.28) with avoidance and negative correlation (-0.29) with approach coping style, both significant (0.001) level.

In a study done by Ganguly (1988) to explore stressful experiences in family and work domains in a sample of 120 adult males from each of the three cadres, i.e., manager, supervisor, and artisan, from a large organization located in Bhopal in Central India, the results indicated that the use of coping strategies was partly related to hierarchical position.
The managers and supervisors used avoidance-like coping strategy, which focused on regulation of interpersonal distance. This is congruent with the roles assigned to them. They are in a position to supervise people for attaining organizational goals. Distancing is a mechanism for incumbents of higher positions to influence their subordinates. Supervisors and artisans used rational effort and social manipulation more frequently. On the other hand, emotional discharge and affective regulation were used more frequently by managers. Religion and fatalistic coping were used more by the artisans followed by supervisors and managers. Logical analysis and tension reduction were also used more by supervisors and managers than artisans. Problem solving, affective regulation, appraisal focused coping, and emotional discharge were the prominent strategies for all the groups.

The core of all these strategies was characterized by emotional function. The problem solving strategy consisted of items aimed at managing stressful experiences through diverse efforts. This strategy is neither purely self-directed nor purely environment-directed. It involves both and defies the dichotomy of primary and secondary control. This strategy is flexible and reflects a mixed pattern of goal directed behaviour. It seems to be a culturally loaded strategy and reflects the diversity and complexity of influences characterizing the use of affective regulation and emotional discharge also indicates the emotional emphasis in coping process. The configuration of relatively more prevalent strategies suggests greater emphasis on the use of non-confrontative form of coping. In fact, the problem-focused strategy did not clearly emerge from the data. A category closer to this was identified which was termed as rational effort.
This strategy occupied a relatively lower position in the priority order. Thus, the pattern of coping could not be neatly categorized as emotion-focused, which implies avoidance like strategies. The significance of social manipulation along with fatalistic coping and religion are culturally relevant coping strategies.

Another important study of coping has been reported by Singh (1990) in relation to the stresses of executives. This study employed a measure of coping strategies involving four factors, namely, active problem solving, non-directional work approach, constructive deferred problem solving, and information seeking. He found that the high level executives experienced lesser stress and strain, utilized better coping strategies, and enjoyed more positive outcomes. Also, a combination of coping strategies forming a condition of passive coping strategy was related to high stress condition.

Pandey (1980, 1981) has indicated that integration is a positively valued and expected behaviour in Indian society. He has attributed it to the large-scale acceptance of feudal and hierarchical structure in Indian society. The studies of Tripathi (1981) also indicate modes of social influence in Indian socio-culturally setting. Social manipulation was positively associated with the strategies like affective regulation, emotional discharge and tension reduction. The strategies termed as rational effort, situation redefinition, problem solving, logical analysis and appraisal focused coping, with minor variations, went together. It was also observed that emotion discharge and tension reduction were not independent but related to other strategies.
Moos (1986) noted "that feelings of self confidence, an easy-going disposition, a disinclination to use avoidance coping and the availability of family support operate jointly to protect individuals from negative psycho-social consequences of life stress".

It may well be concluded that conceptualization of coping requires a comprehensive framework incorporating individual as well as situational variables. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have provided an outline of transactional model of stress in which the person and environment transaction involves, "a mutually reciprocal, bidirectional relationship". This present results indicate that coping strategies are flexible and their use is related to dispositional variables, type of stress and the context.

Models Designed for Coping Job Stress:

Cherns (1976) designed a model for managing organizational stress. Cherns in his socio-technical design advocated the need of a constructive participative organization if the system has to be capable of self-moderation, adaptive to change and effective in making use of the capacities of its manpower.

1. People who evidence an active interest in activities outside the work arena may not like to spend their energies on work more than what is minimum required. If people are to experience a psychological state of "Being in the control of the job", the one's responsibility for enriching the job should be voluntary.

2. An instrument based prescription may recommend the need for job enrichment irrespective of the employee's interest and commitment. The scale is proposed to be used for data collection only rather than for data collection, diagnosis and prescription.
3. Data generated by the scale should be reviewed in a participative setting by the concerned employee and the superior. This will help in defining role expectations and identifying stresses arising from the job. It will also help in taking account the abilities and expectations of the individuals and hence in improving effort performance expectancy.

Thus by using the participative approach, it will be possible to enjoy a number of advantageous outcomes. The author has categorized this into two groups.

The first level outcome of the PJCM includes (a) Congruence between the job and the individuals characteristics (b) Role clarity (c) Increasing expectancy (Effort performance) (d) Increasing expectancy. Similarly the second level outcome includes (a) Control of organizational stresses (b) Improvement in productivity (c) Improvement in worker satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism etc.

**A Model of Stress and Coping:**

This model shows a way to conceptualize stress. The person is constantly interacting with the environment; objective and psychological, in which there are stressors. Stress may be manifested in physiological, psychological or behavioural responses. The nature of response depends upon individual differences. Some are more sensitive to the presence of stressors. Some use more effective coping mechanisms.
Bounce Model (1983): Pestonjee developed a model to explain how we cope with stress reactions. It is called the bounce model, because the behavioural decompensation taking place due to stress tends to get reflected in interpersonal and other reactions. The reactions are received and analyzed by the environment, which, in turn, bounces back signals to the individual to bring about a change either at the organism level or at the response level.

1. Intraphysic includes things, which are intimate and personal, like temperament, values, abilities and health.
2. External (Physical) includes totality of the work environment, atmosphere, colleagues, policies etc.
3. External (Social) refers to the cultural context of one's life, it may include religion, caste, language, dress and other factors.

NIOSH research has identified organizational characteristics associated with both healthy, low stress work and high levels of productivity. The following characteristics are included.

- Recognition of employees for good work performance.
- Opportunities for career development.
- An organizational culture that values the individual worker.
- Management actions that are consistent with organizational values.

A Cybernetic – Theory of Organizational Stress:
Cybernetic is concerned with the use of information and feedback to control purposeful behaviour. The basic premise of this theory is that behaviour is deviated at reducing deviations from a specific goal state.
It is the deviations from the goal state itself that direct the behaviour of the system, rather than some predetermined internal mechanism that aims blindly.

(Buckley 1967:53) Cybernetic theory points to information that is needed to detect strain in the workplace and to device and implement effective coping strategies. Lack of information about stresses and individual differences can lead to poor choice of stress interventions. Insufficient knowledge of effects can make it difficult or impossible to adjust or modify the interventions if necessary. Cybernetic theory suggests that both person and the environment (and the intervention between them) are essential for understanding and resolving Organizational Stress.

Following a medical model, organizations have traditionally addressed Organizational stress from the person side of the relationship (Murphy 1995). They have implemented a number of practices aimed at helping employees understand stress – health relationship and gain the skills to manage workplace stresses.

These individual oriented interventions include relaxation techniques such as meditation and biofeedback; health facilities for physical exercise, time management practice, wellness programs and stress inoculation focusing which helps employees identify stress indicators and devise coping behaviours. Evidence suggests that these personal approaches can provide employees with better coping skills and reduce indicators of strain such as anxiety, depression and blood pressure (Ivancevich et.al., 1990). These positive effects are typically short term, however, pointing to the need to address the environmental condition giving rise to experienced stress.
From a cybernetic perspective, assessing stress and threats in the workplace requires information about employees' preferences and actual working conditions, so a comparison can be between the two. The greater the discrepancy between the preferred and the actual, the greater the likelihood of experienced strain. Moreover, because not all strains require equal attention, information is needed about the relative importance of working conditions for employees' well-being. Stress intervention would have the greatest effect by focusing on the most important working conditions showing the greatest discrepancy between the preferred and the actual.

