Management of Occupational Stress in Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

The stress on individuals ranges from personal day to day life to their organizational activities”. Growing urbanization, industrialization and trigger stress. In this changing environment, participation, interaction, transaction planning and regulation become stressors. People feel stress when they can no longer have complete control over what happens in life. There is no escape from stress in modern life. In today’s context, stress is a costly expense that affects both the employer and the employee. In this back group, this paper examines the sources of stress in one’s occupation, the effects of stress and techniques of managing stress. It concludes that the complete wiping out of stress is out of question. The various strategies recommended for employees and the management are expected to help the employees combat stress effectively. This write up appeals to the organization to be proactive in addressing the stressful situation and any effort put in by any organization in managing the issue of work place stress can have a dramatic impact on bottom line.

Key words: Burnout, Eustress, Relaxation, Stress.

Introduction

In the words of Susan L. Find Fred (1994) “Modern life is full of stress. The stress on individuals ranges from personal day to day life to their organizational activities”. Growing urbanization, industrialization and trigger stress. In this changing environment, participation, interaction, transaction planning and regulation become stressors. People feel stress when they can no longer have complete control over what happens in life. There is no escape from stress in modern life. In today’s context, stress is a costly expense that affects both the employer and the employee.

In India, over half of the call centre employees have been experiencing stress at their work spot and keep on quitting their work. The Canadian Institute of Health Information reports that over one quarter of employees in the suffer from stress of different types. The Japanese Govt. which keeps track of job related stress every five years has reported that a percentage of Japanese employees who experience stress, anxiety, burnout in their work life has increased from 51 in 1982 to almost 70 during 2007. Most recently, more than 6000 UK firms paid an average of over 80,000 on stress related damages to employees. Bill Challashan, Chairman of UK Health Commission has expressed that half a million people a year report that they experience depression, anxiety or burn-out due to work – related stress. Stress is an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to a person’s well being. The stress is a negative consequence of modern living. People are stressed because of ‘certain causes like over work’ ‘job-insecurity’ ‘information overload’ and the ‘increasing pace of life’. These events produce distress. Which strikes a persons psychological and physiological well being and is associated with several work-related behaviour. There is also positive dimension to stress called ‘eustress’ which connotes a healthy and positive outcome of stressful events.

Intense or prolonged stress can produce physiological symptoms like high blood pressure. Ulcers, sexual dysfunction, headaches, coronary heart disace and so on. Behavioural symptoms of stress include poor job performance, poor decision making, workplace accidents, higher absenteeism and increased work place aggression. The stress reduces psychologically job satisfaction; increases,
moodiness, depression and job burn out. The Job-burn out means complete emotional exhaustion,
cynicism and reduced efficiency resulting from prolonged exposure to stress.

Thus stress is negative outcome causing enormous strain on physical and mental well being of
employees on one hand and financial resources of the organization on the other hand. Only a few elite
organizations address the issue seriously. Many do not have any formal process for tackling concerns
stemming from stress. Perhaps these companies do not fully understand its implications on various
performance dimensions of employees. Some employers do not understand the source of stress and its
manifestation in work spot. Some do not promote an environment where employees can express the
stress experienced by them at work spot without any fear of repercussions.

In this back drop, this write up deliberates on the issues and prescribes the remedies for
addressing the stress both at the organizational as well as at individual levels. Before taking up deep
deliberation a brief review of literature is made to find out the gap to be filled up by the current
researches.

Review of Literature

Beech (1984) in his research has concluded that job stress is a condition arising from the people
and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal
functioning. According to Arthur et.al (2001), personality characteristics such as authoritarianism,
rigidity, masculinity, femininity, extraversion supportiveness, spontaneity, emotionality and tolerance
for work ambiguity, locus of control, anxiety and need for achievement are particularly relevant to
individual stress. Thomas et.al (1979) proved in his research that the employees who served in the
credit card company experienced a high level of stress and cholesterol and became ulcer and arthritics
patients”. Cynthia E. Corder (1993) work addicts or work alcohols are susceptible to burnout.
According to her, such of those employees in the helping professions like counsellors, health care
professionals and social workers those controlling vehicular traffic, customer services representatives
and stock brokers are more likely get burnt out.

