

4.8 STRESS MANAGEMENT

4.8.1 Organization Level Stress Coping Strategies:

Organization focuses on many aspects - job design, goal setting, organizational modification, changing organizational processes and design, decision making skills, control techniques, change management, OD techniques, leadership styles, and so forth – to reduce employees, stress and job anxiety.

In an organization each of specific stressors (causes of stress) must be identified, minutely studied, and suitably modified. Special stress coping organizational strategies consist of one or more of following action:

1. **Job Design** Organization must design jobs for each group of employees carefully and, from time to time, necessary modifications must be made to keep employees stress-free. Special measures in this context include restructuring job duties, telecommunicating, job sharing, part time work, flexible scheduling, release time for personal and family events, medical of leaves, reducing, frequency of distanced business traveling, preference/interest based job, training for improving work related skills, improving standard inputs and facilities.
2. **Job (Working) Conditions or Physical Condition** These conditions include removing safety hazards, controlling noise, ensuring air circulation and ventilation, managing ideal temperature level, providing good to from transportation facilities, augmenting necessary facilities and supports, ensuring conducive supervision etc.
3. **Organizational Structure/Design** Reducing over formalization, and objective, clear, and humanitarian HRM policies and practices have positive impact on reducing stress level. Clear and fair policies and rules, provision of suitable monetary and non monetary incentives, well-defined roles and status, team building, clarity in responsibility and authority relations, reduced complexities, effective and acceptable leadership, decision making process and employees involvement, easing rigid hierarchical structure, etc. have potential role for reducing and / or preventing employees stress.
4. **Effective Communication-** Barriers in effective communication must be removed. Communication supports the interactions among employees. All measures must be taken to make communication effective.
5. **Health Measures** Poor health itself is a powerful stressor. Organization must take few but effective measures to keep employees physically and mentally fit. Proper lunch timings, healthy/nutritious diet, availability of on site medical facilities, cultural and social functions at workplace, counseling services, maintaining gymnasium and health club, and facility for entertainment, relaxing, and leisure have positive impacts on coping with stress.

4.8.2. Individual Level Stress Coping Strategies

An individual has to do something himself to reduce his stress level. A number of spiritual personalities, philosophers, management trainers and experts, and wise men have suggested some simple but effective and practical ways to keep excessive stress away. Fred E. Luthans focuses on exercise, relaxation, behavioural self control, cognitive therapy, and networking as individual stress coping strategies. Some of the methods to control personal stress have been discussed below:

1. **Physical Exercise:** Exercise is an effective measure to combat stress. It refreshes our body and mind, and keeps us healthy. A healthy man can easily face stressing situations. Walking, jogging, swimming, rope climbing.

2. **Time Management** : Limited or fixed time and a number of jobs, of different priorities, to complete lead to stress. Time management is useful device to avoid or minimize stress. All tasks must be ranked as per their priorities and, accordingly, time should be allocated. Careful predetermined schedule can help a manager to make advance preparation for each task. Time management helps prevent stressful situations.
3. **Relaxation** : Relaxation provides enough physical and mental power to deal with stressful situations. It energizes body and mind. Relax for sometime to release tension. Meditation has been proved a powerful means to manage prolonged stressful situation more effectively. It involves both muscle and mental relaxation. Reading good books, watching light and comedy television programmes, listening to music, visiting holy and natural places, playing with kids, and getting involved in activities of interest can help reduce stress level. One must practice yoga and meditation, develop sense of humor, and develop happiness for sound health.
4. **Behavioural Self-control** Self control is like self help in fighting against stressful situation. Listen to others carefully, attend complaints with calmness, have patience, control anger and aggressiveness, and understand and accept own weakness and limitations. Cultivate and practice adaptability. Train your brain to perform any without feeling stress.
5. **Cognitive Therapy**: Cognitive therapy is clinical treatment by psychologists. Clinical psychologists have developed various techniques for reducing stress. Techniques of cognitive behavioural modification and efficacy building can be used to regulate stress.
6. **Networking** : Networking implies building and maintaining close associations and interactions with empathetic coworkers and colleagues who listen willingly and patiently and help in confidence building.
7. **Right Philosophy of Life**: Philosophy of life guides and inspires people to tackle problems leading to stress. Man is an emotional animal. His mindset and living styles have direct influence on his ability to tolerate and fight with stressing situations. One must develop and adopt appropriate and unique philosophy of life suitable to overall situation. Some simple facts of human life (suggested by philosophers, psychologists, and stress management experts) have been stated in form of anecdotes as under.
 - 'Life is journey; ups and downs are natural events.
 - Satisfied man is always a happy man.
 - 'Work is worship. We must love the work, not the outcomes.
 - 'Hardships and problems are part of life. Problems are the real test of your capabilities.
 - 'God always does the right things for me.'
 - 'Give happiness to others, you will have it automatically.