**Action Plan for Coping:**

What can employees do to reduce workplace stress? They might start, Stum, President of Aon Consulting based in Chicago, Illinois, says, by taking a fresh look at their benefit packages as work hours lengthen, employees are placing greater importance on the time off they receive. Indeed, when the researchers asked workers to rank 23 common benefits, paid vacation and holidays was six places higher in 1998 than in 1995, now claiming the fourth sport among all employee benefits.

On a more fundamental level, Stum believes that companies should begin tailoring the workplace to the need of individual workers. "Executives have gotten smart about how to segment their customer base, now they need to get smart in segmenting their workforce," he says. "We are talking about something a whole lot more sophisticated than allowing a few employees to work at home."
Companies need to think about customizing work schedules and benefits packages to help each employee strike the right Work-Life balance."

Rethinking the relationship between the employer and employee can go a long way towards reducing workers stress level and it may also pay big dividends for companies. Aon researches isolated 17 determinants of workforce commitment – as seen from employees point of view. Management’s reorganization of personal and family life ranked first, whereas salary did not even make the top ten. Says Stum, “employers who do a superior job of recognizing the important of worker’s of the job lives could be rewarded with a more committed and productive workforce and an improved bottom line”

**Improving Person-Environment Fit:**

Any intervention designed to improve person-environment fit must be individualized. A standard job enlargement program might improve the fit of some employees while worsening the fit of others. Individual data on person-environment fit are required for planning a successful program. Our questionnaires can provide these data for a wide spectrum of jobs, but some common dimensions may need to be added for special jobs: For example, one special stress common for personnel officers could be hostile for union members.

There are several way of improving fit in an individualized programme: by changing job stresses, by changing abilities of the person, by increasing supplies for needs by changing the person’s goals.
A good fit between the person and the environment occurs when the supplies in the environment (for example, money, supportive people, opportunities to achieve) are sufficient to satisfy the motives of the individual.

**Reducing Job Stress:** Improving the person-environment fit of an employee by changing job stresses may run into important opposing forces. For example, the change may involve changes in technology, which are extremely expensive. In addition, the individualized changes in specific job demands upsets the formal bureaucratic structure of jobs when each individual is doing his or her own thing. Furthermore, there may be serious problems of inequity of pay another reward when jobs are individualized rather than standardized. Despite these barriers to an individualized change in job stresses in order to improve person-environment fit, it is well worth the effort.

Studies have found that person-environment fit can be twice as important as the job stresses plus the effects of personal abilities and goals in determining job strains. Stress on the person due to the under utilization of employee’s highest skills means that the organization is not getting its full return from the money invested in the person’s salary.

These discussions emphasize several important themes, such as the relevance of both demand-abilities fit and needs—supplies fit to recruitment and selection decisions, the need to customize Organizational interventions to suit the needs and abilities of the affected individuals and the viability of resolving P-E misfit by targeting the person, the environment, or both.

These general principles provide an overarching framework for stress management interventions. However, it is difficult to translate these principles into more detailed prescriptions, due to the limitations of available evidence regarding the exact nature of the relationship between Person-Environment fit and strain.

2.3 ROLE FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS:

Role is an important dimension in understanding an organization and planning its effectiveness. An individual is linked with the system, this linkage is a vital "entity", which may help increase Organizational Effectiveness by integrating the individual with the Organization. In this sense, role becomes an important dimension for planning the effectiveness of both the person and the organization. By achieving an integration of self amongst various roles, an individual increases his personal effectiveness and mental well being and at the same time makes the best use of one's creativity thus maximizing organizational effectiveness.

The main purpose behind these interventions is to increase the mutuality of role in an organization. Organizational effectiveness to a large extent, depends on such mutuality.
Mutuality ensures that the problems, which an organization faces are solved by teams of people who use their expertise in looking at various aspects of the problems, and collaborate in ensuring speedy, efficient and effective solutions. Problems in organizations are becoming more complex, and require the joint effort of several individuals. Even individual effectiveness requires a higher degree of collaboration. Though the terms ‘confrontation’ may be used for such a process, the term ‘exploration’ has generally been preferred.

The issues that are particularly relevant in role interventions are mentioned below:

1. **Mutuality versus exclusiveness**: Role interventions attempt to build mutuality amongst the roles. Help giving and receiving is possible only in a relationship of mutuality. Mutuality is a function of trust, and a perception of the importance and power of the other role as well as one’s own. If a role occupant perceives his own role, or the other role to lack power, other kinds of relationship may develop between the two roles.

2. **Creativity versus conformity**: Role interventions attempt to stimulate persons in an organization to search new solutions to the problems they face in working together. The emphasis is on attempting alternative ways of solving a problem. Role-interventions tone down the use of traditional methods of problem solving, if these methods have not proved to be efficacious. Creativity can be achieved by looking at the problem from different angles, and IRE (Inter-Role Expectation) stresses this. Creativity is related to internal locus of control.
3. **Confrontation versus avoidance:** The main philosophy underlying role intervention is that problems can be solved if they are brought to the surface and a conscious attempt made to search out a solution. Instead of avoiding the problems either by not looking at them or by working on no-issues, these interventions attempt to help the various role occupants confront their problems in order to find a solution. According to this approach, confrontation of a problem is necessary to reach a lasting solution.

4. **Exploration versus expectation of readymade solutions:** Role interventions attempt to help people evolve a solution rather than expect any such solution from experts or from other persons in the organization. The usual tendency is to look for a readymade solution, which may relieve tension, especially if it is suggested and prescribed by an authority figure like an expert or the top management. The underlying philosophy of role focused OD is that such a solution may not be effective involving a problem. Effective solutions can come about only through exploration rather than through acceptance of an ideal solution. Exploration would mean a joint effort at understanding the problem and weighing the alternate solution.

Role interventions use a structured approach along with process orientation. Although the various steps involved in these interventions are aimed at generating data, using structured exercises, the work on the data involves group work, and the solutions can only be achieved through process-oriented work on the problems brought to the surface by the structured exercises.
By using the structured exercises, the usual threat which process work produces is reduced. Confrontation of the problems and issues of inter-role relationships are brought up during the discussion in which process interventions by a consultant become important.

To sum up, the main purpose of role-focused interventions is to increase creativity and the coping ability of individual employees, and also promote mutuality amongst the organizational roles. These interventions encourage exploration or confrontation [rather than avoidance], mutuality [rather than exclusiveness], and creativity [rather than adoption of known solutions or conformity to expectations]. Role-focused interventions are structured, and therefore non-threatening, but they focus sharply on the intra­-group, inter-group and organizational processes.

**Dealing with Role Ambiguity:**

- When an individual is not clear about the various expectations people have from his role, he faces a conflict, which may be termed as role ambiguity. Role ambiguity may be due to the lack of information available to the role occupant, or due to the lack of understanding of the information available. Role ambiguity may be in relation to the activities, responsibilities, personal style and norms. There can be three foci of role ambiguity; the expectations that a role sender holds from the role occupant, the expectations sent by the role sender to the role occupant, and the expectations, which the role occupant receives and interprets in the light of prior information and experience.
Four different kinds of roles are likely to experience ambiguity; roles which are new to the organization, roles in expanding or contracting organizations, roles in organizations exposed to frequent changes in demand, and process roles. Role ambiguity may result in various other conflicts.

This can be overcome by ROLE ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE (RAT) suggested by Dayal and Thomas and later by Pareek (1975) which involves following steps;

- Completion of an expectation form by the role occupant, including expected functions, and their importance in the role.
- Completion of an expectation form by each member of the role set.
- Preparation of a summary of the expectations by the role occupant.
- Discussion of the differences and the achievement of a consensus regarding the various functions in the role. The discussion is initiated and coordinated by the role occupant.

**Stresses of Role Taking:**

- This includes Self Role Distance, Role Overload and Role Stagnation.
- An organizational role is defined by the expectations of the role senders [including the role occupant]. If the role occupant only goes along with the other role senders' expectations, he may experience several stresses such as above. On the other hand the role of occupant may realize that he has a central place in shaping his role.
Role making refers to the initiative and proactive stand taken by the role occupant in relation to his role. In these stresses [SRD, RS and RO] role making is particularly relevant.