Joseph Seltzer (1979) views that when people are burned out, they are more likely to complain;
to attribute their errors to other and tend to be highly irritable. They feel alienated and the stress
experienced by them drives many to think about leaving their jobs and to seek out a opportunities else
where. Warriars (2004) in his research study on bank employees in South Tamil Nadu, India, has
unearthed the fact that higher dosage of technical infusion in banking industry has contributed to great
stress among the employees, Veeramani (2006) has established in his study on one hundred credit card
managers in a private sector bank that inability to achieve the target drives the employees crazy.

Pastonjee (1999) has identified certain organizational stressors namely work overload, ill-
deﬁned authority-responsibility relationship, poor physical environment, non-transparent employee
evaluation, and poor performance reward in his study on one of the automobile units in Chennai city.
Robbins (2006) had recommended a slew of strategies to combat stress experienced by individuals at
work spot. They include meditation, breathing, walking are and relaxing. Pareek (1983) has traced the
sources of occupational stress in police department. Harrison (1976) has deliberated about the different
types of stress experienced by misfit employees Gupta (2008) has singled out the stress factors
responsible for employee attrition in BPO industry in India.

It is clear from the review that most of the literatures are addressing stress experienced in
western contexts. In view of a limited work done in Indian context, the present study addresses the
need for addition of fresh literature in the area.

Globalization has ushered in competition among the various players across the industries. The
various corporate entities in their bid to maintain or increase their market share in their respective
industries pressure the employees to realize their goals of different hues. Thus different types of
organizational problems lead them to different kind of stress. In this context, identification of
prominent stressors and application of right solution are important both in the interest of organization and employees.

**Discussion of Issues and Strategies**

Stress stems from many different sources and can involve virtually all aspects of our daily lives. This part of analysis, however, deals primarily with only two sets of factors that produce or influence stress: those relating to aspects of organization and those involving personal characteristics of individuals. Basically the discussion revolves around three sub-themes:

- Sources of stress (occupational stress, in particular).
- Effects of stress (including the impact on health and other work related behaviour).
- Techniques for managing stress. McGrath (1976) observes that “There is potential for occupational stress when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting the demands which threaten to exceed the persons’ capabilities and resources for meeting it. The adverse effects of stress, in general, are frustration, decreasing productivity, disease and early mortality. “American of Institute of stress estimates the work related stress costs American business about 300 billion every year”. Lydia Nathan (2008). This includes man-days lost; medical treatment and deaths. It is more difficult to assess an indirect costs, which includes employees turn-over, alcoholism and drug abuse. Given this, it become apparent that the estimate of 300 billion dollars will be a very insignificant part of the total costs and that the magnitude of the problem phenomenal.”

Work we all do fulfils a number of basic human needs. It

- provides income for survival;
- provides purposeful physical and mental activity;
- increases self-esteem and feeling of competence,
- meets social needs;
- actualizes talents and capabilities;
- leaves behind some enduring creation;
- earns reputation and wins recognition.

When there is a failure to satisfy these needs or when there is a perceived threat to their fulfilment, a situation of stress arises. The extent or the nature of stress, of course, differs from person to person and how he looks at it.

The diagrammatic representation of sources stress is given below.

![Diagram of stressors](image-url)
Sources of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress falls into five broad categories which are discussed below:

1. **Workload**

   Two sets of situations can exist i.e., ‘overload’ and ‘underload’. The overload can be quantitative or qualitative or both. The situation of quantitative overload exists when the targets assigned or deadlines fixed are unrealistic. Despite the workers being professionally competent to do their jobs, the time restrictions generate stress. Qualitative overload takes place when the work demands more than what the workers possess by way of technical and intellectual competence. The effects of this stress are reported to be mental fatigue, headache and gastrointestinal disorders.

   Author Blanna Richard (2002) says that a combination of quantitative and qualitative overload takes place mostly in higher administrative and managerial positions. Decision making at this level relates to complex situations affecting the well-being of the organization, the people who work in it and the society at large.

   In the Indian context the major problem mostly is that of qualitative overload. It is only recently that this has been given serious attention by way of training of personnel at various levels to improve their competence and sharpen their professional skills. In Afghanistan for instance, the commercial accounting system was introduced in Government departments on the recommendations of a consultant from USAID when the country did not have even a single chartered accountant of its own. The result was a total chaos of Government accounts and the resultant frustration among those who were required to work on the system.

