

Stress and Its Management: A Study Based on HRM Textbook Literature

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Abstract

Stress has become a serious issue which will have to be dealt with. It needs to be managed successfully. Though stress and its management have become a critical issue in the education and the practice of Human Resource Management (HRM), little research has been done with regard to a comprehensive synthesis of stress and its management in the field of HRM in Sri Lanka and Asian context. This non-traditional but systematic research paper was written to accomplish seven objectives: (1) To present some dictionary definitions of stress; (2) To explore and present nominal definitions of stress given by different authors in the HRM literature; (3) To decide whether there is a universally accepted definition of stress; (4) To explore, describe and explain why stress and its management are crucial; (5) To explore and specify the possible causes of stress given by different authors, and formulate an integrative list; (6) To explore and specify the available strategies to manage stress given by different authors, and formulate an integrative list; and (7) To ascertain the myths and facts about stress. A non-scientific method called authority was applied in order to carry out the study, and the desk research strategy was the research strategy adopted for this study. 34 main HRM textbooks which had been available and written in English were initially examined and out of them, 22 textbooks which had the discussion of stress were utilized for the study. In addition to presenting what has been written in the textbooks the study yielded 15 characteristics of stress, 5 reasons for criticality of stress, an integrative list of 81 specific stressors, an integrative list of 77 specific stress management strategies, and seven myths and seven facts of stress.

Key Words: Definition, Human Resource Management, Organizational Behavior, Stress, Stress Management

Introduction

We all are human beings and we are in search of happiness generally. Specifically, we have various goals to be accomplished as parents, children, adults, and citizens. Most of us are members of various organizations set up for achieving certain goals. We may be professionals engaged in our own businesses, certain employees of certain organizations, or entrepreneurs engaged in producing certain goods and services. It is inevitable that we have various tasks, duties, and responsibilities to be performed, various demands to be met, and various obligations to be fulfilled. As far as employees including professionals are concerned, they have various aspects of life such as work, family, social, academic, religious, recreational, and other lives (Opatha, 2019). They are required to have work-life balance, and at least work-family balance. Work-family balance refers to an employee's ability to meet his or her expectations and his or her family members' expectations to the extent that makes them happy (Opatha, 2010; Opatha and Teong, 2014). Lack of this balance results in work-family conflicts and family-work conflicts (Opatha and Perera, 2017). Employees are supposed to contribute to organizational outcomes such as employee productivity, cost-effectiveness, profits, market share, customer service quality, product quality, organizational green performance, ethical performance etc. It has generally been observed that number, frequency, and complexity of what employees are supposed to perform get increased day by day and year by year. Consequently, it is inevitable that current employees have stress and most of them suffer from it. Empirical studies done in Sri Lanka reveal that managers suffer from grievances owing to job itself, personnel management decisions, working conditions, interpersonal relations, and personal problems; and the grievance handling methods used are not at good level (Opatha, 1994; Opatha and Ismail, 2001; Akuratiyagamage and Opatha, 2004). Though these studies were done in many years ago, current problems being faced by Sri Lankan managers and employees including higher inflation, transport hassles, political uncertainties, increased government taxes, increased unethical practices of top personnel etc suggest that employees suffer from distress. Sri Lankan estate workers suffer a lot of grievances due to higher workloads and wage cuts (Perera and Selvaraj, 2021) suggesting a high level of stress. Even in organizations where best Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are being practiced, there is a possibility that some employees are subject to suffering from grievances during the employment life (Opatha, 2019) and one major reason is high level of stress suffered by them. According to some estimation, humankind loses 100 million workdays every year due to the aftermath of stress and what matters more, 50 to 75 per cent of today's diseases are related to stress (Treven and Potocan, 2005). Many occupations today involve increasing demands and decreasing resources with a resultant imbalance producing personal stress (Hede, 2010). Stress is a growing problem in many organizations and is having an increasingly negative impact on employees (Carr, Kelley, Keaton and Albrecht, 2011). Stress at workplace is quite common in all sorts of environment (Dhaneesh and Iswarya, 2023). Thus, stress has become a serious issue which we will have to deal with. It needs to be managed properly.

Stress and its management are discussed in the field of HRM as well as in the field of Organizational Behaviour (OB). Under the HRM function called *Employee Health and Safety Management*, stress (predominantly occupational stress) and its management are discussed

in the HRM literature, and they are done so not as a main topic but only as a subtopic/aspect. Stress and its management are discussed as a separate main topic or a co-topic alone with the topic called *Change Management* in the OB literature.

It is essential for the academic or teacher to secure a good and right competence of stress and its management for the purpose of right teaching as well as managing his or her own stress. It is indispensable for HRM professionals and managers who manage people at work to be knowledgeable and skillful about stress and its management for the purpose of managing others' stress and managing their own stress as well. Similarly, it is essential for the student or learner to obtain a sound understanding in respect of stress and stress management for the purpose of learning to secure the relevant educational or professional qualification as well as managing their own stress. You being a reader of this article may be an academic, a teacher, an HRM professional, a manager, or a student. To ask following research questions is of critical concern in this regard:

1. What are the dictionary definitions of Stress?
2. What are the nominal definitions of Stress given by different authors in the HRM literature?
3. Is there a universally accepted definition of Stress?
4. Why are Stress and its management crucial?
5. What are the possible causes of Stress given by different authors?
6. What are the available strategies to manage Stress given by different authors?
7. What are the myths and facts which can be explored and mentioned about Stress?

According to my observations, there is no single research paper in Sri Lankan context, perhaps in the South Asian context which provides adequate and systematic answers for the above research questions deriving from main HRM textbook literature. Little research has been done with regard to a comprehensive synthesis of stress and its management in the field of HRM in Sri Lanka and Asian context. In this research paper a synthesis means a combination of ideas to form a sort of literature which is of theoretical and practical value. Currently it is possible to observe that a considerable number of textbooks, scholar books, and articles related to stress have been published internationally. When considered the current body of knowledge of stress and its management, a theoretical gap exists in ascertaining comprehensive meaning and content of stress and its management for teaching and learning purpose, particularly in Sri Lankan context, perhaps in Asian context. Furthermore, to engage in a study of this nature is interesting and scholastically curious.

Objectives

In line with the seven research questions, seven objectives were set for writing this theoretical research paper and they are:

1. To present some dictionary definitions of Stress.
2. To explore and present nominal definitions of Stress given by different authors in the HRM literature.

3. To decide whether there is a universally accepted definition of Stress.
4. To explore, describe and explain why Stress and its management are crucial.
5. To explore and specify the possible causes of Stress given by different authors, and formulate an integrative list.
6. To explore and specify the available strategies to manage Stress given by different authors, and formulate an integrative list.
7. To ascertain the myths and facts about Stress.

Method

The method adopted to do this study is neither conventional nor scientific. This research paper is a result of a study which was carried out by using a major non-scientific method called Authority. Authority is a method which can be applied to acquire knowledge and it is a non-scientific method that involves seeking of answers from authority or experts on a specific subject (Davis and Cosenza, 1985; Nazario-Romero, 2016). The research strategy adopted for the purpose of carrying out this non-traditional study was the desk research strategy. In order to accomplish the first objective of this research paper, only three dictionaries were used. The reasons are that the predominant source of exploring the definitions of stress is main HRM literature, and to do an extensive search of defining in dictionaries is beyond the objectives of this study. 34 textbooks of HRM written by highly and appropriated qualified authors written in English which were physically available to the author in the form of virtual mode or hard copy were examined and only 22 textbooks had the discussion of stress and its management or alleviating. A rigorous attempt was made to explore the definitions and other relevant contents from the textbooks so as to achieve the other objectives of the study to the extent that is reasonably adequate. Descriptive and integrative approaches were adopted rather than the critical and prescriptive approaches in order to find answers systematically for the research questions. Exhibit 1 presents information that includes the names of the author or authors, year of publication, country of publication, availability of discussion of stress, and non-availability of discussion of stress in respect of the main HRM textbooks examined (resultantly utilized) for this paper.

Exhibit 1. Information about the Main HRM Textbooks used for this Study

No.	Author/s	Year	Country of Publication	Availability of Discussion of Stress	Non-Availability of Discussion of Stress
1	French	1978	USA		X
2	Glueck	1979	USA		X
3	Chruden and Sherman	1980	USA	X	
4	Stone and Meltz	1983	Canada	X	
5	Beach	1985	USA	X	
6	Schuler and Youngblood	1986	USA	X	

7	Heneman III, Schwab, Fossum, and Dyer	1989	USA	X	
8	Graham and Bennett	1992	UK	X	
9	Bernardin and Russell	1993	USA	X	
10	Bratton and Gold	1994	UK	X	
11	Singh, Chhabra, and Taneja	1995	India		X
12	Mamoria	1996	India		X
13	Werther and Davis	1996	USA	X	
14	Harris	1997	USA	X	
15	Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux	1999	USA	X	
16	Pattanayak	2003	India		X
17	Kleiman	2004	USA	X	
18	Fisher, Schoenfeldt, and Shaw	2006	USA		X
19	Beardwell and Claydon	2007	UK		X
20	Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright	2007	USA		X
21	Byars and Rue	2008	USA	X	
22	DeNisi and Griffin	2008	USA	X	
23	Opatha	2009	Sri Lanka	X	
24	Cascio	2010	USA		X
25	Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy	2010	USA		X
26	Ivancevich	2010	USA	X	
27	Mathis and Jackson	2011	USA		X
28	Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson	2011	UK	X	
29	Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash	2013	Canada	X	
30	Stewart and Brown	2014	USA		X
31	Bohlander and Snell	2017	USA	X	
32	Aswathappa	2017	India	X	
33	Dessler	2017	USA	X	
34	Armstrong and Taylor	2020	UK	X	

Dictionary Definitions of Stress

A definition is a statement that makes a concept/construct clear and distinct (Opatha, 2003). It includes a statement that attempts to convey the meaning of a term (Opatha, 2023). A dictionary definition is a definition given in an established dictionary. An extensive search of definitions given in various dictionaries including online ones was not done and only three dictionaries were used and they were indeed the ones which the author of this research paper has been using for many years. The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1979) presents three definitions of the word 'Stress': (1) emphasis; (2) the extra force used in speaking a particular syllable or word; and (3) pressure, tension, strain. The third meaning is applicable as far as this research paper is concerned. According to the Collins Birmingham University English

Language Dictionary (1987), 'Stress' is defined in four ways: (1) putting an extra emphasis on a point, argument, subject, etc; (2) feeling tension and anxiety because of difficulties in life; (3) a strong physical pressure applied to an object; and (4) emphasis put on a word or a part of a word when pronouncing (= accent). The second meaning can be considered in this study. As per the both dictionaries, the word 'Stress' has several meanings. According to Dictionary of Personnel Management written by Ivanovic and edited by Collin (1990), stress is nervous tension or worry. As this dictionary is a specific subject-related one, it provides one defining which is used in Personnel Management (current expanded term is HRM). Thus, the term 'Stress' has five words which can be utilized in order to define it, and they include pressure, tension, strain, anxiety, and worry. When a person has any of these, it makes that person has a difficulty to be calm or to feel at ease.