- **Role Stagnation:** In Role Stagnation, the changing demands of the role may produce stress, especially when the role occupant has been occupying another role for a long time, and finds it difficult to make the transition. Role stagnation also includes stress related to career progression. At middle age, and usually at the middle-management levels, a career becomes increasingly problematic and most executives find that their progress slows down. Job opportunities become fewer, the jobs available take longer to master, the decisions cannot be revoked, old knowledge and methods become obsolete, energies may be flagging or utilized more for family activities and there may be a 'press' of fresh young recruits to complete with. The executives usually suffer these fears, disappointments and frustrations in silent isolation from their families and colleagues.

- The fear of demotion or obsolescence can be strong for those who know they have reached their career ceiling, and most will inevitably suffer some erosion of status before they finally retire. An organization needs to pay attention to this.

- **Age is no longer reversed** – it is fast becoming a young man's world. The rapidity with which the society is developing [technologically, economically and socially] is indicative of the fact that individuals will now need to change careers during their working life [as companies change their products].
Such trends breed uncertainty and research suggests that older workers look for stability. Unless managers adapt their expectations to new circumstances, career development stress, especially later in life, is likely to become an increasingly common experience.

- Role Overload: When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his role set, he experiences role overload. Role Overload could be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative refers to having too much to do while qualitative implies work that is too difficult. The complementary phenomena of quantitative and qualitative underload are also hypothesized as a potential source of stress.

Inadequacy Stresses:

- A sense of inadequacy or powerlessness can be extremely stressful. Interventions may be required to make the roles more important and central in an organization. Three factors contributing to this feeling of inadequacy or powerlessness are; the perception that role does not have challenging and important functions, a perceived lack of resources needed for effective role performance, and a perceived lack of internal resources [competence]. The three stresses are, Role Erosion, Role Inadequacy and Personal Inadequacy.

Role Erosion:

- Role Erosion is a feeling by the role occupant that his role; either does not have important functions, or that such functions have been taken away from the role [for example during re-organization leading to the creation of new roles and redesigning of existing roles].
When an organization expands, or is redesigned, or its functions change, most individuals are likely to feel that the new roles which are being created as a result of these changes being less important and less satisfying to them. This feeling of a loss of importance is called role erosion. The stress caused by role erosion can be managed by understanding the strong aspects of the roles, and redefining the role. This can be overcome by Role Substantiation through exercises like "fish bowl" with the help of a facilitator. This is called Role Substantiation.

Role Isolation:

- In a role set, the role occupant may feel that certain roles are psychologically nearer to them, while others are at a distance. The main criteria of role-role distance are the frequency and ease of interaction. When linkages are strong, the role-role distance will be low. In the absence of strong linkage, the resulting role-role distance can produce stress. The linkages are strong or weak in relation to how they are desired by the role occupant. Role Isolation can, therefore, be measured in terms of the existing and desired linkages. The gap between the desired and the existing linkages will indicate the amount of distance between the two roles.

- Relationships at work are a major source of managerial stress. Poor relations can be defined as those which exhibit a low trust, a low supportiveness and a low interest in listening to or helping in the problems confronted by the role occupant.
This stress can overcome by Role Linkage. This exercise is to build mutuality and linkages amongst the roles within a role set. Wherein the facilitator explains the concepts of role and role set, and the purpose of the exercise. Role linkages may be considered weak when the perceived distance between one role and another is significantly large. Weak role linkages may lead an individual to develop efficiency in isolation.

Usually these tendencies are discernible in large organizations. In such situations, solving problems by individuals in isolation may be quite effective; but when collaborative efforts are called for, these distances may hamper organizational effectiveness, thereby rendering this coping strategy dysfunctional.

Role pairs with perceived low linkages meet and discuss where there are weak linkages [or which linkages are perceived as weak] and what can be done to improve them. The steps mutually agreed upon by the role occupants are then shared with the entire group.

When individuals experience stress, they adopt ways of dealing with it as they cannot remain in a continual state of tension. We will call this coping. The word coping has been used mainly with two meanings – ways of dealing with stress, and the effort to ‘master’ conditions of harm, threat or challenge. We will use the term coping as in the first meaning [ways of dealing with stress], and distinguish between effective and ineffective coping.
Generally, effective coping strategies are ‘approach’ strategies, which confront the problem of stress as a challenger, and increase the capability of dealing with it. Ineffective strategies are ‘escape’ or ‘avoidance’ strategies, which reduce the feeling of stress, for example, by denying the reality of stress, or through the use of alcohol, drugs or other aids to escapism.

Research has shown that social and emotional support available to the person helps him to effectively cope with stress. Persons maintaining close interpersonal relationships with friends and family are able to use more approach strategies.

Social support includes both material support [providing resources], and emotional support [listening to the person and encouraging him]. However, studies have also shown that unsolicited support may have negative consequences.

Approach or effective strategies of coping include efforts to increase physical and mental preparedness for coping [through physical exercises, yoga and meditation, diet management], creative diversions for emotional enrichment [music, art, theatre, etc.] strategies of dealing with the basic problems causing stress, and collaborative work to solve such problems.

The various coping strategies or styles used in role stress have been studied and the findings show that approach style have a strong relationship with internality, optimism, role efficacy, job satisfaction and effective role behaviour in organizations. Two contrasting strategies [avoidance or dysfunctional and approach or functional] for some role stresses are explained below.
Let us take self-role distance. Many individuals find conflict between their self-concept and the role they occupy in an organization. They may play that role in a routine way to earn their living. They take no interest in their role and this is indicative of self-role distance i.e. they have rejected the role. On the other hand, some other individuals may seriously occupy their roles and in due course of time, completely forget their self-concept and play that role effectively, but reject their self. Both these approaches are avoidance approaches and are dysfunctional. If an individual rejects the role he is likely to be ineffective in the organization. However, if he rejects the self, it is likely to lose his effectiveness as an individual, which in turn will adversely affect his mental health.

An approach for functional or functional strategy of dealing with his stress is to attempt role integration. The individual may analyze the various aspects of the roles, which cause self-role distance, and may begin to acquire skills, which help him to bridge this gap or carry his own self into the role by defining some aspects of the role according to his own strengths. In other words, an attempt to both to grow into the role and make the role grow to use the special capabilities of the person would result in role integration, where the individual gets the satisfaction of occupying a role which is nearer to his self-concept. Such an integration is not easy to achieve, but with systematic effort, it is also not very difficult to attain.

Similarly is the case with role expectation conflict. When the various expectations from the role one occupies conflict with one another, role stress may develop.
One way to deal with this stress is to eliminate these conflicting expectations from the role. This process called role shrinkage prunes the role in such a way that some expectations can be given up. Role shrinkage may help in avoiding the problem, but it is a dysfunctional approach since the advantage of a larger role is lost. Instead of role shrinkage, if role linkages are established with other roles and the problem solved by devising some new ways of compromising the conflicting expectations, the individual can experience both the process of growth as well as satisfaction. For example, if a professor who experiences conflict between the three expectations from his role – those of teaching students, doing research and consulting organizations, finds that the stress is essentially one of personal inadequacy, not having enough skills, he may take recourse to role shrinkage.

However, one way to deal with this problem is to develop role linkages with other colleagues who are good at research, and work out an arrangement whereby research is not neglected A better way of resolving the problem could be to find ways of doing things in a more non traditional and productive manner.