   Under the underload situation, the job does not provide adequate reinforcement and the indices of underload are monotony, lack of opportunities to use skills and expertise, repetitive performance and high degree of specialization.

   People sometimes even go to extent of committing suicide due to the stress of underload syndrome involving absence of intellectual involvement and opportunities to use their specialized knowledge.

   Hans Seyle (1974) terms these problems “asdeprivational stress”. The most common consequence of derivational stress is that the employees work at a minimally acceptable level showing no real interest in work. It has been observed that wherever norms have been fixed (e.g. by the staff inspection unit in departments like posts and telecommunications) the employees work just upto that level and thereafter their involvement and commitment ceases.

2. **Occupational Frustrations**

   Hindrances in the attainment of goals by job holder lead to stressful reactions. The important components of occupational frustration and their effects are the following:

   **a. Job ambiguity:** Saranya (1998) observes that job ambiguity arises when there is no clarity of the nature of job reporting relationship is ill-defined and the precise lines of authority and accountability are blurred.”

   The cutting edge level of administration in India is district and sub-district level administration. Unfortunately, it is at these levels that confusion abounds over the roles of various functionaries and their accountability. There is multiplicity of development schemes with overlapping jurisdictions, multiplicity of agencies responsible for their implementation with none to coordinate specifically and
everybody almost treading on the toes of others. There is also ambiguity about the role of the Collector of the district. This not only jeopardizes the achievement of goals, but also results in frustration among those responsible for implementation of schemes.

b. Role conflict: This situation exists when roles and responsibilities of workers directly conflict with each other. This conflict is more at middle management level, which is sandwiched between the senior and lower management levels. In such a scenario, there are conflicting job demands, particularly when subordinates have to report to more than one supervisor and is entrusted with unrelated group of activities. Smith Carilla (2001) “Conflicts also arise because of the problem of conflicting policies, the personal aspirations, group needs and societal requirements.” The classic example of role-conflict is the conflict between the line and staff officers. The line officers feel hamstrung by the clearances required from the staff officers before any substantive decision can be taken. The staff officers often do not feel themselves as an integral part of the organizational group.

c. High degree of specialization: “Specialization is necessary and good because it helps in innovation, increasing efficiency and quality. But over-specialization is frustrating because the individual concerned feels distanced from the end product, having too few opportunities to identify with the organization, its policies and the services it renders or the goods its produces”, (Seward Brain, 2000).

d. Poor Career Development: Maran (2005) Stagnation in a particular grade and absence of opportunities to upgrade the existing skills or pressure to acquire newer ones is the important stressors. Reinforcement can be provided by formal training and counseling.

3. Occupational Changes
Whenever technological advancement is absorbed in any enterprise, workers used to the existing technology undergo stress on adapting to newer technology. Similarly employees promoted to higher cadres experience stress in the initial phase. Employees on the verge of retirements and after retirement perceive a higher sense of stress when they are pulled out from their daily routines.

Many retirees don not live long in their post retirement life due to perception of loss of self esteem, depression, loss of motivation general apathy, sleep disturbance and lack of appetite. Therefore enterprises need to put in place the right measures to address the stress resulting from aforesaid situations. As regards stress emanating from ever changing technical advancement, employees may be given financial and non-financial incentives in acquiring new skills. As for retirees, post retirement benefits sufficient to have comfortable living may be ensured.

Resick Patrician (2004) when a person is suddenly-pulled away from a reinforcing factor like a steady employment, stress is quite natural. Therefore, a proper planning and psychological preparation for retirement are strongly recommended by developing alternative sources of reinforcement e.g., hobbies, social contacts, financial security.

4. Stress of Accountability
In the opinion of Mason L. John, (2005), persons those as the higher level who are accountable for others performance experience higher levels of stress. Feelings of tension and anxiety are often reported by them. They are also more likely to suffer from diseases like ulcers and hyper-tension them the actual performances. It may be pertinent to recall the experience that Baron Robbert (1983) has undergone. In his own words. dollars, share holders, dividends, market changes all these are just numbers. They bother me sure but the decisions that eat away at me are the ones that involve people. If I have to lay off the father of a family or call someone on the carpet, i am a wreck for days”. The aforesaid statement clearly reinforces the stress resulting from accountability for others performance.
5. Other sources of Occupational Stress

Other sources of occupational stress include physical environments (e.g. noise, lighting, etc.) and interpersonal relationships.