Definitions of Stress in HRM Literature

Definitions are very useful for the students as well as the teachers because of the basic reason that they give intentionally prepared statements with regard to the meaning of a concept such as stress (adapted from Opatha, 2021). Chruden and Sherman (1980) define stress as any adjustive demand that requires coping behaviour. This definition indicates (though the authors have not described in detail) that stress is a demand that makes an adjustment or adjustments needing an action or actions to deal with it successfully. They mention that stress comes from two sources: physical activity and mental or emotional activity, and the physical reaction of the body is the same.

Stone and Meltz (1983) mention about job stress and consider it as a special health problem. Their discussion about stress is very limited and do not give a definition of it. They mention that job stress occurs when some element of the work environment has a negative impact on an employee's mental health and well-being.

Beach (1985) does not give his own definition of stress. However, he quotes a definition given by Ivancevich and Matteson in 1980, i.e., stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and/or psychological processes, that is a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that places special physical and/or psychological demands upon a person. He mentions that individual characteristics may include factors such as sex, health status, and heredity, and psychological processes refer to factors such as attitudes, values, and various personality dimensions. Further, he writes (p. 540): *"Although people have experienced stress and suffered from stress since the beginnings of mankind, it is only in recent years that it has been researched systematically. Dr. Hans Selye of Canada was the first medical scientist to carry out comprehensive research on stress and its treatment beginning in the 1940s and continuing for 40 years. Only in the past five to ten years have human resource managers and managers, more generally, in industry shown interest in managing stress in the workplace."* His writing was done in 1985 indicating that stress management had not been a critical concern or an issue in HRM by that time.

Schuler and Youngblood (1986) consider organizational stress as a hazard to occupational health and safety, and identify stress as a sociopsychological aspect influencing occupational

health and safety (in addition to low quality of work life). They define it as a sociopsychological work environment component characterized by organizational changes, workload, poor supervision, unfair salaries, job insecurity, and physical insecurity all producing uncertainty. Their definition (given under the glossary) includes reasons or causes of occupational stress too.

Heneman III, Schwab, Fossum, and Dyer (1989) do not directly define the term stress and stress has been discussed under the topic Occupational Safety and Health. However, they write (p. 708): “*Some employees may not feel capable of adequately responding to demands of their job and the work environment. When this happens, employees are said to experience job stress, and they may have a number of adverse reactions to it.*” This writing indicates that some employees may feel capable and others may not feel capable to respond sufficiently to job and work environment demands.

Graham and Bennett (1992) discuss stress at work under the topic *conditions of work*. They do not present a definition of stress at work. However, they mention symptoms of stress which can be physical, psychological and/or behavioural. Physical manifestations include restlessness, hyperactivity (more than just active), impatience, high blood pressure, headaches, weight loss, and skin complaints. According to them, anxiety is perhaps the clearest indicator of stress. They mention that anxiety affects the abilities to concentrate and relax, creates irritability and generates feelings of malaise (a general feeling of discomfort) and unease.

Bernardin and Russell (1993) present a definition of job stress based on research literature and it is: “*a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change his or her psychological and/or physiological condition such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning.*” Thus, according to these two authors, job stress is a situation where job-related factors make the employee experience a psychological and/or physiological change to produce an abnormal functioning. They consider stress as a major problem for workers in today’s highly competitive environment, with its emphasis on cost control, reduced labour expense, and higher productivity.

Bratton and Gold (1994) do not define stress directly. They (1994, p. 97) write: “The term 'stress' (is) in now part of the regular vocabulary of managers and employees. While some stress is normal to life, if stress is repeated or prolonged individuals experience physical and psychological discomfort.” This writing indicates that repeated stress is physical and psychological discomfort experienced by an employee. They observe that stress can be seen not only within individuals in the higher echelons of the organizational hierarchy but also employees at the lower levels of the hierarchy.

Werther and Davis (1996) do not discuss stress and its management in the text. But they present definitions of stress, stressors, stress-performance model, and stress threshold in the glossary, and this is their fifth edition. Their original edition (first, in 1981) has a detailed discussion about stress and its management under the topic *Stress, Counseling, and Discipline*.

According to them, stress is a condition of strain that affects one's emotions, thought processes, and physical condition. They mention that employees develop various symptoms of stress which can harm their job performance and these symptoms include nervousness and tension, chronic worry, digestive problems, high blood pressure, inability to relax, excessive use of alcohol and/or tobacco, sleep problems, uncooperative attitudes, feelings of inability to cope, and anger and aggression.

Harris (1997) uses a term called 'Psychological Stress'. But he does not provide a definition of that term directly. According to him, psychological stress is a current safety and health issue in the workplace.

Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999) define stress as the body's nonspecific reaction to any demand made on it. They consider it as a highly individual condition because it affects employees in different ways. They mention that certain events may be quite stressful to one person but not to another.

Kleiman (2004) does not give a direct definition of stress. He observes that workplace stress runs rampant at most workplaces. It implies that stress at work is something which is not welcome by employees or is unpleasant to them.

Byars and Rue (2008) define stress as mental and physical condition that results from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure to remove it. They mention that the potential for stress exists when an environmental situation presents a demand threatening to exceed a person's capabilities and resources for meeting it. Thus, stress is a condition which is both mental and physical and it gets its existence from an environmental situation presenting a demand which becomes a threat to the person owing to the inadequacy of his or her capabilities and resources to encounter it successfully.

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) define that stress is a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive or physical demands on him or her, and that the stimuli that cause stress are stressors. They discuss stress at work under the topic *Safety, Health, Well-being, and Security*.

Opatha (2009) defines that stress means pressing conditions which affect the employee's emotions (strong feelings such as fear, love, hostility, anger, jealousy, etc), thoughts, functions and physical conditions. Further Opatha (2009, p. 751) defines: "*Stress is what an employee experiences internally in response to an event or a situation or a thing he/she finds difficult to deal with. It is the pressure or strain an employee feels in life.*" He considers organizational stress as a hazard of socio-psychological aspect of the work environment.

Ivancevich (2010, p. 553) writes: "*The concept of stress is very difficult to pin down in specific terms. There are experts who think of stress as the pressures in the world that produce emotional discomfort. Others feel that emotional discomfort is the stress that is caused by pressures or conditions called stressors. Still others view stress in terms of physiological or body reactions: blood pressure, heart rate, or hormone levels.*"³³ We will define stress as a person's

physical, chemical, and mental reactions to stressors or stimuli in the environment. Stress occurs whenever environmental forces (stimuli) throw bodily and mental functions out of equilibrium.” Accordingly, defining stress clearly is a very difficult task. Reason is that different experts view it differently. Stress has been defined by Ivancevich (2010) as a person’s physical, chemical, and mental reactions to stressors or stimuli in the environment. Based on research done in 2000 and 2003 by Ivancevich and his two colleagues namely Konopaske and DeFrank, Ivancevich (2010) points out that there is a stress called Travel Stress which is experienced by business travelers and road warriors; and it is defined as the perceptual, emotional, behavioural, and physical responses made by an individual during one or more of the phases of travel. Further, it can occur before, during, or after trips. The research suggests that if travel stress is left unchecked, it can eventually lead to absenteeism, burnout, productivity fluctuations, and turnover. A road worrier is an employee who has to do frequent travels as an official requirement and many duties while travelling.

Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011) do not give a definition of stress. However, in a previous edition Torrington and Hall (1998) define stress as the response of individuals to work pressures. According to the both authors, the level of pressure determines whether individuals display the symptoms of stress though the symptoms have not been specified.

Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash (2013) do not define stress in their own way but present the definition of workplace stress given in 2000 by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety and Health. It is *“the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands of the employee and the amount of control the employee has over meeting those demands.”*

Bohlander and Snell (2017) define stress as any demand on the individual that requires coping behavior. They write that stress comes from two basic sources: physical activity and mental or emotional activity, and the physical reaction of the body to both types of stress is the same.

Aswathappa (2017) defines that stress is an individual’s response to a disturbing factor in the environment and the consequence of such reaction. Further he writes that stress obviously involves interaction of the person and the environment, and the physical or psychological demands from the environment that cause stress are called stressors. The body of an employee has only a limited capacity to respond to stressors.

Dessler (2017) does not define stress but he discusses it under Safety, Health, and Risk Management (Chapter 16). It is considered by him as one of the workplace health hazards.

Armstrong and Taylor (2020) define that stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. As per the definition, stress is a mental or emotional issue faced by employees.

Refer to Exhibit 2 that provides the definitions or implied definitions given by the authors considered for this study. 22 definitions given by different authors in HRM can be seen, and they were the nominal or working definitions used by the relevant authors.

Exhibit 2. Definitions of Stress found in HRM Textbook Literature

Number	Definition or Implied Definition	Source
1	Stress is any adjustive demand that requires coping behaviour.	Chruden and Sherman (1980)
2	Job stress occurs when some element of the work environment has a negative impact on an employee's mental health and well-being.	Stone and Meltz (1983)
3	Stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and/or psychological processes, that is a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that places special physical and/or psychological demands upon a person.	Beach (1985)
4	Stress is a sociopsychological work environment component characterized by organizational changes, workload, poor supervision, unfair salaries, job insecurity, and physical insecurity all producing uncertainty.	Schuler and Youngblood (1986)
5	Some employees may not feel capable of adequately responding to demands of their job and the work environment. When this happens, employees are said to experience job stress, and they may have a number of adverse reactions to it.	Heneman III, Schwab, Fossum, and Dyer (1989)
6	Anxiety is perhaps the clearest indicator of stress. Anxiety affects the abilities to concentrate and relax, creates irritability and generates feelings of malaise and unease.	Graham and Bennett (1992)
7	Stress is a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change his or her psychological and/or physiological condition such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning.	Bernardin and Russell (1993)
8	Repeated stress is physical and psychological discomfort experienced by an employee.	Bratton and Gold (1994)
9	Stress is a condition of strain that affects one's emotions, thought processes, and physical condition.	Werther and Davis (1996)
10	Psychological stress is a current safety and health issue in the workplace.	Harris (1997)

11	Stress is the body's nonspecific reaction to any demand made on it.	Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999)
12	Stress at work is something which is not welcome by employees or is unpleasant to them.	Kleiman (2004)
13	Stress is mental and physical condition that results from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure to remove it.	Byars and Rue (2008)
14	Stress is a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive or physical demands on him or her.	DeNisi and Griffin (2008)
15	Stress is what an employee experiences internally in response to an event or a situation or a thing he/she finds difficult to deal with. It is the pressure or strain an employee feels in life.	Opatha (2009)
16	Stress is a person's physical, chemical, and mental reactions to stressors or stimuli in the environment.	Ivancevich (2010)
17	Stress is the response of individuals to work pressures.	Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011)
18	Stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands of the employee and the amount of control the employee has over meeting those demands.	Schwind, Das, Wagar, Fassina, and Bulmash (2013)
19	Stress is any demand on the individual that requires coping behavior.	Bohlander and Snell (2017)
20	Stress is an individual's response to a disturbing factor in the environment and the consequence of such reaction.	Aswathappa (2017)
21	Stress is one of the workplace health hazards.	Dessler (2017)
22	Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.	Armstrong and Taylor (2020)

According to Exhibit 2 it is clear that different definitions have been given by different authors implying that there is no universally accepted definition for the term Stress. There is no surprise to notice such a non-existence because of the fact that the concept of stress is an abstract concept. It is a construct developed by the relevant author or authors to achieve his or her or their purpose of writing. The task of defining stress clearly is very difficult, and that is why different experts view it differently. An attempt was made to derive characteristics from the definitions, and here a characteristic means a feature that belongs typically to the definition (adapted from Opatha, 2021). Refer to Exhibit 3 for characteristics derived from the definitions numbered 22. Only unique or different characteristics have been specified by

excluding repetition of the characteristics of similar nature or rewording appropriately. Further they are given not in the order of authors. It is possible to observe 15 characteristics of stress.