Role stagnation is a common stress within organizations. Individuals who acquire new roles as a result of promotion or taking over of more challenging roles feel apprehensive because the role is new and requires skills, which the role occupant may not have. In such a situation, the usual response is to continue as in the previous role about which the individual is sure, and which he had been doing successfully. In many cases, this is the tragedy of the organizations – even after advancement people at the top continue to play the role of lower level managers.
A foreman, for example, in due course of time may become a General Manager, but he may still continue to play the role of a foreman. This as a consequence frustrates the new foreman and others who expect the GM to devote his time to the more productive aspects. In one organization, after several self-search sessions, it became clear to many senior management level personnel that their tendency towards close supervision was really a tendency to continue playing their old roles. This is especially so if the individual role requires many new skills which have to be developed. For example, planning roles and the role of scanning the environment require altogether new skills. In the absence of such skills, the usual tendency is to fall back on the old tried out roles. This is called role fixation, and is an avoidance strategy.

It is necessary for an individual to grow out of his role as a boy into that of an adolescent, and out of adolescence into adulthood. Similarly, it is important for people to grow out of their old roles into new ones and face up to the new challenges. An approach or a functional strategy to resolve this conflict is that of role transition. Role transition is the process whereby a previous role, howsoever successful and satisfying it may have been, is given up to take a new and a more developed role. Role transition is helped by various processes, including anticipatory socialization, role clarity, substitute gratification and the transition procedure. In order to make role transition more effective, it is necessary to have anticipatory socialization that is preparatory to the taking up of the new role. This would also include delegation of responsibility and functions to people in subordinate roles, so that a person can be free to experiment, and get help in such experimentation from others. Such a process of role transition may be very useful.
In inter-role distance an individual may experience stress due to conflict between the roles he occupies, and which may conflict with the expectations. The usual approach to deal with this problem is to either partition the roles clearly, so that a person is a husband or a father when he is at home, and an executive when he is in his office. The other alternative is role elimination, which is accepting one role at the cost of the other. In such a case, the individual takes recourse to rationalization. Take for example; an executive who neglects his family at home and in this process eliminates his role as a father and a husband. He rationalizes this process by thinking that he makes a unique contribution to the company and can therefore afford to neglect his family, or that he earns enough for his family, which in turn, should pay the price of losing him as a husband and a father. Such rationalizations are a part of the process of role elimination. These are avoidance strategies.

Role Efficacy:

The performance of a person working in an organization depends on his own potential effectiveness, technical competence, managerial experience, etc. as well as the design of the role that he performs in the organization. It is the integration of the two [the person and the role] that ensures a person’s effectiveness in the organization. Unless a person has the requisite knowledge, technical and the skills required for the role, he cannot be effective. Equally important is how the role which he occupied in the organization is designed. If the role does not allow the person to use his competence, and if he constantly feels frustrated in the role, his effectiveness is likely to be low.
The integration of a person and the role comes about when the role is able to fulfill the needs of the individual, and when the individual in turn is able to contribute to the evolution of the role. The more we move from role taking [responding to the expectations of the other persons to role making] taking initiative in designing the role more creatively in a way such that the expectations of the others as well as of the role occupant are integrated], the more the role is likely to be effective. Effectiveness of a person-in-role in an organization will depend on his own potential effectiveness of the role, and the organizational climate. The potential effectiveness can be called efficacy.

Personal efficacy would mean potential effectiveness of a person in personal and interpersonal situations. Role efficacy would mean the potential effectiveness of an individual occupying a particular role in an organization.

Role efficacy can be seen as the psychological factor underlying role effectiveness. In short, role efficacy is the potential effectiveness of a role.

**Aspects of Role Efficacy:**

Role efficacy has several aspects. The more these aspects are present in a role, the higher the efficacy of that role is likely to be. These aspects can be classified into three groups or dimensions. One dimension of role efficacy is called ‘role making’ as opposed to role taking. The former is an active attitude towards the role [to define and make the role as one likes], whereas the latter is a passive attitude [mainly responding to the others’ expectations].
Dimension 1: Role Making

a) **Self-Role integration**: Every person has his strengths, experience, technical training, special skills, and some unique contribution that he may be able to make. The more the role a person occupies the more he has an opportunity for the use of such special strengths, the higher his efficacy is likely to be. This is called self-role integration.

b) **Proactivity**: A person who occupies a role, responds to the various expectations that people in the organization have from that role. Proactivity means taking initiative rather than only responding to the others' expectations contributes much more to efficacy.

c) **Creativity**: An opportunity to try new and unconventional ways of solving problems. An opportunity to be creative is equally important.

d) **Confrontation**: The tendency to confront problems and find relevant solutions contributes to efficacy. When people facing interpersonal problems sit down, talk about these problems and search out solutions, their efficacy is likely to be higher.

Dimension 2: Role Centering

a) **Centering**: If a person occupying a particular role in an organization feels that the role he occupies is central to the organization, his role efficacy is likely to be high. Every employee would like to feel that his role is important to the organization.
If persons occupying various roles feel that their roles are peripheral i.e. not very important, their potential effectiveness will be low. This is true for all persons and not only for those at the lowest level. In a large hospital Class IV employees like ward boys and attendants had very high motivation when they joined the hospital. They would bring their friends and relatives from nearby villages to proudly show their place of work. However, within a few months they sat gossiping in groups. They were rated as very low in their effectiveness. An investigation of this problem showed that within a few months of their joining the hospital, their perception about the importance of their role changed; they felt that their role was not important at all. In contrast with this, in another hospital, the gatekeeper was trained to screen visitors who wanted to sit outside the visiting hours. He used his discretion in making or not making exceptions and referred a case to the nurses or doctors for only clarification and guidance.

Interviews with Class IV employees in this hospital showed that they perceived their roles as quite important. One obvious factor underlying the low motivation of the former and the higher motivation of the latter was the perceived importance of the roles.

b) Influence: A related concept is that of influence or power. The more influence a person is able to exercise in the role, the higher the role efficacy is likely to be.
One factor which may make roles in the public sector or civil service more efficacious is the opportunity to influence a larger section of the society. On the other hand, if a person feels that he has no power in the role he occupies in the organization, the efficacy is likely to be low.

c) Personal Growth: One factor which contributes effectively to role efficacy is the perception that the role provides the individual with an opportunity to grow and develop. There are several examples of people leaving one role and becoming very effective in another primarily because they had more opportunity to growth in the latter. A head of a training institute accepted the position, taking a big financial cut in his salary because he felt that he had nothing more to learn in the previous position, and in the new position he had opportunities to grow further. Examples of executives switching over to faculty roles at the management institutes indicate the importance of self-development in role efficacy. If a person feels that he is stagnating in a role without any opportunity to growth he is likely to have a low role efficacy. In many institutes of higher learning, the roles of the staff pose problems of low efficacy.

The main factor behind this is the lack of opportunity for them to grow systematically in their roles. Institutes which are able to plan the growth of such people in the roles will have higher efficacy and obtain a great deal of contribution from them.
Dimension 3: Role Linking:

a) **Inter-role Linkage:** Linkages of one's role with other roles in the organization increases efficacy. If there is a joint effort in understanding problems, finding solutions, etc., the efficacy of the various roles involved is likely to be high. Of course, the presumption is that people know how to work effectively. Similarly, if a person is a member of a task group set up for a specific purpose, his efficacy, other factors being common, is likely to be high. The feeling of isolation of a role [that a person works without any linkage with other roles] reduces role efficacy.

b) **Helping Relationship:** In addition to inter-role linkage, the opportunity for people to receive and give help also increases role efficacy. If persons performing a particular role feel that they can get help from some source in the organization whenever the need arises, they are likely to have higher role efficacy. On the other hand, if there is a feeling that no help is forthcoming when asked for, or that the respondents are hostile, role efficacy will be low. A helping relationship is of two kinds - feeling free to ask for help and expecting that help would be available when it is needed, as well as the willingness to give help and respond to the needs of others.

c) **Super-ordination:** A role may have linkages with systems, groups and entities beyond the organization. When a person performing a particular role feels that what he does is likely to be of value to a larger group, his efficacy is likely to be high.
The roles, which give opportunities to the role occupants to work for superordinate goals have the highest role efficacy. Super-ordinate goals are goals, which serve large groups, and those which cannot be achieved without some collaborative effort. One major motivation for people at the top, to move to public sector undertakings is to have an opportunity to work for larger goals, which are likely to help larger sections of the society. Many people have voluntarily accepted cuts in their salaries to move from the private sector to the public sector at the top level, mainly because the new role would give them an opportunity to serve a larger interest. Roles in which people feel that what they are doing is helpful to the organization in which they work, result in role efficacy. But if a person feels that he does not get an opportunity to be of help to a larger group, the role efficacy is likely to be low.