Effects of Stressors

Walter B Cannon, an eminent Harvard physiologist recognized in 1920 the importance of hormones and chemical mediators in body’s response to stressors. As the body prepares itself for defence against stress or to avoid threat, three systems are most directly involved and the effects of stressors thereon are summarized as under:

Cardiovascular system
- Heart rate elevated
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate variability
- Coronary heart disease

Digestive system
- Increased stomach acidity
- Loss of appetite
- Reduction in the flow of saliva
- Nausea
- Ulcers

Muscular system
- Tense muscles
- Tension headache
- Tightness of chest cavity
- Tension at the back of neck
- Tension around the stomach
- Back-ache

Hans Seyle (1974) introduced his concept of “Generalized Adaptation Syndrome”, meaning physiological reactions brought about by a broad range of environmental stimuli. He regarded stress as a non-specific response of body to any new demand on his energy, efforts, skill or existing knowledge.

It has three phases. In the first phase, i.e., Alarm phase, stress is generalized and is manifested by increased activity in most of the body systems. In the second phase or, Resistance phase, adaptation to stressor is localized to one or two bodily systems with little or no evidence of development of symptoms. In the final phase i.e., Exhaustion Phase, the system or systems appear to be overloaded with consequent development of symptoms and this phase can result in illness or even mortality.

It should be remembered that many of these problems are the product of many factors such as genetic pre-disposition, excessive smoking over-use of drugs and high consumption of alcohol. Hence, while these may be pre-disposing factors, stress may become a precipitating factor.

Personality factor contributes significantly to stressful reactions. Friedman and Roseman (1974), categorized people into two days : type A and type B. We find that there are certain people who always seem to work under pressure, and stay competitive and are both impatient and aggressive. In contrast, there are others who are more positive in their approach, who are relaxed and easy going. These two types respectively have been called type A and type B. Research shows that most of the people in the united states actually seem to fall into one category or the other. Specifically, about 40 per cent of the general population is type A and 60 percent is type B (Byrne, 1981).
The peculiar traits of type A personality are the following:
- An eagerness to complete.
- A desire for recognition.
- Quickness of physical and mental functioning.
- Fierce driving towards poorly defined objectives.
- Self-imposed deadlines.
- Anguish at repetitive chores.
- Multiple thinking and action.
- Impatient at the rate of progress.
- A sense of unease and guilt at relaxation.

The difference between type A and B persons have important implications for organizational behaviour. Under hard-driving, competitive environment, individual would behave very differently from those relaxed and easy going in any job-related activities. Further, type A and type B persons also differ in other key areas like personal health, social relations and performance of many tasks.

Those showing type B traits experience less serious heart disease while type A category is more likely to suffer heart ailments.

Type an individuals pay a very high price for their hard driving and for their high pressure lifestyle. The findings are that type A individuals have higher resting pulse rate than type B in a wide range of situations. They react to several types of stresses (e.g. of threat of failure) with a larger increment in blood pressure.

In the sphere of interpersonal relationship, these two types demonstrate a highly contrasting pattern of social behaviour. Types A is more impatient with others and prefer to work alone rather than as a part of the team. They are more irritable than type B.

Viewed in the context of organizational behaviour, type A persons appear to work faster on many tasks simultaneously even if there is no pressure or deadline. Similarly, they generally complain less about hard work than type B. They also appear to be better able to handle tasks involving multiple demands than type B (Fazio et al, 1981).

On the other hand, additional findings suggest that Glass, et.al (1974) type A may not always have the advantage. For example, they do more poorly than type B on tasks requiring delayed responses. They are simply too impatient to wait (Friedman et.al 1974). More importantly, most members of top management are type A and not type B. Several factors contribute to this finding. It is possible that many do not live long due to health risks as they rise to the top levels. It is also possible that disposition of impatience is incompatible with the skills (e.g., considered judgment) required for effective functioning at top levels.