Exhibit 3. Characteristics Derived from the Definitions Studied

1. Stress is a current safety and health issue in the workplace.
2. It is a workplace health hazard.
3. It is a sociopsychological work environment component caused by various factors.
4. It is an internally experienced thing by an employee as a response to something that is difficult to be dealt with.
5. It is the pressure or strain an employee feels in his or her life.
6. It is an individual's response to a disturbing factor in the environment.
7. It is a state of mental or emotional tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.
8. It involves a person's physical, chemical, and mental reactions to stressors or stimuli in the environment.
9. It is a mental and physical condition of an employee that results from a perceived threat of danger (physical or emotional) and the pressure to remove it.
10. It is something which is not welcome by an employee because it is unpleasant to him or her.
11. It affects an employee's emotions, thought processes, and physical condition.
12. It is something experienced by an employee when he or she feels incapable of adequately responding to demands of his or her job and the work environment.
13. It is a situation that forces the person to deviate from normal functioning.
14. It is anxiety that hurts the abilities of an employee to concentrate and relax.
15. It is an employee's adaptive response to any external action, situation, or event that places special physical and/or psychological demands upon him/her.

Criticality of Stress

Criticality of stress refers to the extent to which stress is crucial. In this section the importance of stress implying criticalness of its management is described and explained by exploring the relevant HRM textbook literature. Chruden and Sherman (1980) write that surveys indicate that widespread stress is adversely affecting more and more people in business. 93% of job-related health problems were reported as the result of stress. They emphasize that helping employees cope with stress is a necessity.

Stone and Meltz (1983) perceive that stress is a special health problem. They mention that increasing concern and research effort have been directed towards psychological or mental occupational illnesses such as job stress (and alcoholism). Stress affects employees' health.

Beach (1985, p.541) writes: "Stress upon a human being causes various physiological changes including an increase in heart beat rate, blood pressure, and rate of breathing. It also can cause an increase in eye pupil size, skin temperature, perspiration, and blood glucose. Severe stress and prolonged stress can cause heart attacks, ulcers, migraine headaches, and colitis." Further he

mentions that the consequences of stress can be very extensive and damaging in addition to the physiological effects. Stress can generate anxiety, boredom, depression, fatigue, and lowered self-esteem and behavioural changes such as drug use, emotional outbursts, excessive drinking and smoking, impulsive behaviour, impaired speech, trembling, inability to make decisions, and excessive forgetfulness. According to him, there are also organizational effects such as excessive absenteeism, turnover, grievances, accidents, strikes, and lowered productivity.

Schuler and Youngblood (1986) explain that stress is very costly. They write (p. 484): *“Hazardous sociopsychological conditions caused by occupational stress and low quality of work life include dissatisfaction, apathy, withdrawal, projection, tunnel vision, forgetfulness, inner confusion about roles and duties, mistrust of others, vacillation in decision making, inattentiveness, irritability, procrastination, and a tendency to become distraught over trifles.”* According to this quotation, it implies that there are mental effects as well as behavioural effects of stress.

Heneman III et al (1989) mention three types of consequences of stress in order to show the importance of stress management. Three types are physiological, psychological, and personnel/human resource outcomes. Physiological consequences include high blood pressure, sweating, excessive eating or loss of appetite. Psychological consequences include nervousness, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and feeling of being “burned out”. Personnel outcomes include attraction, performance, retention, attendance, satisfaction, and other which are impacted negatively by stress.

Graham and Bennett (1992) observe that stress-ridden individuals can become irrational, emotionally volatile and excessively suspicious; can have stress-created fatigue which makes the person be dull, clumsy, unable to think clearly or perform work for long periods; can become oversensitive to criticism; can be antagonistic; cannot increasingly relate to friends and working colleagues; can have more accidents; and can have marital and other family difficulties. Hence, stress is of importance to be managed.

Bernardin and Russell (1993) write that workplace stress is truly epidemic as per a 1991 survey done by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company. They further explain the importance of stress by writing that the stress is making employees sick and affecting their productivity and accident rates, and a frequently cited problem in workers' compensation claims, many of which are considered by experts to be fraudulent.

Bratton and Gold (1994) emphasise that stress is very costly. They mention that occupational stress costs considerable sums of money to individuals and businesses in addition to the physical and psychological disabilities. One example given by them is that it was estimated in 1991 that occupational stress cost Canadian business annually over £7 billion in absenteeism, disability payments, replacement payments and lower productivity. Bratton and Gold (1994) mention that the experience of work can lead to a variety of symptoms of stress that can harm employees' health and job performance, and some common symptoms of stress include

tension and anxiety, anger and aggression, high blood pressure, inability to relax, excessive alcohol and/or tobacco use, forgetfulness, increased absenteeism, sleep problems, digestive problems, chronic worry, irritability and boredom, uncooperative attitudes, increased accidents, and reduced job satisfaction. According to the authors, the above-mentioned characteristics are typical symptoms of stress. Some authors (example: Heneman III et al) consider them as consequences of stress.

According to Werther and Davis (1996; as originally in 1981) excessive amounts of stress can threaten one's ability to cope with the environment, and consequently develop various symptoms of stress which result in harming his or her job performance.

Harris (1997) mention that psychological stress can be a major expense for organizations. Further he writes that it has been linked to numerous problems, including greater susceptibility to the common cold, ulcers, colitis, and numerous other ailments.

Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999) explain the significance of stress management by mentioning that stress can be as destructive to an individual as any accident. Further they explain that stress can result in poor attendance, excessive use of alcohol or other drugs, poor job performance, or even overall poor health. They (1999, p. 473) write: *"There is increasing evidence indicating that severe, prolonged stress is related to the diseases that are leading causes of death-- coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, cancer, emphysema, diabetics, and cirrhosis; stress may even lead to suicide. Stress costs U.S. industry billions of dollars each year in lost wages and treatment of related disorders."* Thus, prolonged stress is very costly. When organizational and individual failure to deal with stress effectively occurs, a condition called burnout (a gradual wearing down, a depletion of one's physical and mental resources that results from stress that is not necessarily job-related) occurs. Further they point that any employee may experience burnout, and no one is exempt.

Kleiman (2004) shows the importance of stress by using research, and accordingly there are a rise of workers' compensation claims for stress-related workplace disabilities, a calling by some experts of stress as the US's fastest growing occupational disease, and a thought of most (46%) of the American that their jobs are very stressful. Further he mentions that excessive amounts of stressors can have debilitating health effects such as ulcers, colitis, hypertension, headaches, lower backpain, and cardiac conditions; and may affect to reduce performance, increase turnover, reduce morale, and generate conflicts among employees, miss work, and exhibit indifference towards coworkers and customers.

Byars and Rue (2008) write that stress manifests itself among employees in several ways, including increased absenteeism, job turnover, lower productivity, and mistakes on the job. Further they mention that about some common stress-related disorders which include tension and migraine headaches; coronary heart disease; high blood pressure; muscle tightness in the chest, neck, and lower back; gastritis; indigestion; ulcers; diarrhea; constipation; bronchial asthma; rheumatoid arthritis; and some menstrual and sexual dysfunctions. In addition, from a psychological perspective, they mention that inordinate

stress can adversely affect personal factors such as concentration, memory, sleep, appetite, motivation, mood, and the ability to relate to others. Another important problem was discussed by them and it was professional burnout which occurs when work is no longer meaningful to a person and which can result from stress or variety of other work-related or personal factors. The authors discuss burnout by using a model (called the path to professional burnout) developed by Donald Rogers in 1984 according to which working conditions (constant pressure, insecurity, competition, paternalism etc) produce effects such as unfulfilled expectations, lack of challenge, lack of meaning, lack of control, limited mobility, overtime work, and poor decisions which lead to stress, fatigue, frustrations, helplessness, and guilt which culminate in burnout. Thus, stress has been considered as an antecedent or contributing factor of burnout.

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) discuss consequences of stress at work and they include individual consequences, organizational consequences, and burnout. Individual consequences include three specific categories such as behavioural, psychological, and medical. The behavioural consequences are smoking, accident tendencies, violence, and appetite disorders. The psychological consequences are sleeping disturbances, depression, family problems and sexual difficulties. The medical consequences are heart disease, stroke, headaches, backaches, ulcers and related stomach and intestinal disorders, and skin conditions like acne and hives. Organizational consequences include decline in performance, absenteeism and turnover, and decreased motivation and satisfaction. Burnout (a general feeling of exhaustion that develops when an individual simultaneously experiences too much pressure and too few sources of satisfaction) is a serious consequence of stress at work. This has clear implications for both employees and organizations.

Opatha (2009) explains that stress may lead to that the employee suffers from fatigue, hypertension, headache, conflicts with others, high blood pressure, losing weights, unrest, impatience etc. He writes that occupational stress and low quality of work life are composed of sociopsychological aspect of the work environment of an organization, and they lead to conditions such as dissatisfaction, apathy, confusion, tension, negligence, disorder, frustration etc which increase medical cost, compensation, legal cost, turnover, absenteeism, and reduce job satisfaction, job involvement, citizenship behaviour, efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity. Hence organisational stress and its management are of very importance.

Ivancevich (2010) writes the importance of stress and according to him, the American Institute of Stress estimates that stress costs U.S. employers between \$200 billion and \$300 billion a year in increased workers' compensation claims, lost productivity, higher health care costs, and turnover. Further, based on research he mentions that the endocrine system, the cardiovascular system, the muscular system, and the emotions of an employee are affected directly by stress.

Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011) consider that stress is a threat to both physical and psychological well-being. They (2011, p. 681) show the criticality of stress and write that the Health and Safety Executive in 2004 (HSE 2004) estimates the costs to society of work-

related stress to be around £4 billion each year, while 13.5 million working days were lost to stress in 2007/08. Further, they mention that stress-related conditions are now one of the two most common causes of sickness absence as a matter of fact (as per Department of Health 2004). In the glossary, Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011) mention that stress presents managers with two problems: (1) How does a manager detect malingering and take appropriate action? This occurs when an employee becomes absent from work suffering from stress, but this is a condition that is easy to fake and not easy to diagnose; and (2) How should a manager not exacerbate or cause stress in someone? In this regard it is important for the manager to understand stress and its management.

Schwind et al (2013) mention that high levels of stress are usually associated with poorer job performance. In Canada stress-related mental health problems such as burnout, depression, and anxiety are increasing and such issues cost the Canadian economy about \$ 30 billion annually (Schwind et al, 2013). Further they observe that persons who have stress are more likely to become nervous, easily provoked to anger, and chronically worried about things.

Bohlander and Snell (2017) emphasize that job stress places both women and men at risk for fatigue, high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems, depression, and obesity and increases employee susceptibility to infectious diseases. They write some research findings which are: (1) Work-related stress contributes to injuries and illnesses which contribute to higher health care costs and can lower productivity, job satisfaction, and retention; (2) Stress is the most frequently cited reason employees give for why they would leave a company; (3) HR professionals are well aware of the negative effects of workplace stress on employees' health and job performance; and (4) In one study, 48% of employers said that stress caused by working long hours affects business performance, and 29% said that stress caused by widespread use of technology—such as cell phones and personal digital assistants—negatively affects business outcomes.