2.4 ROLE EFFICACY AND EFFECTIVENESS:

Research shows that persons with high role efficacy seem to experience less role stress, anxiety and work related tension. They rely on their own strengths to cope with problems and use more purposeful behaviour. They are active and they interact with people and the environment; persist in solving problems mostly by themselves, and sometimes by taking the help of other people, show growth orientation, attitudinal commitment, positive and approach behaviour, and feel satisfied with their jobs and roles in the organizations. This is a profile of effective managers.
The way people and jobs are put together and the way their roles and relationships are defined is an important determinant whether an organization is successful.

In the 1950s, effectiveness was defined as the degree to which an organization realized its goals. The 1960s and early 1970s saw a proliferation of Organizational Effectiveness studies where thirty different criteria were identified to measure organizational effectiveness.

1. Overall effectiveness
2. Productivity
3. Efficiency
4. Profit
5. Quality
6. Accidents
7. Growth
8. Absenteeism
9. Turnover
10. Job Satisfaction
11. Motivation
12. Morale
13. Control
14. Conflict / Cohesion
15. Flexibility / Adaptation
16. Planning & Goal Setting
17. Goal Consensus
18. Internalization of Organizational goals
19. Role & Norm congruence
20. Managerial interpersonal skills
21. Managerial task skills
22. Information management & communication
23. Readiness
24. Utilization of environment
Organizational Effectiveness must consider both means (process) and ends (outcomes) because organizations do many things and their success depends upon adequate performance in a number of areas. The definition of Organizational Effectiveness must reflect this complexity. In the middle and late 1980s, the eight characteristics given in Tom Peters and Robert Waterman's "In Search of Excellence", became the managerial bible for many practicing managers. After studying forty two companies, Peters and Waterman's described as well managed, highly effective or "excellent" – these included firms like IBM, Du Pont, 3M, McDonald's and Procter & Gamble – they found eight common characteristics that these companies had in common.

1. They had a bias for action and getting things accomplished.
2. They stayed close to their customers in order to fully understand their customer's need.
3. They allowed employees a high degree of autonomy and fostered the entrepreneurial spirit.
4. They sought to increase productivity through employee participation.
5. Their employees knew what the company stand for and their managers were actively involved in problems at all levels.
6. They stayed close to the businesses they knew and understood.

7. They had organization structures that were elegantly simple, with a minimal number of people in staff support activities.

8. They blended tight, centralized controls for protecting the company’s core values with loose controls in other areas to encourage risk taking and innovation.

The goal attainment approach states that an organization’s effectiveness must be appraised in terms of the accomplishment of ends rather than means. The two dominant positions of Organizational Effectiveness are goal attainment and systems approaches. The former defines Organizational Effectiveness as the accomplishment of ends. The latter focuses on means – defining Organizational Effectiveness as the ability to acquire inputs, process these inputs, channel the outputs and maintain stability and balance in the system. The strategic – constituencies approach defines Organizational Effectiveness as satisfying the demands of those constituencies in the environment from which the organization requires support for its continued existence. Success, then is the ability to placate those individuals, groups and institutions upon which the organization depends for its continued operation.

The final perspective is one based on competing values. It has sought to synthesize the large number of Organizational Effectiveness criteria into four models, each of which is based on a given set of values and each of which, additionally, is preferred depending on where an organization is in its life cycle.
Organizational Effectiveness is conceptually complex. It can be defined as the degree to which an organization attains its short (ends) and long term (means) goals, the selection of which reflects strategic constituencies, the self interest of the evaluator, and the life stage of the organization.

Bhandarker and Singh (1986) proposed a triponged action plan aimed at three levels namely, individual, organizational and societal, because the problem of stress reduction and prevention is both complex and intricate. The action plan is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Level</th>
<th>Organizational Level</th>
<th>Societal Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual can reduce stress by:</td>
<td>Helping them to smoothen the ‘home’ life so that the friction between work and home life is minimal.</td>
<td>Teaching belief in self through facilitating in dependent interaction with the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Cultivating belief in self</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Develop inner directed personality</td>
<td>B Improving channels of communications; sharing information and greater feedback on performance to develop one’s sense of identify in the system</td>
<td>B A larger movement to discourage mindless pill popping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Developing self-coping mechanism by adopting the strategy of coming up to stress.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Giving greater assurance to management and support to reduce psychological burden.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Shifting focus to Indian heritage for the sake of suitable habit / life partner.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reducing blind drug intake and relying on genuine problem solving strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Facilitating greater inter relationship among individuals to build positive relationships.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Cultivating positive habits on interest such as yoga, meditation, sports, breathing exercise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Discourage blind drugs usage and encouraging medical treatment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Promoting culture of small family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Introducing compulsory breathing exercise.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Using demographic information to identify stress prone persons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Inducing psychiatrists into health care units and improving health related facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Making annual holidays compulsory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kumar in his paper on Management of Executives identified four steps to be taken by executives to develop skills to resolve stresses.

1. Experiencing stress.
2. Identification of possible strategies to resolve stress.
3. Selecting and executing a strategy.
4. If stress is not resolved, trying out some other strategy.

According to Kumar, the resolution of stress is more curative than preventive and helps the executive to resolve stress after it has been experienced. On the contrary, management of stress is both preventive and curative. He attempted to make the individual executive understand: direct, control, predict and prevent stress in his job.

2.5 SUGGESTION AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL:

Karen Moore's an HR Consultant of HSE and IOM guidance, points out a list of ways to reduce workplace stress:

- Commitment by senior management which is evidenced by their presence at meetings and training sessions; for example:
- Involvement of trade union and workplace representatives at an early stage.
- Conducting an audit of stress as part of the risk assessment process and ensuring this is done regularly.
- Developing a clear policy statement and guidance about how the organization intends to deal with stress.
Ensuring that the related policies support this strategy; for example: the sickness absence policy, flexible working policy etc.

Ensure that legislation such as working time is adhered to

Put in place training courses which provide management development but also sessions, which provide information about how to manage stress and identify the signs.

Following up the results of the stress audit, for example: examining methods of work and making alterations to the working environment.

Monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis so that adjustments can be made.

Ensure that good communication channels are in place so that staff and managers know what is expected of them in relation to their job roles and also if problems rise.

Put in place curative measures such as Employee Assistant Programs and other benefits which signal to staff that they are valued and their contribution welcomed; which can also provide real assistance to those in need.

What can be done to protect the health and well-being of employees so that they stay healthy and productive in their jobs? Here are four strategies that lead to higher productivity, lower absenteeism and a healthier work force. While any one of these strategies can reduce occupational stress, when taken together they represent a powerful force in protecting the health – and the productivity – of individual employees.
Strategy One: Determine whether organizational restructuring, downsizing, and reengineering are in the best interest of your company – and your employees. In some instances the layoffs may have improved the financial health of the organization. But in many instances, the corporate restructuring did little to help the organization. In a study of 531 American Corporations companies, three-quarters of those surveyed indicated that they had reduced their payrolls. Most, however reported that the job reductions had failed to achieve their goals. “Eighty-five percent of the companies sought profits, but earnings increased in just 46% of the cases. Fifty-eight percent had expected higher productivity, but only 34% experienced it. Sixty-one percent sought to improve customer service, only 33% reported having it.”