Strategies for Stress Management

Many different procedures for combating stress have been developed and these fall into two major categories: personal strategies (approaches that can be adopted by individuals to their own behaviour) and organizational strategies (i.e., strategies organizations can follow to minimize stress among its employees).

The following are personal strategies for combating stress at work place.

A. PERSONAL STRATEGIES

1. Self-improvement and self-help are simple but effective techniques. These focus on physical strategies as well as on psychological strategies.
2. Factors which increase physical fitness (e.g., exercise and good / balanced diet) help in withstanding the adverse effects of stress. Physically fit people generally have better immunity to disease than those who are less fit (Mataji, 2000).

3. Strategies based on psychological or behavioural factors are more in vogue now than in the past. The one which has received the maximum amount of firm support from careful research is “development of network of social support”. Persons who enjoy close friendly ties with others are often able to cope with job-related stress in contrast to individuals who lack such support. This is so because the former are confident of receiving help in times of need (Rose Julin, 2003).

4. Another simple but effective technique is “plan ahead”. Generally people expose themselves to unnecessary stress simply because they allow the stressful events to overtake them rather than anticipate them in advance and devise measures to out beat them or to formulate protective strategies to lesson their impact.

5. “Take a vacation”, “adopt a hobby” or “participate in enjoyable activities” are another set of simple devices. Growing evidence suggests that such measures negate stressors greatly. Persons most likely to benefit in this manner are those most in need of assistance i.e., individuals who recently experienced negative and upsetting life events (Resick Patrician JW, 2004).

6. The next strategy is relaxation training. The attempt is to deal with stress through mastering techniques that induce deep muscle and mental relaxation. The muscular over-tension disrupts the adaptive functioning of various bodily systems. From the scientific point of view, relaxation refers to the lengthening of skeletal muscle fibres, while tension refers to the contraction or shortening of muscle fibres. There are some 620 skeletal muscles in the human body (Beech et.al, 1984).

There are two distinct stages in the history of relaxation training.

The first phase began with the work of Burns, (2004) the recognized pioneer in the field of relaxation therapy. He established the principle that relaxation is the direct physiological opposite of tension or excitement; it is the absence of nerve muscle impulses.

The second phase began with Joseph Arnold, (1988). He produced experimental neurosis in cats by evoking anxiety brought about by placing them in a restricted environment and administering harmless but unpleasant shocks. The result obtained by Arnold was that there could be inhibition of adaptive functions (e.g., failure to eat, impaired social activities, sexual inadequacies, etc.) if the anxiety persists. Using similar reasoning Stephen, (1994) concluded that deep relaxation could be used to inhibit anxiety evoked by fear arousing stimuli in humans.

The major benefits claimed for relaxation include:

2. Elimination or amelioration of stress related problems.
3. Reducing the need to depend on stress inhibitors.
4. Significant reduction in anxiety level
5. Improvement in performance.
7. Increased level of self-esteem and self-assuredness.

It needs to be remembered that relaxation training is not a routine ritualistic and simple process as it might seem to be. In fact, it requires a high degree of self-control, disciplined and regular practice and it is only one of the many methods of controlling stress. L.E. Burns (2004) has developed a three-stage technique of relaxation which aims at progressive muscle relaxation.
Meditation

Meditation is another technique for obtaining similar results. It has received a great deal of popular attention in the recent past in the West as well. Many yogic techniques are also available and have been practiced in our country from ancient times. The benefits claimed by this technique have been well established and it has been adopted by millions throughout the world. In a sense, the basic procedures are fairly simple. After assuming a comfortable posture, persons meditating close their eyes and attempt to clear all disturbing thoughts from their minds. They silently chant the single syllable (or mantra e.g., OM) over and over again.

The studies designed to investigate the effect of meditation have yielded the following interesting results: Schultz, (1972)

1. Persons engaged in this practice report such positive changes as increased feeling of well-being, higher reserve of energy and clarity of thought.
2. Meditation appears to produce important changes in bodily functions.

Wallace et.al (1972) obtained careful records of physiological reactions of 36 individuals before, during and after meditation. Results indicated that 30 minutes of quiet meditation reduced the subjects oxygen intake, lowered their respiration, increased the electrical resistance of their skin (a change linked to reduced emotional arousal), and shifted their brain waves towards a pattern reflecting calm relaxation.