Aswathappa (2017) mentions that stress costs heavily and many working days get lost due to stress-related conditions. According to his model of occupational stress, stress results in three types of outcomes including behavioural (satisfaction, performance, absenteeism, turnover, accidents, and substance abuse), cognitive (poor decision-making, lack of concentration, and forgetfulness), and physiological (increased blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and burnout).

Dessler (2017) mentions some consequences of stress showing its criticality. Human consequences of job stress include anxiety, depression, anger, cardiovascular disease, headaches, and accidents; and organizational consequences include diminished performance and increased absenteeism and turnover.

Armstrong and Taylor (2020, p. 581) write the importance of stress in the way: *“Undue stress can seriously affect mental health. In the workplace it can impact significantly on productivity, performance and happiness. The UK Health and Safety Executive reported in 2018 that 12.5 million working days were lost to absence caused by stress, anxiety and depression in 2016/17 in*

the UK and that this accounted for 49 per cent of all working days lost.” Thus, stress is very costly. Here undue stress means distress. Further, they write that there are four reasons why organizations should be concerned about stress and do something about it. Four reasons are: (1) Organizations should act in a socially responsible way to provide a good quality of working life; (2) Excessive stress causes illness; (3) Stress can result in inability to cope with the demands of the job, which of course creates more stress; and (4) Excessive stress can reduce employee effectiveness and therefore organizational performance.

Based on the above writings, several reasons can be found for the purpose of describing and explaining the criticalness of stress. These reasons are given in Exhibit 4. There are five reasons justifying that stress and its management are crucial.

Exhibit 4. Reasons for Criticality of Stress

Number	Specific Reason
1	Stress (too much or prolonged) may produce three types of individual consequences . <u>Physiological or Medical</u> (negative health effects including high cholesterol, heart attacks, ulcers, migraine headaches, colitis, fatigue, headache, high blood pressure, losing weight, related stomach and intestinal disorders, skin conditions like acne and hives. etc) <u>Psychological</u> (negative mental effects including poor decision-making, lack of concentration, forgetfulness, dissatisfaction, apathy, confusion, tension, negligence, disorder, frustration, sleeping disturbances, depression, family problems and sexual difficulties etc) <u>Behavioural</u> (smoking, accident tendencies, violence, appetite disorders, etc)
2	Stress (too much or prolonged) may produce organizational consequences including reduced performance, increased turnover, reduced morale, generated conflicts among employees, missed work, exhibited indifference towards coworkers and customers, increased absenteeism, decreased motivation and satisfaction, increased accidents, higher health care costs, etc)
3	When organizational and individual failure to deal with stress effectively occurs, a condition called burnout (a gradual wearing down, a depletion of one’s physical and mental resources that results from stress that is not necessarily job-related) occurs. Any employee may experience burnout, and no one is exempt.
4	A manager should not exacerbate or cause stress in someone. Manager is not supposed to be a cause of stress of his or her subordinates. Hence, a right and adequate understanding of stress and its management is a must.
5	Organizations should act in a socially responsible way to provide for good quality of working life, health, safety and employee well-being. Hence stress and its management are a serious concern of management of the organization.

Causes of Stress

Causes of stress refer to factors or antecedents of stress or stressors. Stressors are sources of stress which are demands causing stress. Chrudden and Sherman (1980) present two types of sources of stress: sources of job-related stress and other sources of stress. Sources of job-related stress include arguments with supervisors and fellow employees, feeling trapped in a job for which a person is ill-suited, minor irritations such as lack of privacy in offices, unappealing music, and excessive smoke, and serious conditions related to the management of personnel such as having little to say about how a job is performed, overspecialization, lack of communication on the job, and lack of recognition for a job well done. Other sources of stress mean sources that may not be job related or at least may not appear to be job related, and are personal crises and more severe and lasting emotional problems. Further they emphasize that there is stress of change. In this regard they mention demands of life events deriving from the classic work of Holmes and Rahe (in 1987): the social adjustment rating scale. Examples of life events are death of spouse, divorce, marital separation, jail term, death of close family member, personal injury or illness etc. Furthermore, they point out that there are changes on the job which produce stress. In the organization of today, change is inevitable and necessary if it is to survive (Chrudden and Sherman, 1980).

Stone and Meltz (1983) present some sources of stress. They include job demands which cannot be met by the employee, unsupportive boss, work schedule, and social environment at work.

Beach (1985) presents several reasons for that employees suffer from stress. These reasons include limited time for getting the work done, rude bosses, work assignments which are too difficult to complete, limited promotion opportunities, and firing from the job.

Schuler and Youngblood (1986) present four major sources of occupational stress. They include four Ss (supervisor, salary, security, and safety), organizational change, work pace, and physical environment. When supervisor, salary, security, and safety are not good or adequate, employees suffer from stress. Changes, particularly ones without advance warning (due to the uncertainty surrounding a change yet to come) cause many employees to suffer stress symptoms. They write (p. 495): *“It has been reported that workers on machine-paced jobs feel exhausted at the end of the shift and are unable to relax soon after work because of increased adrenaline secretion on the job. In a study of twenty-three white-and blue-collar occupations, assembly workers reported the highest level of severe stress symptoms.”* Unlike employee pacing (which gives the individual control of the operations to the employee), machine pacing does not give control over the speed of the operation and the work output to the employee. Further they mention under physical environment that office automation, crowding, lack of privacy, and lack of control over it (for example, being able to move a desk or chairs or even hand pictures in an effort to personalize a work area) result in stress.

Heneman III et al (1989) mention that potential sources or causes of stress are referred to as stressors and they include organizational (e.g., rewards system), job (e.g., task variety), and individual (e.g., personality type) stressors.

Graham and Bennett (1992) mention some causes of stress at work. They include (1) Not knowing which tasks should assume priority and thus trying (unsuccessfully) to complete all of them simultaneously, (2) Unclear job descriptions and organization charts/manuals leading to ambiguity about who should do what, (3) Feelings of personal inadequacy and insecurity, (4) Frustrations at not being able to get things done, (5) Lack of communication with superiors, and conflicting demands placed on the individual by superiors who impose incompatible goals, (6) Bad personal relationships with other workers, and (7) Overwork, which may be quantitative (having too much work to do) or qualitative (finding work too difficult) and long working hours. It seems that they have not discussed or shown personal reasons or causes because their concern was about stress at work, not general stress at life.

Bernardin and Russell (1993) write that stress is different from stressor and a stressor is an object or event that causes stress. Stressors include work with Video Display Terminals (VDTs), exposure to second hand smoke all day, lighting or noise problems, temperature, bad air, prolonged exposure to certain job demands (working too hard or too fast, having too much to do, having conflicting demands), role ambiguity (workers simply do not understand what is expected on the job or what is expected is contrary to what they think should be done), conflicts between job obligations and family obligations, downsizing or right sizing, jobs affected by recent changes, low control at work, etc.

Bratton and Gold (1994) present a good description and explanation of causes of stress according to which researchers identify two major types of stressors: work-related factors and individual factors. Work-related factors include work overload, time pressures, bad relations with supervisor, lack of communications, change of work, role ambiguity, frustration, conflict at work, job design, and harassment (sexual and racial) while individual factors are financial worries, marital problems, pregnancy, problems with children, death of spouse, and dual roles (particularly of working mothers).

Werther and Davis (1996; as originally in 1981) discuss two types of causes of stress: job causes and off-the-job causes. Typical job causes include work overload, time pressures, poor quality of supervision, insecure political climate, insufficient authority to match responsibilities, role ambiguity, frustration, interpersonal and intergroup conflict, differences between company and employee values, and change of any type. Off-the-job causes include financial worries, problems with children, physical problems, marital problems, and change in residence (these are top five causes adapting by the authors from Kiev and Kohn, 1979). Further they mention (based on research) that death of a spouse or other close family member, divorce, marital separation, and major injury or illness are serious off-the job causes.

Harris (1997) emphasizes stressors that are created at work. He uses a theory called Demand-Control Model of Stress as an explanation for what causes psychological stress at work. According to him, it is one of the most popular theories to explain psychological stress and it was developed by Karasek in 1979. Harris (1997) writes that according to the demand-control model of stress, two factors determine the amount of stress an employee will experience, i.e., job demands and control. Job demands include the degree to which the employee must work

quickly with great concentration, have more to do than he or she is capable of completing in the allocated time (often referred to as role overload), have conflicting requirements (such as two bosses with different standards), role ambiguity (being unsure of what the expectations or goals of the employee's job are), the lack of feedback about the employee's job performance, and the fear of job loss (Harris, 1997). As per the theory, an employee will experience the most stress when the job has high demands and little control. Further Harris (1997) mentions that employees often suffer at work from stress emanating from their personal life including financial difficulties, marital problems, and life changes.

Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999) give a relatively detailed analysis of sources of stress, and stress sources exist both within and outside the organization. Work-related sources include role ambiguity, role conflict, workload variance, managerial work (responsibility for people, conducting performance appraisal, coordinating and communicating layoffs, and conducting outplacement counselling create a great deal of stress for some managers), working conditions (the machines and tools used, overcrowding, excessive noise, poor lighting, and poorly maintained workstations and equipment), and corporate culture (the CEO's leadership style, combination of different personality types with differing values and belief systems, and competition encouraged by the organization's reward system for promotion, pay increases, and status). Stress factors outside the job and job environment which are less controllable by management include the family (marriages ending in divorce and resultant problems, dual career family etc), financial problems, and living conditions (people who are in densely populated areas face longer lines, endure more hectic traffic jams, and contend with higher levels of air and noise pollution, and then become more stressful).

By adapting from some literature, Kleiman (2004) has developed an exhibit that presents a list of common job stress factors under three categories. He identifies the exhibit as a fairly complete list of job stressors which include: (1) The nature of one's work (unclear supervisory directives, under-or overutilization of abilities, unrealistic deadlines for completing work, conflict between personal and organizational goals, work overload, unclear perceptions regarding one's role in the organization, and having a great deal of responsibility, but little authority to make decisions); (2) Interpersonal relationships (conflicts between work groups, competition rather than cooperation, among workers, poor relationships with coworkers, and being a target of prejudice because of one's age, gender, race, etc.); and (3) Organizational and management practices (lack of support from management, lack of opportunity for growth and development, overly close supervision, not being allowed to express one's feelings, inadequate recognition/reward system, and uncertainty regarding downsizing/layoffs).

Byars and Rue (2008) prepared a table to show common sources and suggested causes of job-related stress. Nine common sources were shown and they are: threat of the job loss, job mismatch, conflicting expectations, role ambiguity, role overload, fear/responsibility, working conditions, working relationships, and alienation. Certain jobs, such as air traffic controller and certain computer-related jobs are more likely to lead to burnout than others (Byars and Rue, 2008).

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) discuss causes of stress at work in detail by using a model of the causes and consequences of stress in organization originally developed in 1984 by James Quick and Jonathan Quick. They describe and explain four types of stressors as organizational stressors which include (1) Task demands (occupation, security, and overload); (2) physical demands (temperature and office design); (3) Role demands (ambiguity and conflict); and (4) Interpersonal demands (group pressures, leadership style, and personalities). Life stressors have also been mentioned as the causes of stress and they include life change and life trauma.