Granted there are times which an organization must “downsize” operations in order to be viable. But decisions to reduce staff must be done carefully for the stress on employees will be immense and will not necessarily lead to achieving the hoped-for expectations. In addition, losing a job represents on of the greatest stress that an individual can experience. In a listing of 41 stresses, losing a job ranks 8th in severity with such stresses as “a death of a spouse”, “divorce”, “separation” raking before it.

Regrettably, the emotional problems affecting those who have experienced job loss are disturbing. In a study of 900 Canadian families that had experienced job loss, researcher William Avison discovered strikingly high levels of psychological problems among the unemployed; 55 to 75% greater than those who work steadily. Among the problems were depression, drug abuse and anxiety.
Granted, there are times in which layoffs are necessary in order to keep the organization financially viable. But if layoffs must occur, compassion must be communicated. The best way to communicate compassion? Provide severance packages, career-counseling services and make every effort to formally recognize the contributions that laid off workers have made to the enterprise.

It is also important to provide support to the “survivors”, those individuals whose jobs have been preserved and who were not a victim of corporate restructuring. The reason? Often there is resentment towards cost-cutting administrators even if their job has been protected. Said one manager “If it is cynical it’s for a good reason. I have seen too many people thrown out on the street. And yet the same basic management team that got us in the predicament was still there. You try to be objective. You say there are too many layers of management. There’s too much redundancy. It’s too difficult to get things done. Then you see lots of people getting hit for little or no reason. If it’s someone in your area who is being cut you momentarily think: Thank God it wasn’t me. Then you become very bitter about it. Especially if you know that it’s somebody who has worked hard, has done a good job and taken his responsibilities seriously.”

How best to retain the loyalty of the survivors? It is crucial for employees to understand the financial and programmatic reason for “rightsizing” an organization. But it is equally important for survivors to understand why their jobs were preserved. They need to understand what is expected of them and to understand that their role is vital to the future of the organization.
In brief, they need to see a new challenge – a challenge which when realized will be rewarded by their employer.

To repeat the threat of losing one’s job due to corporate restructuring, represents one of the most significant stresses in the life of an employee. Caution must be advised if the productivity and morale of workers is not diminished. If there is no alternative but to reduce the workforce, reductions should be made with concern both for the person losing their job as well as to the “survivors” – those whose jobs (and careers) have been preserved.

Strategy Two: Carefully control the number of hours worked. Today there is a tacit rule in many U.S. organizations: You cannot work too hard or too long. A new corporate model dubbed, the “High Commitment” model has sprung up that suggests your life should resolve around work and little else.

According to Fortune magazine, “At many companies the kind of punishing hours once reserved for crises have become the standard drill. A whole generation of managers has grown up who never had a 40 hours workweek; it appears that some never will. Or will they? With their personal and family lives in smithereens or a state of perpetual postponement, what seems a substantial contingent of the formerly ambitious have begun harboring seditious thoughts about the work ethic and the all-importance of a dazzling career. Exhaustion and disillusion are setting in.”

If organizations wish to keep highly productive employees, it is imperative that the issue of work overload be addressed. The reason?
There is evidence that talented employees will look elsewhere for work, if unreasonable demands are not diminished. In a study conducted by Korn / Ferry International, an executive search firm, of 700 senior executives found that only 7% want more responsibility. When the same question was asked a decade ago, 58% wanted more work, states Lester Korn, the firm's chairman: “A lot of people don't want the pressure. States Robert Kelley, A business professor at Carnegie Melon University and an expert on corporate restructuring, “The best executives are leading the move away from overwork. It used to be that 60-hour work weeks gave you warrior status, but the trend is reversing. People are saying that 60-hour work week means something is wrong with the system or with the person.

Now it should be emphasized that most employees don't mind hard work, provided it is work that they see rewarding to the organization as well to themselves. Nor do they mind the periodic stress that comes when long hours have to be worked in order to meet organizational deadlines. But the primary culprit that leads to stage five in the work satisfaction/dissatisfaction cycle, is unrelieved stress. It's the type of stress in which there is no exit. "My boss demands 65 hour work weeks," says a middle manager. "He is a workaholic and he expects everyone else to be a workaholic."

If an organization is restructuring operations, it is imperative that the resulting workloads of employees be carefully analyzed to make certain that the demands are reasonable. Unfortunately this is often not undertaken.
Kim Cameron, a University of Michigan business professor asked 2,000 managers at the companies about their workloads after layoffs. 47% of the respondents said they were working "a great deal" more than two years earlier. Stated Cameron: "There's a general approach of throwing a hand grenade at a bunch of employees and whoever survives has to do all the work there was before.

If personnel are to be skillfully managed so that productivity is increased and stress is decreased, sensitivity to the workloads of employees must be carefully addressed. David R Carpenter, CEO of Transamerica states the issue succinctly: "We can't beat people into the ground anymore." States Patrick Price, CEO of San Francisco Federal Savings, "We must recognize the signs when managers are being pushed too hard and help out with people, systems- whatever it takes."

When a worker dies from exhaustion in Japan, it is called koroshi, or "death from overwork". Fortunately, this problem has a solution. But for the problem to be solved executives/managers at all levels will need to understand its significance and be prepared to examine work responsibilities and determine what is appropriate given the challenges facing the organization and the abilities / needs of the workforce.

Strategy Three: Keep goals focused. Strategy two suggests that if occupational stress is to be diminished, the number of hours employees work should be carefully evaluated. This suggestion however, should not be taken to mean that workers would not work hard or respond to challenges that demand the very best from them.
If there is one fact that is documented in the management literature, it is this: Workers respond enthusiastically to a challenge—provided they see the benefit to their employer as well as to themselves.

There is no question: when individuals are committed to reaching a valued goal, optimism surfaces. This is true both professionally and personally. Consider a study of 1200 individuals who weathered tough times—from divorce to the death of a loved one to job loss. What enabled them to survive? Raymond Flannery, Jr. Assistant Professor of Psychology of Harvard University found that the survivors ("stress-tolerant people") were committed to reaching a goal. In addition, they had the benefit of strong, caring friendships.

It is difficult to overemphasize the empowerment that comes when employees establish meaningful priorities. For example, the occupational physician who smiled broadly as he described a new chair that he designed to eliminate back problems and reduce worker compensation costs.

Does the establishment of meaningful goals really reduce stress? Does it really lead to higher productivity and higher morale? Consider a twenty-year study at Yale University in which researcher asked graduates whether they had committed themselves in writing to what they wanted to accomplish in life. Only 3% had taken the time to write their goals. The class was again surveyed twenty years later. The 3% who had established their goals were more satisfied with their lives than those who had not. And 97% of the wealth of the class was in the hands of the same 3%.
Those who have their goals carefully defined tend to be among the most successful in their careers. While those who seem scattered, without focus, tend to be less successful.

If there is one commonality of employees in stage three in the job satisfaction / dissatisfaction model discussed earlier, it is this: their goals have become defused and their priorities have often become misplaced. The solution? Supervisors need to meet frequently with subordinates to carefully define goals, isolate problems that keep employees from realizing their goals and provide appropriate support. In addition, employees themselves need to carefully reexamine their work patterns and ask whether their time is being spent appropriately. It is a fact, that productivity could be noticeably improved if workers reexamined their priorities.

Economist Tor Dahl suggests that it is possible to free up to 30% of your time and resources without harming your current productivity. How? “First, by reducing waiting time; second, by screening those tasks you shouldn’t be doing; three, by delegating those tasks to the ideal person; fourth, by planning better use of your time; and fifth, by executing the tasks you should be doing better.”

In summary, the heart of strategy two must be a firm commitment on the part of management to help employees keep their goals focused and to jointly determine realistic time frames for achieving the goals. It also means that management will be available to help on problems associated with realizing the goals.
Strategy Four: Unleash the creativity in employees in resolving challenges confronting the organization. The reason? Once employees feel empowered to address major issues, they gain control over irritants that keep them from performing at peak levels. In addition, if an organization regards their creativity, they will be empowered to address other important issues. The result is that productivity will increase and stress will be diminished.