Any kind of stress-mental or physical – destabilizes vital energy or Prana. And the most immediate and gross manifestation of this dis-equilibrium always takes place through our breathing process. In Patanjali’s Rajyoga, the art and science of Pranayama was evolved. The Indian psychology tells that not much can be achieved in this direction by confining oneself only to intellectual knowledge. It calls for transintellectual approach. The approach suggested for daily life by Prof. Chakravorty is that of Compose – Decompose – Recompose.

At the beginning of each day one should try to consciously compose oneself. During the day we are involved in numerous activities, thoughts and reactions. This is decomposition of our beings. We become thoroughly exteriorized. Therefore, at the close of the day, a planned and regular process of recomposition becomes imperative.

The process of composing and recomposing can be attempted through breathing exercises e.g., breathing from one nostril while keeping the other closed and breathing out from the nostril other than the one from which the breathing took place.

B. ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Personal strategies for coping with stress differ greatly but they converge on one common point i.e., enabling the individuals, through various techniques, to deal with stress when it occurs. Organizational strategies minimize such reactions by removing causes that produce them from the work environment. They range from changes in the organizational structure to changes in the nature of specific jobs.

The origin of stress in relation to the jobs and the factors leading thereto have already been analysed and therefore, the first requirement is to remove or minimize their occurrence. For example, role ambiguities, unrealistic targets, lack of participation in decision making process, etc., are some of the stress inducing factors and these need to be judiciously managed. Additionally, reinforcement through positive factors should be provided and these in brief can be:
Both organizations and employees have to share a joint responsibility for effective management of stress. Healthy organizations invest time, energy, and resources in putting in place a system to spot out the sources of stressors in the organization and take proactive measures to stop the feeling of discomfort and inconvenience by employees from developing into organizational stress. The following strategies are recommended in general for both proactive and reactive organizations for taking on organizational stress.

1. **Assess the Level of Stress**

   There is a variety of ways to diagnose the level of stress affecting the employees. Surveying the employees using a questionnaire can unearth a lot of facts relating to the level of stress experienced by employees. Another way is conducting an interview with employees. Such interview may bring to light a lot of emotional output of employees. But all employees may not be comfortable with such interview. Alternately, organization can entrust job of diagnosis to consultants or stress management experts who can simply observe the working style of employees over a period of time either at individual level or at organization level and make valid recommendations. Besides, there are other stress measurement scales developed by Human Resource Consultants namely French and Khan (1962), Cooper, Sloan and Williams, (1988). These scales command a high reliability and validity. These scales provide organizations point in times score card that can be used as bench mark indicator for future measurement and growth.

2. **Employee Assistant Programmes (EAPs)**

   Many reputed companies offer counseling services to stress affected employees. Most EAPs are broad – brush programmes that counsel employees on job – related as well as personal problems. This mechanism helps the employees understand, acquire stress management skills and practise them.

3. **Work Balance Initiatives**

   Companies have introduced a variety of strategies to help employees achieve work – life balance in India. They include Flexi time options, job – sharing, telecommuting, child care support.

   - **Flexi working hours:** Some firms are flexible on the hours, days and amount of time employees spend on working. Employees under this arrangement rearrange the work schedule to accommodate family events, ranging from attending children’s school activities to caring for elderly parents.

   - **Job-Sharing:** This arrangement splits career position between two people so that they experience less time – based stress between work and family.

   - **Telecommuting:** This strategy reduces the time and stress of commuting to work and provides employees with time to fulfill familial obligations.

   - **Childcare Support:** Nearly one quarter of US employees utilize onsite or subsidized child care facilities. Companies in India have been providing these facilities. This reduces stress resulting from taking care of their children during the working hours of employees.

4. **Temporary Withdrawal Strategies**

   Keeping the employees off the stressful work climate for a temporary period by giving them sabbaticals or paid vacation helps the stressed out employees to recuperate their lost energies and return to work invigorated.