Opatha (2009) presents 14 reasons (causes) which affect the occurrence of organisational stress. They include: (1) Lack of time to perform entrusted tasks and duties, (2) Lack of competence to perform duties, (3) Role ambiguity, (4) Role conflict, (5) Poor supervision, (6) Job dissatisfaction, (7) Lack of job security, (8) Perception that pays are unfair, (9) Having superior who expects, from subordinates, a responsibility that is more than the delegated authority, (10) Poor team functioning, (11) Lack of privacy when it is needed, (12) Lack of control over privacy (to treat job place or tools as personal: for example, ability to personalize a work place by moving a desk or chairs or even hanging a picture), (13) When an organisational change happens, perceiving it unfavourably without knowing its real nature, and (14) When the employee is required to do new duties (complex) without giving a proper training.

Ivancevich (2010) discusses three main stressors, i.e., person-environment fit, workload, and role conflict. According to Ivancevich (2010), changes in the work and personal environment are inevitable; if a person does not feel comfortable with his or her work environment, he or she is in what psychologists refer to as a state of disequilibrium; and the person's skills, abilities, and goals do not fit with the work environment (boss, co-workers, compensation system). Further, based on research, he mentions that lack of fit between the person and the environment can have results on several levels: subjective (feeling fatigued), behavioral (accident-proneness), cognitive (a mental block), physiological (elevated blood pressure), and organizational (higher absence rate); and that these levels of stress caused by disequilibrium are costly (premature deaths of employees, higher rates of accidents, performance inefficiencies, increased turnover, increased disability payments, and many other areas).

Schwind et al (2013) write that although major distress can occur from only one stressor, usually stressors combine to affect an employee in a variety of ways until distress develops. Major causes of stress include (1) factors unique to the job (workload, work pace/variety/meaningfulness of work, autonomy, hours of work/shift work, physical environment such as noise and air quality, and isolation); (2) Role in the organization (role conflict/role ambiguity, and level of responsibility); (3) Relationships at work (supervisors/coworkers/subordinates, and threat of violence, harassment etc.); (4) Organizational climate (participation or non-participation in decision making, management style, and communication patterns); and (5) career development (under or overpromotion, job security, career development opportunities, and overall job satisfaction).

Bohlander and Snell (2017) write that the causes of workplace stress are many, and however, according to a study by Luminari, a national health care company, four factors have a major influence on employee stress: (1) High demand: having too much to do in too short a time, (2) High effort: having to expend too much mental or physical energy over too long a period, (3) Low control: having too little influence over the way a job is done on a day-to-day basis, and (4) Low reward: receiving inadequate feedback on performance and no recognition for a job well done. Further they mention that other job stressors include layoffs and organizational restructuring; disagreements with managers or fellow employees; prejudice because of age, gender, race, or religion; inability to voice complaints; poor working conditions; and minor irritations such as lack of privacy, unappealing music, and other conditions which can be distressful to one person or another.

Aswathappa (2017) developed a model of occupational stress according to which, stressors can be seen at individual level, group level, organizational level, and extra-organizational level. Individual-level stressors include personality (the Type A personality is stress-prone while the Type B personality is less stress-prone), role overload (too much work causes stress to an employee), role conflict (when an employee has two roles that are in conflict or when an employee's personal values clash with organizational goals), role ambiguity (when an employee is uncertain about his or her responsibilities, functions, performance expectations, and level of authority), and task characteristics (tasks are more stressful when they involve decision-making, monitoring equipment or exchanging information with others). Group-level stressors include managerial behaviour (exhibiting inconsistent behaviours, failing to give support, showing lack of concern, providing inadequate direction, and focusing on negatives while ignoring positives), lack of cohesiveness, intragroup conflict, status incongruence, sexual harassment, and workplace violence. Organizational stressors include organizational climate (when it gives chronic work demands, lacks participation, and has poor working conditions), organizational structure (excessive rules, lack of authority, and lack of participation in decisions), organizational leadership (when managerial styles of top managers create a culture characterized by tension, fear and anxiety through unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run, imposing of excessive tight controls and routine firing of employees who fail to measure up to expectations), and organizational life cycle (eight stages such as birth, growth, policy, procedure, theory, religion, ritual, and last rites are in the cycle, and while the early stages are exciting, the latter ones create anxiety and tension). Extra-organizational stressors are factors outside the organization and they include family (death of a spouse, injury to one's child, failure in school, an unplanned pregnancy, etc), economy, lack of mobility, and quality of life.

Dessler (2017) mentions that a variety of workplace factors can lead to stress, and writes, based on research that work schedule, pace of work, job security, route to and from work, workplace noise, poor supervision, and the number and nature of customers or clients are such factors. Further he mentions that personal factors such as Type A personalities and nonjob problems like divorce influence stress.

Armstrong and Taylor (2020) do not present causes of stress in direct way. However, they mention six well-being factors such as the work environment, job design and demands, relationships with line managers, relationships with colleagues, work-life balance, and financial well-being. They write that stress can occur owing to problems of any of these factors.

A laborious effort was made to develop a list of specific stressors which were derived from the HRM textbook literature presented so far. Duplications were removed for the purpose of developing the list which does integrating or combining almost all the stressors specifically mentioned by the relevant authors. Refer to Exhibit 5 to get the so developed list of specific stressors. It gives specific stressors under four categories, i.e., job stressors, group-level stressors, organizational stressors, and extra-organizational stressors. There are 41 job stressors, 5 group-level stressors, 14 organizational stressors, and 21 extra-organizational stressors totaling 81 specific stressors.

Exhibit 5. The Integrative List of Specific Stressors

Job stressors (Sources of job-related stress/work-related factors / job causes)

- 1) Arguments with supervisors and fellow employees
- 2) Feeling trapped in a job for which a person is ill-suited
- 3) Changes on the job
- 4) Unsupportive boss/rude bosses
- 5) Work schedule which is inconvenient and inflexible
- 6) Lack of time to perform entrusted tasks and duties/limited time for getting the work done/time pressures
- 7) Limited promotion opportunities
- 8) Firing from the job
- 9) Lack of four Ss (supervisor, salary, security, and safety) in good amount
- 10) Work pace (working too hard or too fast/ the degree to which the employee must work quickly with great concentration)
- 11) Office automation and technology
- 12) Crowding
- 13) Lack of task priority/Not knowing which tasks should assume priority and thus trying (unsuccessfully) to complete all of them simultaneously
- 14) Unclear job descriptions and organization charts/manuals leading to ambiguity about who should do what
- 15) Feelings of personal inadequacy and insecurity/ Lack of competence to perform duties
- 16) Frustrations at not being able to get things done
- 17) Lack of communication with superiors
- 18) Conflicting demands placed on the individual by superiors who impose incompatible goals/ have conflicting requirements (such as two bosses with different standards)
- 19) Bad personal relationships with other workers

- 20) Work overload/Overwork, which may be quantitative (having too much work to do) or qualitative (finding work too difficult) and long working hours / have more to do than he or she is capable of completing in the allocated time
- 21) Work with Video Display Terminals (VDTs),
- 22) Role ambiguity (workers simply do not understand what is expected on the job or what is expected is contrary to what they think should be done)
- 23) Conflicts between job obligations and family obligations
- 24) Low control at work
- 25) Bad relations with supervisor
- 26) Harassment (sexual and racial)
- 27) Insufficient authority to match responsibilities/ Having superior who expects, from subordinates, a responsibility that is more than the delegated authority
- 28) Lack of feedback about the employee's job performance
- 29) Managerial work (responsibility for people, conducting performance appraisal, coordinating and communicating layoffs, and conducting outplacement counselling create a great deal of stress for some managers)
- 30) Poor working conditions (the machines and tools used, overcrowding, excessive noise, poor lighting, unappealing music, excessive smoke, exposure to second hand smoke all day, high or low temperature, bad air, and poorly maintained workstations and equipment)
- 31) Threat of the job loss/fear of job loss
- 32) Alienation
- 33) Job dissatisfaction
- 34) Lack of job security
- 35) Perception that pays are unfair
- 36) Lack of privacy when it is needed
- 37) Lack of control over privacy (to treat job place or tools as personal: for example, ability to personalize a work place by moving a desk or chairs or even hanging a picture)
- 38) High effort: having to expend too much mental or physical energy for a long period
- 39) Low control: having too little influence over the way a job is done on a day-to-day basis
- 40) Prejudice because of age, gender, race, or religion
- 41) Inability to voice complaints

Group-level stressors (Factors at group level)

- 1) Managerial behaviour (exhibiting inconsistent behaviours, failing to give support, showing lack of concern, providing inadequate direction, and focusing on negatives while ignoring positives)
- 2) Lack of cohesiveness
- 3) Intragroup conflict
- 4) Status incongruence

5) Group violence

Organizational stressors (Factors which are at organization level/organizational decisions and HRM practices)

- 1) Organizational change (changes, particularly ones without advance warning: When an organisational change happens, perceiving it unfavourably without knowing its real nature)
- 2) Organizational climate (when it gives chronic work demands, lacks participation, and has poor working conditions)
- 3) Organizational structure (overspecialization, excessive rules, lack of authority, and lack of participation in decisions)
- 4) Organizational leadership (when managerial styles of top managers create a culture characterized by tension, fear and anxiety through unrealistic pressures to perform in the short run, imposing of excessive tight controls and routine firing of employees who fail to measure up to expectations)
- 5) Organizational life cycle (eight stages such as birth, growth, policy, procedure, theory, religion, ritual, and last rites are in the cycle, and while the early stages are exciting, the latter ones create anxiety and tension)
- 6) Layoffs and organizational restructuring
- 7) Corporate culture (the CEO's leadership style, combination of different personality types with differing values and belief systems, and competition encouraged by the organization's reward system for promotion, pay increases, and status)
- 8) Jobs affected by recent changes
- 9) Lack of communications
- 10) Improper or inadequate job design
- 11) Insecure political climate
- 12) When the employee is required to do new duties (complex) without giving a proper training
- 13) Route to and from work/travel stress
- 14) Lack of recognition for a job well done, rewards, and career development opportunities.

Extra-organizational stressors (factors outside the organization/individual and other factors/ off-the-job causes)

- 1) Injury to one's child
- 2) Failure in school
- 3) An unplanned pregnancy
- 4) Divorce
- 5) Marital separation
- 6) Jail term

- 7) Death of close family member
- 8) Death of spouse
- 9) Personal injury or illness
- 10) Financial worries
- 11) Marital problems
- 12) Pregnancy
- 13) Problems with children
- 14) Dual roles (particularly of working mothers)
- 15) Physical problems
- 16) Change in residence
- 17) Personality issues
- 18) Living conditions (people who are in densely populated areas face longer lines, endure more hectic traffic jams, and contend with higher levels of air and noise pollution, and then become more stressful)
- 19) Economy which is under developed
- 20) Lack of mobility
- 21) Quality of life which is poor

Stress Management Solutions

Chruden and Sherman (1980) discuss how to cope with stress. They specially mention physical fitness programs. Further they mention techniques such as biofeedback, progressive relaxation, behaviour modification, encounter group participation, transactional analysis, and transcendental meditation. They mention that a popular ritual found in organizations like “coffee break” may be counterproductive if it leads to over consumption of beverages from overdoses of caffeine. Instead of a coffee break, many organizations encourage their employees to take an “exercise break” as empirically found by the authors (because of the fact that the exercise stimulates circulation, relaxes tense muscles, and counteracts boredom and mental fatigue). Also they point out that wherever feasible, employees should participate in planning for the change, the organization should provide a program for communicating the details of the change and keeping employees advised of its progress, employees must be convinced that they will benefit from the proposed change or at least not be adversely affected by it, and changes should be introduced gradually so as to permit employees more time to adjust to the change.

