ABSTRACT

Among all resources, human resource is considered as an important resource in the changing scenario of business environment. In organizations, results and productivity are directly proportional to the quantity and the quality of its human resources. Human resources have the greatest potential to develop and grow if the right climate is provided to them. Employees tend to be satisfied if their needs, wants, requirements, quest for job recognition and encouragement are identified and fulfilled by the management so that their work is free from stress-related aspects. Occupational stress is a worldwide issue with implications for employees, organizations, and economies. This study examined the stress management in employees of five sugar mills spread over Erode, Namakkal and Karur districts of Tamil Nadu. The study has the following objectives. It aims to study the stress factors, impact of occupational stress on health, behavior and performance of employees, stress management facilities offered by the sugar mills, employees’ coping strategies for managing stress and the social support factors.

An extensive review of the literature indicated the need for a better understanding of this area which is related to stress symptoms, stress factors, health problems, social support factors, coping strategies and other issues dealt with stress. For selection of the five sugar mills purposive sampling was adopted. All the 330 employees working in these five sugar mills were included for the study. The data were collected with the help of questionnaire. A pilot study was undertaken by the researcher with twenty employees in the sugar mills to understand the variables involved in the study. A preliminary questionnaire was constructed to collect data from the employees in the sugar mills. Results indicate that the profile variables which are significantly associated with stress symptoms are age, experience, income, numbers of dependents and marital status.

There is significant relationship is found between difficult factors in job and stress symptoms. The study revealed that shortage of cane harvesting laborers, work load, time pressures and deadlines, and unable to satisfy all stakeholders as the topmost stress causing factors. The findings show that most of the sugar mill employees had impact of stress on their health. There is positive correlation between stress symptoms and physical and mental health problems. Both stress symptoms and health problems do influence overall job performance.
The most important stress coping strategies identified are positive thinking, prayer and conversation with likeminded persons. The profile variables which are significantly associated with the level of stress overcome by the respondents are educational qualification, age, experience, monthly income and number of dependents. The rescaled factor loadings displayed four important social support factors like Society support, Relation support, Workplace support and Surrounding support. Most of the employees expected exclusive laborers for cane harvesting. Suggestions for managing employees’ stress include the allotment of exclusive laborers for cane harvesting, deployment of cane harvesting machines during laborer shortage, providing employees with opportunities for growth, providing responsibilities to them at higher levels, conducting time management programs, educating the employees to use the existing facilities, providing corporate fitness and health programs and reduction of paper work by introducing computers.

This work has brought out the connection and dependence between (a) work stressors and personal resources (b) company’s support and well-being of the workers and (c) the employees attitude and the company’s welfare. Implications may include focus on employee stress in the sugar mills of other districts, comparison of stress problems between field staff members and office staff members, comparative study in different states in India and study from the management point of view. This study is meaningful to both employees and the sugar mills because findings suggest strategies for managing employees’ stress for improving employees’ job performance and organizational effectiveness.