5. **Wellness Programmes**

   Research indicates that physical exercise has potentials to reduce physiological consequences of stress by relaxing their muscle tension lowering heart beat and arresting stomach acidity. Many companies in India have put in place fitness centres to enable the employees keep in shape. Similarly firms provide facility for meditation and provide advisory services in the matter of diet, nutrition, regular sleep, sitting posture and other good habits. Park Place Entertainment Corporation in Las Vegas recently introduced a wellness programmes in which its’ 19000 employees have a free access to a wide array of wellness classes, individualized health appraisals with health and disease prevention information. Even in India, all blue chip companies have been offering these facilities as a matter of
routine employee welfare measure. Generally all these activities normalise an individual’s heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension and breathing rate.

6. Social Support
Social support in an organization can be in the form of emotional support among the colleagues through exchange of information or knowledge or in the form of actual help on the job, in addition to one’s own work responsibilities. In this connection, firms can institute mentorship programmes either formally by the organization or informally by like – minded individuals to facilitate their personal and professional development. The mentors provide coaching and counselling to develop self awareness among the stressed out employees.

7. Participative Management
Participative management allows employees to take part in decision – making so that there is a sense of control over this jobs. Kaisen management, suggestions scheme. Quality circles, employee empowerment, formation of autonomous work groups, brainstorming, joint consultative committees, and so on are different forums that promote employee participation. It is one of the stress fighting interventions increasing the value of employees and paving for higher employee productivity.

8. Physical and Well Being Facilities
Organizations are realizing the impact of work ambience that appeals to the restless professionals of new millennium. Physical environment can be a strong overt expressions of an organizations unique persona, influencing employee behaviour. A well lit office subsidized canteen, gymnasium and sports facilities, ergonomic chairs and desks, sound proof walls, cubical provision of state of the art office gadgets, devises and personal computers staff quarters, recreating facilities supportive superiors, invited talks on matters of current importance, accident insurance, arranging get together on important occasion, medicare facilities, tours, picnics, and so on are contributing overtly or covertly in great measure to counteract the impact of occupational stress.

9. Delegation and Decentralisation
Job stress can be greatly reduced by decentralization i.e., dispersal of authority and responsibility throughout the organization. This is particularly relevant in the Indian context where the responsibility has been assigned to field functionaries but powers have been held back. The constitution of autonomous teams would help in this direction.

10. Performance Management System
Through proper adjustment in the reward system, job-related stress can be avoided considerably. Performance management system should be perceived as reasonable and the distribution of rewards be seen as fair by the employees. There should be no arbitrariness in dispensing rewards arising from predilections and subjective judgments of the superiors. The large number of cases before the Central Administrative Tribunal and the high percentage of judgments going against the Government show that a fairly large number of Government employees are not satisfied with the way the HR policies in relation to areas like pay and promotion are being implemented. The performance criteria, method of appraisal and results of review of performance should be transparent so that employees concerned can know exactly where he/she stands in relation to others and what they should do to climb the career path. This would counteract the stress experienced due to biased reviews. A feeling of justice and fair play is supposed to debilitate the stress.

11. Sound Training
Improved techniques of training and placement of employees should be introduced to help individuals perform their jobs with the minimum strain and to avoid mis-match between the persons and the jobs.

12. Free Flow of Communication
The lines of communication within organization should be improved, so that information flows in an uninterrupted fashion in all directions.

13. Change in the nature of job
A change in the nature of specific jobs can also aid in controlled stress arising out of maladjustment e.g., boredom, monotony, etc. Three-prolonged strategy is suggested i.e., job enrichment, job enlargement and the skill improvement.

Conclusion
The write up has brought to the fore the fact that stress is taking a heavy toll on work force. The different types of occupational stress and their impact on workers have been addressed. The employee by pursuing various strategies suggested in the article can beat the stress to the maximum possible extent. The strategies recommended for organization have the potential to stem the occurrence of the stress. Last but not least, the modern day work practices are stress laden. The complete wiping out of stress is out of question. The strategies suggested can certainly help the employees combat stress effectively.

Many avenues are open to manage work-related stress. Some directly remove unwarranted stress or remove employees from stressful environments others help employees alter their perception of environment as stressful. Wellness programmes encourage employees to build better physical defences against stressful experience. Social support provides emotional, informational and material resource to support and buffer stressful experiences. The cost of ignoring the impact of stress can be very damaging to the growth of an organization. As the adage goes prevention is better cure, the organizations have to be proactive in addressing stressful situations. Eventually an organization’s ability to effectively manage the issue of workplace stress can have a dramatic impact on bottom line.

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