Beach (1985) gives a brief discussion about minimizing stress in the organization. The ways of minimizing stress include increasing employees and managers’ awareness of stressors and plans to cope with the stressors, improving environmental hygiene in the workplace, minimizing unpredictability and ambiguity (freedom from fear of layoff or arbitrary and capricious discharge), effective supervision, support by the peer group, appropriate job design, and providing educational and information programs to help individuals reduce their own stress.

Schuler and Youngblood (1986) present two types of major stress strategies: (1) organizational stress management strategies and (2) individual stress management strategies. The first one includes specific programs designed to improve the aspects of an organization causing stress. Hence, they attempt to provide supervision, salary, security, safety, workload, and the physical environment in the way that does not cause employees to suffer from stress. The second type includes time management, good diets, regular exercise, monitoring physical health, and building social support groups.

Heneman III et al (1989) discuss stress reduction. They mention two main coping mechanisms such as organizational and individual. Under organizational mechanism, it is needed to minimize the occurrence of stressors in the organization. Examples are accident reduction and environmental health control programs. Under individual mechanism, it is needed to work directly with employees, by emphasizing how they can better cope with stress. Examples are employee assistance programs (such as drug abuse programs, emotional counselling, family and marital counselling, financial counselling, legal counselling, and career counselling).

Graham and Bennett (1992) end their discussion of stress at work after dealing with how to cope with stress. They suggest six strategies which include (1) Delegation of duties to subordinates to avoid work overload, (2) Deciding in advance when to withdraw from particularly stressful activities, (3) Keeping a *stress diary* to record all stressful occurrences and hence identify common causes, (4) Conscious relaxation, (5) Training in personal assertion and/or psychological self-awareness methods such as transactional analysis, and (6) Restructuring jobs in order to remove exceptionally stressful elements (which then needs to be redistributed equally among all the employees).

Bernardin and Russell (1993) briefly present stress management and reduction programs. They present empirical examples where some organizations emphasize exercise, nutrition, relaxation techniques, time management, and self-awareness while others reduce physical stressors by redesigning the workplace and reduce role ambiguity and role conflict by interventions following a job analysis and survey research. According to the both authors, many organizations incorporate their stress reduction programs into comprehensive employment assistance programs (EAPs).

Bratton and Gold (1994) discuss some of the specific actions which can be taken by individuals and HR practitioners for the purpose of alleviating occupational stress. Individual strategies include physical exercise, hobby, meditation, group discussions, and assertiveness training. Organizational strategies include (1) Meeting with employees to discuss extent of stress, (2) Conduct a survey and inspect workplace for stress-causing factors, (3) Improve job and organizational design, (4) Improve communication, (5) Develop a stress policy and monitor its effectiveness, and (6) Train managers to be sensitive to the causes and early symptoms of stress. Bratton and Gold (1994) discuss a very important point in managing stress. It is that stress needs to be controlled at source. When sources of stress are dealt with in the way that removes them or minimizes their negative impact, stress can really be managed. They mention that workshops designed to change 'life-styles' by promoting healthy eating and

fitness help employees relieve the strains caused by job stress. But they (workshops) cannot eliminate the source of stress. Further they emphasize that stress needs to be controlled at source like other occupational hazards, and it is important for HR managers to identify priorities and investigate ways of dealing with the problem. In this regard, relevant responsible managers are required to look at the design of jobs and organization structure, and conduct detailed surveys to identify priorities for action.

Werther and Davis (1996; as originally in 1981) discuss some personnel actions to reduce stress. These are: (1) To escape from the stress through a transfer, (2) To provide training programs to improve coping ability, (3) To redesign jobs, and (4) To provide counselling services to help employees deal with stress.

Harris (1997) discusses two kinds of programs used by companies to reduce stress. Stress management training programs and wellness programs are the two kinds. Stress management training programs can have a focus on relaxation techniques (such as meditation), practical skills (such as time management) or a combination to reduce stress. Wellness programs are designed not only to reduce stress but also to improve the overall physical and mental health of employees. He provides empirical evidence about wellness programs which typically involve a series of educational and behavioural courses designed to encourage smoking cessation, proper diet and nutrition, and improved physical fitness. He concludes the discussion of stress by making an important point that much of the responsibility is on the employee to learn how to cope with stress even though companies have programs to alleviate stress. His final advice to the employee includes (1) Only worry about the important stuff, (2) Nothing at work is that important, and (3) Find enjoyable things to do, such as reading and walking, that will enable him or her to relax.

Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999) discuss that a number of programs and techniques are available for preventing or relieving excessive stress. They discuss three types of programs and techniques that can be helpful in coping with stress. The first type is general organizational programs which include (1) To create a corporate culture that holds anxiety and tension to an acceptable level, seeks and values employee inputs, gives greater control to employees over their work, and emphasizes communication; (2) To define each employee's role yet by caring not to discourage risk takers and those who want to assume greater responsibility; (3) To give the training and development to employees so that they can successfully perform current and future jobs by giving equal consideration to achieving personal and organizational goals, can work as effective team members, and can have an awareness of how they and their work relate to others; (4) To assist employees in planning for career progression; (5) To allow employees to participate in making decisions that affect them, and to make them know what is going on in the firm, what their particular roles are, and how well they are performing their jobs; and (6) To meet both financial and non-financial employee needs through an equitable reward system. The second type is specific techniques which include (1) Hypnosis (an altered state of consciousness that is artificially induced and characterized by increased receptiveness to the hypnotist's suggestions); (2) Biofeedback (a method of learning to control involuntary bodily processes, such as blood pressure or heart

rate; and (3) Transcendental meditation (a stress reduction technique in which an individual, comfortably seated, mentally repeats a secret word or phrase or mantra provided by a trained instructor). Third type is specific organizational programs which include physical fitness programs, alcohol and drug abuse programs, and employee assistant programs.

Kleiman (2004) discusses employee assistant programs and wellness programs as organizational interventions for minimizing job stress. Further, he (2004, p. 428) presents some of the specific actions that managers can take to alleviate worker stress. They are: (1) Try to match job assignments to employee skills, (2) Avoid placing unrealistic deadlines on employees, (3) Encourage employees to voice their concerns, (4) Provide appropriate training and orientation, (5) Rotate assignments between high-and low-stress tasks as much as possible, (6) Provide employees with clear explanations of assigned duties and the activities for which they will be held accountable, (7) State specific criteria by which employee performance will be judged and exactly how their performance will be measured, and (8) Periodically, let employees know where they stand with regard to job performance, and discuss how they can improve their performance.

Byars and Rue (2008) observe that many organizations conduct training programs designed for the purpose of reducing stress of employees, and most of these programs involve teaching self-help techniques to employees to reduce their own stress.

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) present two basic organizational strategies in order to assist employees to manage their stress, i.e., institutional programs and collateral stress programs. According to the authors, institutional programs for managing stress are undertaken through established organizational mechanisms some of which include properly designed jobs and work schedules, organizational culture that reinforces a healthy mix of work and nonwork activities, and supervisors who can do a better job of keeping work-loads reasonable without being a potential major source of overload. Collateral stress programs are organizational programs which are specially created to help employees deal with stress, and some examples are employee fitness programs, and programs which promote everything from humor to massage as antidotes for stress.

Opatha (2009) presents 12 strategies for minimizing organizational stress. They are: (1) Perform proper job design and introduce alternative work schedules, (2) Ensure career development and give facilities for that, (3) Train in order to remove lack of employee competencies to perform duties, (4) Ensure job security, (5) Give fair and sufficient wages and salaries, (6) Perform delegation of authority efficiently and effectively (including the application of the parity principle: duties=authority=responsibility), (7) Provide opportunities and facilities for team working (as needed), (8) Allow privacy when it is needed, (9) Manage changes properly, (10) Make supervision good, (11) Perform job analysis and write accurate job descriptions so as to avoid Role Conflict (disagreement about how a role should be performed: working on unnecessary things, receiving contradictory orders or requests from two or more persons) and Role Ambiguity (duties and responsibilities are unclear or confusing), and (12) Take all the possible measures in order to protect the employee from

accidents and diseases and make employees informed fully about the measures taken. In addition to the above strategies, Opatha (2009) proposes an individual approach of managing stress called 5 Ds. Five Ds include five Developments, and they are: (1) Develop a right attitude about your stress, (2) Develop right interaction with your work life and non-work life, (3) Develop a right physical competence to cope with your stress, (4) Develop opportunities to change your stressful environment, and (5) Develop your related knowledge and skills.

Ivancevich (2010) discusses two ways to cope with stress: (1) To eliminate the stressor by changing policies, the structure, the work requirements, or whatever is necessary; and (2) To deal with stress individually. Organizational programs include organization-sponsored workshops and seminars, and recommended structural, job, and policy changes that can eventually improve the well-being of employees. The HR department can provide specialists, facilities, monitoring or evaluation, and other important resources. Programs for coping with stress at the individual level include meditation, biofeedback, exercise, and diet which assist suffered employees to relax, feel better, and regenerate energy. Ivancevich (2010, p. 555) writes: *“Stress management programs are even being developed in Japan, where white-collar employees are paying a high price for success: alcoholism, mental breakdowns, and suicide. The Japanese name for the phenomenon is karoushi, defined as death from overwork. It is also called “stress death,” resulting from the cumulative long-range effects of working in a situation where one feels trapped and powerless to effect any change for the better.”* He concludes his discussion of stress by emphasizing that when a stress management program is instituted, guidelines to follow must include knowledgeable presenters and programs relevant and specific to each individual and to each work environment.

Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson (2011) present a list of organizational initiatives within a health and well-being agenda including stress based on research done by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and it includes Advice on healthy eating, Healthy menu in employee canteen, Healthy snacks in vending machines, In-house gym, Subsidised gym membership, Exercise classes provided on work premises, Support to stop smoking, Regular health checks, Private health insurance, Personalised healthy living programmes for employees, Employee assistance programme, Access to counselling service, Stress risk assessment, Access to physiotherapy, and Massage.

Schwind et al (2013) discuss two types of solutions to the problem of workplace stress, i.e., curative measures (solutions to correct the outcome of stress) and preventive measures (solutions to attempt to change cause of stress). Curative measures include the opportunity to relax through activities such as aerobic exercises, yoga, and meditation; counselling; and external consultancy service to provide assistance to diagnose the causes of stress and to develop ways to cope with it. Preventive measures include stress management training sessions, employee assistance programs, improvement of working conditions, ensuring that an employee's workload is compatible with the employee's capabilities and resources, design of jobs to provide meaningful opportunities for employees to use their skills, clear defining of employee roles and responsibilities, establishment of stress management policy etc. An important solution suggested by Schwind et al (2013) is the stress audit. They (2013, p. 446)

write that human resource managers must be sensitive to the many possible sources and causes of stress at the workplace, and it is possible to evaluate the extent of dysfunctional stress by performing a stress audit, which assists in identifying the causes of stress.