There is a growing body of research that demonstrates that creativity is almost universally present in people – at least in childhood. As documented in a thoughtful speech by Laurie A Broedling, Senior Vice President, McDonnell Douglas Corporation, the pre-school years represent a golden age of creativity in which “every child sparkles with artistry and innovative problem solving skills. Young children paint in bold and daring strokes. They are able to master two or more languages with little difficulty. After that however, with exposure to more structure and discipline, and with more peer group pressure a kind of rot sets in; and most of us grow into artistically stunted adults. It starts with school and it gets a whole lot worse as one enters corporate life.”

Pablo Picasso once noted the creativity of children at an exhibition of children’s work, when he observed, “When I was their age, I could draw like Raphael, but it has taken me a whole lifetime to learn to draw like them.”

Albert Elinstein was also acutely aware of the parallels between his thought process and those of children. “How did it come to pass that I was the one to develop the theory of relativity?
The reason, I think, is that a normal adult never stops to think about problems of space and time. These are things that he has thought of as a child. But my intellectual development was retarded, as a result of which I began to wonder about space and time only when I had already grown up. Naturally, I could go deeper into the problem than a child with normal abilities. After working with organizations for over twenty years, I am convinced that creativity can be relearned or as Ms. Broedling suggests: “It can be exhumed – from the slag heap of institutional thinking – and brought back to life with careful nurturing.”

How best to encourage creativity? First, there needs to be a careful alignment between an employee’s skills and the task that needs to be accomplished. Second, presenting organizational problems to staff and asking them to delineate two or three creative solutions, which often produces “out-of-the-box” thinking-new ideas for dilemmas. Third, employees should be asked directly if their talents are being adequately utilized. Often supervisors are unaware of the creativity within their staff. In Robert Blake and Jane Mouton’s pioneering work on managerial behavior they discovered that individuals who were perceived as “unproductive”, often had very productive lives outside of the organization. Not only were they holding responsible positions within their community and churches, but also they were making major contributions to non-work causes. But not recognizing their talents, employers were missing out on the many contributions that could have been made.

It is a fact that the brainpower of employees is not adequately utilized in most organizations.
At Individual Level:

Since stress is a very subjective experience, it can be most effectively and conveniently prevented or dealt with, through individual efforts. Most of the recent studies on stress management have proved the merits of individual-oriented techniques in preventing or reducing workers' distress (Murpy, 1984a). The individual-oriented interventions are more popular than organizational change approaches due to both logistic and conceptual factors. For example, individual-oriented programmes:

1. are less, even though inexpensive and can be established and evaluated quickly without major disruption of work routines,
2. focus on the workers, not the workplace as targets for change,
3. address the issue of individual differences in perception of and reactions to stress, and
4. can readily be incorporated into existing employee assistance and other company training programmes.

At individual level, stresses of job life can be prevented by making necessary restructuring and modifications in employees' cognitive and behaviour patterns, and by lowering their physiological arousals and stress reactions.

i. Cognitive Intervention Strategies: Stress circumstances do not take their toll from a passive individual but from an individual who imbues stressful situations with personal meaning and struggles to control or master these situations. According to transactional model of stress (Lazarus, 1956; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) experience of the reactions to stress largely depend upon focal person's cognitive appraisal of the stressful situation.
In primary cognitive appraisal, an employee evaluates' estimation of how much appears to be at stake in the transaction in term of their values, motives, or commitments. At the same time the focal person also evaluates (secondary appraisal) his capabilities and readily available resources to deal with the demands of the confronting situation. The final structure of the stress situation is based upon an equation that takes into account the amount and the probabilities of damage inherent in the threat as opposed to the individual's capacity to deal with it. The basic principle of cognitive model of stress reactions elaborates that “one's cognitive structure of a situation is an active and continuing process that includes successive appraisals of the external situation, and the risks, costs, and gains of a particular response. When the individual's vital interest appears to be at stake, the cognitive process provides a highly selective conceptualization. Depending upon the content of the cognitive constellation, the behavioural inclination may be a desire to flee, attack, approach or avoid.”

In conceptualizing a particular event, the cognitive set influences the picture obtained by an individual. Whether the mental image of the stress situation is broad, skewed, or narrow, clear or blurred, actual or distorted, depends upon the characteristics of the cognitive set. These cognitive sets determine which aspects are to be magnified, which to be minimized, and which to be excluded.
ii. Behavioural Intervention Strategies:

Following is an inventory of some stress-resistant behavioural pattern suggested by A.K. Srivastava [1997]:

1. Increase self-esteem and the level of tolerance and patience.
2. Do not be rigid in your ways of functioning, attitudes and decisions
3. Recognize the potential sources of stress in your job
4. Do things at work in a planned and systematic manner
5. Try to separate, and maintain coordination among your job and other roles.
6. Avoid doing many things simultaneously.
7. Set your priorities for job activities
8. Do work efficiently but avoid competitions
9. Work on changing or modifying the style, methodology and policies which caused the situation or experience of stress
10. Devote more time and energy to your job
11. Discuss the problems with supervisor or/and other competent colleagues or superiors
12. Try to maintain good relationship with your superiors, colleagues and subordinates, and have a few dependable friends
13. Thorough yourself into your job and work harder and sincerely
14. Avoid time pressures and role overloading being regular and making proper distribution of the time for your job activities
15. Avoid taking responsibilities or coming beyond your capability and resources
16. Do not try to reach the perfection level in all routine job activities.
17. Be sincere, but do not be over enthusiastic all the time in discharging your duties.
18. Frankly tell your limitations and inabilities.
19. Try to find out complete or durable solutions to the job related problems.
20. Try to nip the problems in the bud.
21. Be a realist, aspire within the framework of your capabilities and resources.
22. Do not poke your nose in other's or irrelevant affairs.
23. Try to overlook rather than to react to the irritating situations or behaviours of people at work.
24. Before doing something, consider all its possible consequences.
25. If there is no way out, do your best to get out of the situation gracefully.

Innovation Intervention Program: Herein employees at their own level innovate the strategies to change environmental pressures, barrier or procedures to prevent or reduce the stress at work. These innovations not only make the work environment less stressful, but also lead to the introduction of procedures, which enhance productivity and quality of work.

In their study, Bounce and West examined the effectiveness of Innovation Promotion Program IPP where in participants having identified work-related stress were encouraged to develop innovative responses to those stressors through group discussion and individual action planning.
Changing Stress-Inducing Behaviour Patterns:

Mathney et al [1986] have suggested that by making necessary alteration in behavioural patterns, employees can prevent stress to a considerable extent. Suinn [1982] developed a behaviour modification programme for heart patients, which included the training in muscle relaxation, identifying varying degrees of muscle tension, general relaxation, and using imagery to practice behaviour incompatible with Type A behaviour. Powell L.H. [1984] also suggested some programmes such as playing to lose in sports, preparing a list of things, which lead to anger, and laughing at oneself.

Developing Coping Skills and Resources:

Research findings suggest that social support is effective in combating stress [Wells, 1984]. Social support reduces employees' stress in three ways:

1. Social support can directly enhance health by satisfying social needs for affiliation, approval, appreciation, and security;

2. Social support can reduce inter-person tension at work and directly affects the level of stress;

3. Social support also buffers the relationship of occupational stress and consequent strains.

Time management has been found to be another useful method for helping workers in developing coping responses. The employee can prevent as well as combat with the stresses of role overload and conflicts through effective management of his time and prioritization of job activities or duties.
Besides the management of time, the employee should also determine the priorities for his different job activities. It is often seen that in absence of schedules and priorities majority of the workers spent more than fifty per cent of their time on non-productive activities.