Bohlander and Snell (2017) show that many organizations provide employees with stress management programs to teach them about how to minimize the negative effects of job-related stress, and a typical program might include instruction in relaxation techniques, coping skills, listening skills, methods of dealing with difficult people, time management, and assertiveness. Further they present a set of tips to an employee to reduce job-related stress, and the set includes: Build rewarding relationships with your coworkers, Talk openly with managers or employees about your job or personal concerns, Prepare for the future by keeping abreast of likely changes in your job's demands, Do not greatly exceed your skills and abilities, Set realistic deadlines; negotiate reasonable deadlines with managers, Act now on problems or concerns of importance, Designate dedicated work periods during which time interruptions are avoided, When feeling stressed, find time for detachment or relaxation, Do not let trivial items take on importance; handle them quickly or assign them to others, and Take short breaks from your work area as a change of pace.

Aswathappa (2017) discusses individual strategies and organizational strategies for stress management. Individual strategies include muscle relaxation, biofeedback, meditation, cognitive restructuring, humour, and stress diary. Organizational strategies include improvements in the physical environment, job redesign to eliminate stressors, changes in workload and deadlines, structural reorganization, changes in work schedules, more flexible hours and sabbaticals, management by objectives or other goal-setting programmes, greater levels of employee participation (particularly in planning changes that affect them), workshops dealing with role clarity and role analysis, employee assistance programmes, and fitness programmes.

Dessler (2017) emphasizes that there are a number of ways to alleviate dysfunctional stress, and these range from commonsense remedies (getting more sleep) to remedies like biofeedback and meditation. Other sensible responses are to find a more suitable job, to get counseling, and to plan and organize each day's activities. Dessler (2017, p. 539) presents a set of suggestions given by Dr. Karl Albrecht which are ways for a person to reduce job stress: (1) Build rewarding, pleasant, cooperative relationships with colleagues and employees; (2) Don't bite off more than you can chew; (3) Build an especially effective and supportive relationship with your boss; (4) Negotiate with your boss for realistic deadlines on important projects; (5) Learn as much as you can about upcoming events and get as much lead time as you can to prepare for them; (6) Find time every day for detachment and relaxation; (7) Take a walk around the office to keep your body refreshed and alert; (8) Find ways to reduce unnecessary noise; (9) Reduce the amount of trivia in your job; delegate routine work when possible; (10) Limit interruptions; (11) Don't put off dealing with distasteful problems; (12) Make a constructive "worry list" that includes solutions for each problem; and (13) Get more and better quality sleep.

Armstrong and Taylor (2020) present some specific ways of managing stress. They are: (1) Job design (for clarifying roles, reducing the danger of role ambiguity and conflict, and giving people more autonomy within a defined structure to manage their responsibilities); (2) Job placement (taking care to place people in jobs that are within their capabilities); (3) Career development (planning careers and promoting staff in accordance with their capabilities, taking care not to over- or under-promote); (4) Targets and performance standards (setting reasonable and achievable targets that may stretch people but do not place impossible burdens on them); (5) Performance management processes (encouraging a dialogue to take place between managers and individuals about the latter's work problems and ambitions); Counselling; (6) Anti-bullying campaigns; (7) Management training (training about what managers can do to alleviate their own stress and reduce it in others); (8) Resilience training for helping to cope with stress; and (9) Mindfulness programmes involving meditation which focus the attention of people on their current experiences.

It was attempted to combine strategies or measures for stress management and reduction by avoiding repetitions. It was to consider specific but different stress management solutions given by all authors mentioned above to form a whole. As a result of integration, an Exhibit numbered 6 was developed to list almost all the possible stress management strategies or actions specified in the literature utilized for this study. As per the Exhibit, two categories of stress management strategies such as organizational and individual exist. There are 54 organizational stress management strategies and 23 individual stress management strategies, and a total of 77 strategies are available.

Exhibit 6. The Integrated List of Specific Stress Management Strategies or Actions

Organizational stress management strategies

1. Physical fitness programs
2. Stress-reduced change management (let employees participate in planning for the change, provide a program for communicating the details of the change and keeping employees advised of its progress, make employees convinced that they will benefit from the proposed change or at least not be adversely affected by it, and introduce changes gradually so as to permit employees more time to adjust to the change)
3. Increase employees and managers' awareness of stressors and plans to cope with the stressors
4. Improving environmental hygiene in the workplace
5. Minimizing unpredictability and ambiguity (freedom from fear of layoff or arbitrary and capricious discharge)
6. Effective supervision
7. Support by the peer group
8. Providing educational and information programs to help individuals reduce their own stress
9. Design specific programs to improve the aspects of an organization causing stress (to provide supervision, salary, security, safety, workload, and the physical environment in the way that does not cause employees to suffer from stress)

10. Accident reduction and environmental health control programs
11. Employee assistance programs (such as drug abuse programs, emotional counselling, family and marital counselling, financial counselling, legal counselling, and career counselling)
12. Delegation of duties to subordinates to avoid work overload
13. Deciding in advance when to withdraw from particularly stressful activities
14. Training in personal assertion and/or psychological self-awareness methods such as transactional analysis
15. Restructuring jobs in order to remove exceptionally stressful elements (which then needs to be redistributed equally among all the employees)
16. Reduce physical stressors by redesigning the workplace
17. Reduce role ambiguity and role conflict by interventions following a job analysis and survey research
18. Meeting with employees to discuss extent of stress
19. Conduct a survey and inspect workplace for stress-causing factors
20. Improve organizational design
21. Improve communication
22. Develop a stress policy and monitor its effectiveness/establishment of stress management policy
23. Train managers to be sensitive to the causes and early symptoms of stress/Management training (training about what managers can do to alleviate their own stress and reduce it in others)
24. To escape from the stress through a transfer
25. Provide training programs for non-managers to improve coping ability
26. Formulate and implement general organizational programs which include (1) to create a corporate culture that holds anxiety and tension to an acceptable level, seeks and values employee inputs, gives greater control to employees over their work, and emphasizes communication; (2) to define each employee's role yet by caring not to discourage risk takers and those who want to assume greater responsibility; (3) to give the training and development to employees so that they can successfully perform current and future jobs by giving equal consideration to achieving personal and organizational goals, can work as effective team members, and can have an awareness of how they and their work relate to others; (4) to assist employees in planning for career progression; (5) to allow employees to participate in making decisions that affect them, and to make them know what is going on in the firm, what their particular roles are, and how well they are performing their jobs; and (6) to meet both financial and non-financial employee needs through an equitable reward system
27. Alcohol and drug abuse programs
28. Apply specific techniques which include (1) Hypnosis (an altered state of consciousness that is artificially induced and characterized by increased receptiveness to the hypnotist's suggestions); (2) Biofeedback (a method of learning to control involuntary bodily processes, such as blood pressure or heart rate; and (3) Transcendental meditation (a stress reduction technique in which an

- individual, comfortably seated, mentally repeats a secret word or phrase or mantra provided by a trained instructor)
29. Try to match job assignments to employee skills
 30. Avoid placing unrealistic deadlines on employees/ Management by objectives or other goal-setting programmes
 31. Encourage employees to voice their concerns
 32. Provide appropriate training and orientation/Train in order to remove lack of employee competencies to perform duties
 33. Rotate assignments between high-and low-stress tasks as much as possible
 34. Provide employees with clear explanations of assigned duties and the activities for which they will be held accountable
 35. State specific criteria by which employee performance will be judged and exactly how their performance will be measured
 36. Periodically, let employees know where they stand with regard to job performance, and discuss how they can improve their performance
 37. Collateral stress programs (organizational programs which are specially created to help employees deal with stress, and some examples are employee fitness programs, and programs which promote everything from humor to massage as antidotes for stress)
 38. Perform proper job design and introduce alternative work schedules
 39. Ensure career development and give facilities for that
 40. Ensure job security
 41. Give fair and sufficient wages and salaries
 42. Perform delegation of authority efficiently and effectively (including the application of the parity principle: duties=authority=responsibility)
 43. Provide opportunities and facilities for team working (as needed)
 44. Allow privacy when it is needed
 45. Perform job analysis and write accurate job descriptions so as to avoid Role Conflict (disagreement about how a role should be performed: working on unnecessary things, receiving contradictory orders or requests from two or more persons) and Role Ambiguity (duties and responsibilities are unclear or confusing)
 46. Take all the possible measures in order to protect the employee from accidents and diseases and make employees informed fully about the measures taken
 47. An emphasis that when a stress management program is instituted, guidelines to follow must include knowledgeable presenters and programs relevant and specific to each individual and to each work environment
 48. Access to physiotherapy and massage
 49. Private health insurance
 50. Personalised healthy living programmes for employees
 51. Stress risk assessment
 52. Aerobic exercises and yoga
 53. Make human resource managers sensitive to the many possible sources and causes of stress at the workplace, and it is possible to evaluate the extent of dysfunctional stress by performing a stress audit, which assists in identifying the causes of stress

54. Anti-bullying campaigns

individual stress management strategies

1. Time management
2. Good diets
3. Regular physical exercises
4. Monitoring physical health
5. Building social support groups
6. Keeping a *stress diary* to record all stressful occurrences and identify common causes
7. Conscious relaxation
8. Hobbies
9. Meditation
10. Group discussions
11. Assertiveness training
12. A final advice to the employee that includes (1) Only worry about the important stuff, (2) Nothing at work is that important, and (3) Find enjoyable things to do, such as reading and walking, that will enable him or her to relax
13. An individual approach of managing stress called 5 Ds (Five Ds include five Developments, and they are: (1) Develop a right attitude about your stress, (2) Develop right interaction with your work life and non-work life, (3) Develop a right physical competence to cope with your stress, (4) Develop opportunities to change your stressful environment, and (5) Develop your related knowledge and skills)
14. Present a set of tips to employees to reduce job-related stress which includes: Build rewarding relationships with your coworkers, Talk openly with managers or employees about the job or personal concerns, Prepare for the future by keeping abreast of likely changes in the job's demands, Do not greatly exceed his/her skills and abilities, Set realistic deadlines; negotiate reasonable deadlines with managers, Act now on problems or concerns of importance, Designate dedicated work periods during which time interruptions are avoided, When feeling stressed, Find time for detachment or relaxation, Do not let trivial items take on importance; handle them quickly or assign them to others, and Take short breaks from the work area as a change of pace
15. Learn as much as the employee can about upcoming events and get as much lead time as he or she can to prepare for them
16. Take a walk around the office to keep the body refreshed and alert
17. Find ways to reduce unnecessary noise
18. Reduce the number of trivia in your job
19. Delegate routine work when possible
20. Limit interruptions
21. Don't put off dealing with distasteful problems
22. Make a constructive "worry list" that includes solutions for each problem
23. Get more and better-quality sleep

Myths and Facts of Stress

The relevant definition given in the Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1979) about myth is that it is an idea that forms part of the beliefs of a group or class but is not founded on fact. According to the Collins Birmingham University English Language Dictionary (1987), the relevant definition of myth is that it is an untrue idea or explanation. Hence, myths are widely held but false ideas, explanations, or beliefs. Myths of stress are beliefs or generally accepted perceptions of stress which are indeed not true. As per the Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1979) the relevant definition of fact is that it is something known to have happened or to be true or to exist. A relevant definition of fact given in the Collins Birmingham University English Language Dictionary (1987) is that it is an item of knowledge that is true and that can be proved. Hence, facts are not opinions or mere beliefs, but are things which are proved to be true. Facts are things or phenomena believed as true and they are generally consensual in nature in that others who have observed the same phenomena agree to their existence (Davis and Cosenza, 1985). HRM researchers observe reality through observation, and state what they have perceived as a fact or facts (Opatha, 2003). Hence, facts of stress refer to items of knowledge of stress that are true and can be proved.

Stress is always bad or not.

DeNisi and Griffin (2008) give three points to support the argument that we should always seek to reduce the levels of stress on the job. These three points are (1) High levels of stress have been related to burnout and physical problems, (2) High levels of stress are related to dissatisfaction and turnover, and (3) High levels of stress lead to declines in performance on the job. The same authors give three points to support the argument that sometimes we can have too little stress and should increase the stress on the job. These three points are (1) Overcoming some stress results in feelings of mastery, (2) Dealing effectively with stress is important for the development of managers, and (3) Jobs with no stress also present no challenge, which leads to boredom. Thus, they conclude that the key is to identify the levels of stress that lead to challenge and stimulation but do not reach the levels of producing burnout and dissatisfaction. Hence, stress is not always a bad thing. Ivancevich (2010) introduces that stress can be good for a person, and good stress, called eustress, is what helps a person complete a report on time or generate a good, quick problem-solving procedure. Also, he emphasizes that unfortunately, stress can also be a major negative aspect of the workplace; and when it hurts the employee, co-workers, or the organization, it must be addressed. Stress is not necessarily undesirable (Torrington, Hall, Taylor, and Atkinson, 2011). They (2011, p. 800) write: *“Stress can be stimulating as well as harmful and some jobs are best done and most enjoyed where there is frequent stress followed by achievement (journalists’ deadlines and surgical crises being two examples).”* Schwind et al (2013) emphasize that not all stress is harmful, and moderate levels of stress may actually increase workplace performance. Bohlander and Snell (2017) mention that psychologists use two separate terms to distinguish between positive and negative forms of stress, even though reactions to the two forms are the same biochemically. Positive form of stress is eustress and that accompanies achievement and exhilaration. Eustress helps employees to forge ahead against obstacles. Stress which is harmful is distress, and stress becomes distress when people begin to sense a loss of their feelings of security and adequacy. Stress is said to be positive when the situation offers an

opportunity for one to gain something (that is eustress) and it is said to be negative when the situation creates physical, psychological, organizational, and social problems.

Stress is a disease or not.

Stress is a safety and health issue, and job-related stress has been associated with a vast array of diseases, such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, peptic ulcers, colitis, and various psychological problems including anxiety and depression (Ivancevich, 2010). As far as what has been written by Ivancevich (2010) is concerned, it seems that stress is something that affects to create or result in diseases, and therefore, it is not a disease, but a cause of a set of diseases. Stress is an occupational hazard that could put an employee's health in danger (Opatha, 2009). Aswathappa (2017) models that owing to stressors stress gets created, and it leads to various outcomes some of which are physiological (increased blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and burnout). Indeed, stress is a hazard which could be dangerous to someone's health. Hence, stress is not a disease but could be a factor or cause of a disease like depression or burnout.

Stress is individual rather than common.

Werther and Davis (1981) observe that people have different tolerances of stressful situations; the level of stressors that one can tolerate before feelings of stress occur is one's stress threshold; and some persons are easily upset by the slightest change or emergency while others are cool, calm, and collected, partly due to their self-confidence in their ability to cope with the stressor by feeling very little stress. Bernardin and Russell (1993, p.639) write: *"There are psychological, physiological, and behavioral consequences of stress. However, reactions to the same stressors vary greatly with the individual. Although individual reactions are difficult to predict, it is known that some people can handle tremendous amounts of stressors without any manifest stressful reactions. Other people fall apart. Some turn to drugs or alcohol."* This indicates that people get differed in terms of their ability to manage stress. Some people can but unfortunately some people cannot. Stress is a highly individual condition because it affects employees in different ways, and certain events may be quite stressful to one person but not to another (Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux, 1999). DeNisi and Griffin (2008) observe that regardless of the stressors present on any job, different individuals will experience that stress differently. They explain that individuals who are highly competitive, highly focused on their work, and have few interests outside of work have type A personality who experience more stress and are more likely to suffer some type of illness due to stress than individuals with type B personality who are less aggressive, more patient, and more easygoing. Further they explain that individuals with high self-esteem are less susceptible to the problems associated with stress because they tend to have a more positive outlook on life and are better able to cope with any stress they encounter. Also, women are more likely to experience stress at work compared with men. Thus, DeNisi and Griffin (2008) mention that there are some factors (like the ones mentioned, i.e., personality, self-esteem, and gender) which influence how one experiences stress. Torrington and Hall (1998) observe that different people react to the same pressures in different ways, and the experience of stress is related to 'type A' coronary-prone behaviour. Aswathappa (2017) describes and explains that not all individuals experience stress with the same intensity. He writes that some people over-react to stressors and get highly

stressed while others have the stamina, endurance, and composure to cope with stressors. How an individual experiences stress depends on four factors such as perception, past experience, social support, and individual differences (Type A individuals and Type B individuals). Hence, stress begins to produce a harmful effect to an employee depending on his or her tolerance level. There is no common tolerance level to all employees. It is individual than common depending on perception, personality, experience, education, social support, etc.

Stress is a general management responsibility or not.

Stress is a problem of employees. Hence it has to be a personal problem and therefore, the relevant employee is responsible for his or her personal problem: stress. Consequently, it needs not to be a managerial concern: the relevant manager of the employee who suffers from stress is not responsible for it and therefore he or she is not to be concerned with stress management. Bratton and Gold (1994, p. 101) write: *“Until recently, job stress has been considered to be a personal problem. Today, it is recognized that stress is a major health problem at work, and it is a general management responsibility to provide the initiative to eliminate or reduce the causes of stress. At organizational level, attention to basic job design principles can alleviate the conditions that may cause stress. At the individual level, HR professionals have conducted workshops on stress management to help the individual employee to cope with stress and avoid over exposure to stress-causing situations.”* Thus, HRM has a function called Job Design which plays a significant role in eliminating or reducing stress. The function called Training and Development is useful to conduct workshops on stress management at the individual level. Generally, stress relates to employees, and therefore it comes under HRM in general and Health, Safety, and Security Management in specific. It has generally been accepted that there is social responsibility of the organization to meet its obligations to provide for the health, safety and well-being of its employees (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). Hence, stress and its management become a serious concern of top managers in any organization.

All the jobs are stressful equally or not.

There is a tendency to believe that all jobs are stressful in an equal way. All employees doing different jobs have to face various job conditions and fulfil various job demands. Each job is composed of tasks, duties, and responsibilities which tend to produce a similar degree of stress to each job holder. This is a myth. It is true that each job consists of tasks, duties, and responsibilities, but jobs get differed in terms of number of duties, complexity of duties, responsibilities involved, working conditions to be applied, technology to be used, nature of customers who are to be dealt with, and knowledge and skills required to perform duties successfully. There is a fact that certain jobs are being identified as more stressful than others (Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux, 1999). Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (1999) show that the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has studied stress levels of different jobs (130) and as a result has found that some jobs are generally being perceived as more stressful than others, and the 12 most stressful jobs are (1) Laborer, (2) Secretary, (3) Inspector, (4) Clinical lab technician, (5) Office manager, (6) Supervisor, (7) Manager/Administrator, (8) Waitress/waiter, (9) Machine operator, (10) Farm owner, (11)

Miner, and (12) Painter. As per the study, some of other high-stress jobs include Bank teller, Electrician, Guard, Meat cutter, policeperson, Practical nurse, Railroad switch person, Social worker, Sales representative, Telephone operator, Mechanic, and Firefighter. Further they mention that workers in such jobs may feel that they are trapped, treated more like machines than people, and some of the less stressful jobs are held by employees who have more control over their jobs, such as college professors and master craftspersons. DeNisi and Griffin (2008, p. 398) write: *“Task demands are stressors associated with the specific job a person performs. Some occupations are by nature more stressful than others. The jobs of surgeon, air traffic controller, and professional football coach obviously are more stressful than those of a general practitioner, airplane baggage loader, and football team equipment manager, respectively.”* Thus, some jobs are more stressful than others.

Some people are immune to stress or no one is immune to stress.

According to Opatha (2020), Coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviation of which is COVID 19, was deadly and very expensive humanly and financially; and it had potential to make the entire industrial and commercial workings of an area of a country, a whole country or many countries in the world paralyzed. However, several vaccines were innovated and given to people in order to make them protected from the effects of Corona. It was possible for making that employees were immune to corona to a higher extent. Hence one may think that some employees who have the access can be vaccinated to encounter effects of stress. But the truth is that a vaccine cannot be produced to stimulate immunity within an employee to stress. It is impossible to make an employee resistant totally or partially to stress through a vaccine. No one is immune to stress, and hence it can affect managers as well as non-managers at all levels of the organisation (Opatha, 2009).

Stress is inevitable for only some people or for anyone.

One may think that stress is certain to happen to only people who do jobs, particularly stressful jobs or temporary jobs. Further, one may think that employees who are not married do not feel stress owing to a smaller number of responsibilities (because there are no responsibilities coming from spouse, and even children). Every employee irrespective of civil status and employment type will have to meet various demands which come from day-to-day activities. Stress is unavoidable for each employee. Opatha (2009, p. 755) writes: *“Your stress is a part of your life. It is a part of your everyday life. It is a factor in your life as life today is complex. Hence it is impossible to avoid your stress.”* Everyone irrespective of gender, status, age, and personality will have to encounter stress when he or she deals with day today demands, responsibilities, and obligations. Stress is inevitable, and it is a common experience that is part of everyone’s life (Ivancevich, 2010). It is necessary to realize that stress is an inevitable part of life and it cannot be avoided (Aswathappa, 2017).

Thus, it is evident that there are seven facts of stress. These facts are given in Exhibit 7 which presents the seven myths also.

Exhibit 7. The Seven Myths and the Seven Facts of Stress

Myths	Facts
1. Stress is always bad.	1. Stress is not always bad.
2. Stress is a disease.	2. Stress is not a disease.
3. Stress is common.	3. Stress is individual.
4. Stress is not a general management responsibility.	4. Stress is a general management responsibility.
5. All the jobs are stressful equally.	5. All the jobs are not stressful equally.
6. Some people are immune to stress.	6. No one is immune to stress.
7. Stress is inevitable for only some people.	7. Stress is inevitable for anyone.

Concluding Remarks

A systematic attempt was made to find answers for the seven research questions subsequently achieving the seven objectives set for the study. The finding in respect of the first research question reveals that the dictionaries give several meanings of the term *stress* including the one which is in line with the applied meaning of stress in the literature of HRM and OB. Other findings are: different authors have given different nominal definitions of stress; there is no universally accepted definition for the term *stress*; dealing with the issue of stress is crucial owing to at least five reasons; various factors tend to cause stress; many strategies are available for management of stress; and seven myths and seven facts of stress were ascertained. Six Exhibits (excluding Exhibit 1) were yielded from the study and they can be considered as significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge of HRM in terms of aids for teaching and learning. It is believed that the paper is of utility for academics who are supposed to teach stress and its management, to manage their own stress and to interact with students in the way that will minimize the students' stress. The paper is instrumental in delivering an increased understanding of stress and its management to professional managers in order to manage stress of their own and their subordinates. It is suggested that future research studies are needed to identify major causes of stress of different categories of employees and to determine relative strengths of stress management strategies. Furthermore, studies of applications in stress management are suggested in order to get detailed information about specific strategies being used by actual organizations.

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