**Monitoring Stressors and Stress Symptoms:**

One technique under this category of strategy is to maintain a stress diary, which is a personal record of the events that happen before a negative stress response [Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980]95. The employee would enter in the log a specific description of the events along with a description of the feelings and thoughts that resulted from the event. Along with the symptoms the focal employee would also enter in the diary the events, which have caused these symptoms of stress.

**Developing Personal Resources:**

Another preventive strategy, suggested by Mathney et al., [1986], involves the development of certain behavioural skills which prepare the employee to cope with stressful situations when they occur. These skills help an individual in interacting more conveniently with each others. Jaremko [1983]96 developed a programme for socially anxious individuals which includes training, initiating and maintaining conversations, making and refusing requests, making and receiving criticisms, giving and receiving compliments, and interpreting non-verbal cues in the behaviour of others.

“Assertiveness training” is another important component of social skill training. The training helps the individuals in responding in a straightforward manner with regard to what they believe, feel and wish.
Making Adjustments Between Work-Family Roles:

Interventions should be made to help the employees to make good adjustment between the demands of job, marital and family roles.

Physiological Intervention Strategies:

Stress management practitioners have suggested a set of interventions which help individuals in preventing the negative effects of stress by lowering physiological arousal, such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, physical exercises, biofeedback, autogenic training, yoga and meditation.

Deep Breathing:

A very simple but useful technique for lowering down the physiological arousal is deep breathing. The individual must be advised to breathe more deeply from the abdomen, instead of shallow [thoracic] breaths, which are associated with stress response.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

It is an extension to the technique of deep breathing, developed long back by Jacobson [1938]. In the technique of progressive muscle relaxation the individual assumes a comfortable position and begins to breathe deeply. Then, the individual relaxes groups of muscles one at a time, beginning with the feet muscles.

Aerobic Exercise:

Physical exercise is another effective and popular means of preventing stress-effects by lowering arousal in recent years. Besides the health benefits, physical exercise has been found to result in psychological well being.
Exercise can act as a release for these physical processes. Research has shown that routine vigorous activity is an effective strategy for preventing the negative effects of stress.

**Biofeedback [Electromyographic]:**

In general, biofeedback system operates by detecting changes in the biological environment of the affected person by means of visual and auditory signals. The individual using these precise and immediate information, engages in a trial and error strategy of testing in order to make change in signals in the desired direction. By biofeedback as a guide, the individual learns in relatively short order how to control the biological response system generating the biofeedback signals. Biofeedback essentially involves three stages. The first stage is acquiring awareness of the maladaptive response. By means of biofeedback, the client learns that certain thoughts as well as bodily events influence the response in question. Next, guided by the biofeedback signal, the individual learns to control the response. Finally the client learns to transfer the control into day-to-day life.

**Autogenic Training and Stress Management:**

The German neurologist Schultz is credited with the development of “Autogenic Training” [AT], which he described as a self-hypnotic procedure. AT is unique as an autonomic self-regulation therapy with emphasis on “self-control”. In this method, the trainee concentrate on his sensations in a passive manner, without trying to bring about change. The trainee is instructed to concentrate on inner sensations rather than environmental stimuli. Here, the trainee is instructed not to force for concentration but to allow sensations to happen. He must be simply an observer rather than a manipulator.
Autogenic Biofeedback Training:
Elmer Green and Alyce developed the autogenic biofeedback treatment methods. Autogenic training, a system of psychosomatic self-regulation, permits the gradual acquisition of autonomic control. The biofeedback training refers to a collection of techniques useful in accelerating psychosomatic self-regulation. Autogenic biofeedback training refers to a collection of techniques useful in accelerating psychosomatic self-regulation. Autogenic biofeedback training integrates these two self-regulatory techniques.

Yoga and Meditation:
Yoga and transcendental meditation are the systems of Indian philosophy and practice. These techniques have been in use in India since ancient times as the techniques of relief from and for improvement in physical and psychological health. It is being used as preventive as well as therapeutic technique. Yoga, by presenting us with various values, techniques and disciplines, teaches us ways of establishing harmony among various aspects of life [Patel, 1993]

Meditation:
Meditation involves taking a comfortable position—either sitting, lying down, or standing. But sitting is the most useful and common posture. It then involves being in a quiet environment, regulating the breath, adopting a physically relaxed and mentally positive attitude and dwelling single mindedly upon an object. The object of the concentration in meditation does not have to be physical. It can be an idea or image; it can be mental repetition of a word or phrase [mantra]; it can be observing one’s own thoughts, perception or reaction, or it can be concentrating on some bodily-generated rhythm.
Relaxation:
In this technique the individual assumes a comfortable position and begins deep breathing. Relaxation is a form of meditation—a state of concentration. By using the mind to focus upon an object, image, or thought, one cancels out all distraction associated with everyday life, and counter balances the stress response.

Psychoeducational Preventive Program:
By combining physiological, behavioural, and cognitive preventive interventions Kagan, Kagan and Watson [1994] developed the psycho educational preventive model for prevention or reduction of job stress, which includes from controlling one’s physiological reactions, to skill to influence others, to self-awareness.

Stress Prevention at Organization Level:
The situations, which cause or are likely to cause stress to the employees can also be prevented by adopting certain precautionary and corrective interventions at organizational level. An initial organizational level, selection of suitable personnel and their proper training in the framework of the job requirements can largely help in preventing or mitigating the job stress likely to be caused by a misfit between employee and his job demands and from job difficulty. While selecting employees, their needs, values and attitudes should also be assessed, besides the assessment of their skills and aptitudes. This congruence between employee and his job can also be attained through ‘job characteristics’ approach to task-design. The job design approach attempts at linking the individual to the job characteristics, with expected outcomes of high intrinsic motivation, high performance and job satisfaction and low absenteeism.
Proper training of new employees and orientation to already working employees also can prevent the experience of stress in work setting. Training has been identified as an important component of interventions to deal with occupational stress. Several areas of training should be pursued with regard to stress management; helping individual's cope, teaching managers about the importance of job design, and inform workers about the job factors that increase the risk of psychological disorders. Supportive supervision and interpersonal relations at work also can prevent the occurrence of the situations of interpersonal stress.

**Improving Organizational Structure and Climate:**

Structure and climate of the organization largely influence job behaviour of its members as well as its overall effectiveness. Ross and Altmaier [1994] have mentioned three intervention strategies for dealing with stress arising from inadequate organization structure and climate; decentralization, participative decision-making and climate survey.

**Participative Decision Making:**

Being involved in the process of decision-making, employees feel a greater sense of influence and control, and so experience lesser ambiguity and distress.

**Climate Survey:**

Management identifies the inadequate and non-congenial aspects through various surveys of organizational climate and makes possible effort to offer feedback.
Career Planning and Management:

Some programmes in this direction are integration of organizational needs into career planning system, helping employees understand the value of lateral waves, identify skills that transfer among job families, take initiative in making career contacts, and use the company job position system.

Stress Audit:

Pestonjee [1992] has suggested “Stress Audit” as proactive intervention, which an organization can adopt to manage stress of managerial personnel. When an organization decides to have a scientific look at the mental-cum-physical health status of its executives, it is called a stress audit. A stress audit refers to the attempt an organization makes to study, explore and control the various types of stress, which the executives experience.

One has to find the right balance between the excessive or abnormal use of our body, which “overheats” its motor, and the lack of use that makes it rust. To function well, one must first warm up, but not to the point of exhaustion. That is not to preach a life of leisure, we should provide an outlet for our talents, but at all costs we must avoid frustration by not attempting that which is beyond us.

Stress is the price that mankind has to pay to survive as an animal, we now pay the same price to accomplish what we consider great things. We must understand the relationship between what we want to do and what we can do, between the significance of challenges we rise to meet and the price we will have to pay as a consequence. Our goals and priorities should be established according to our recognition of this relationship.
Dr. Hans Selye offers advice to anyone needing help while dealing with stress of life which can be summarized in a jingle. "Fight for your highest attainable aim, but do not put up resistance in vain."
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