

Original Research Article

An Understanding of Organizational Stress, Causes, Consequences and Strategies to Manage at Workplace - A Comprehensive Study in Muthoot Fincorp Ltd, Nanjangud Taluk of Mysore, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

There are amply of general problems that people at work worry about - increasing job competition, globalization, annual appraisals, financial crisis, and even new technology. Beside these, employees are put under pressure to meet sales targets, attend meetings on time, fit in with changes in organization by learning and following up new procedures. All these can result different levels of stress. Nowadays, stress is the fastest growing cause of absence from work. Inefficient management, lack of decision-making by management, excessive working hours, and uncertainty as to future employment prospects and the pressure of the job are some of the causes of stress described by employees. In order to study the organisational stress researchers have selected the branches of Muthoot Fincorp Ltd, Nanjangud taluk, the study consists of 50 employees as the samples size by adopting descriptive form of research design and the data is collected by using interview schedules. At last the study found that organisational stress occurs due to both personal and organisational difficulties and at the same time it is found that the organisation has taken plenty of activities to bring down the level of stress.

Key words: Organisational stress, stress management strategies, work- life balance.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a fact of everyday life. When people reach out for help, they are often dealing with circumstances, situations, and stressors in their lives that leave them feeling emotionally and physically overwhelmed. Many people feel that they have very little resources or skills to deal with the high levels of stress they are experiencing. The information in this manual has been compiled to provide information and education about stress, the effects of stress, and the most popular stress management and relaxation techniques that are being used today. This information could be helpful for people who want to

learn how to react to stress in a more constructive, proactive way. The basic premise of this manual is that the benefits of stress reduction and relaxation techniques can be best noticed after they have been practiced regularly over a period of time. Stress also leads to physical disorders, because the internal body system changes to try to cope with stress. Some physical disorders are short range, such as an upset stomach. Others are long range such as a stomach ulcer. Stress over a prolonged time also leads to degenerative diseases of the heart, kidneys, blood vessels, and other parts of the body. It can result in angina and tension headaches. Therefore it is important

that stress, both on and off the job, be kept at a level low enough for most people to tolerate without developing either emotional or physical disorders. There is emerging evidence that in some situation an organization can be held legally liable for the emotional and physical impact of job stress on employees. Poor working conditions, sustained conflicts with supervisors, traumatic events, or intentional harassment of employees sometimes results in anguish, neuroses, or even suicide. If liability is established, employees could claim benefits under workers compensation laws, as well as sue for financial damages.

Although we all talk about stress, it often isn't clear what stress is really about. Many people consider stress to be something that happens to them, an event such as an injury or a job loss. Others think that stress is what happens to our body, mind, and behaviour in response to an event (E.g. heart pounding, anxiety, or nail biting). While stress does involve events and our response to them, these are not the most important factors. Our thoughts about the situations in which we find ourselves are the critical factor. When something happens to us, we automatically evaluate the situation mentally. We decide if it is threatening to us, how we need to deal with the situation, and what skills we can use. If we decide that the demands of the situation outweigh the skills we have, then we label the situation as "stressful" and react with the classic "stress response." If we decide that our coping skills outweigh the demands of the situation, then we don't see it as "stressful."

We consider organizational stress to be the result of those factors in an organization that cause stress for the individual employee, and in turn, have negative organizational consequences. For example, because of organizational needs or changes, factors such as increased workloads or changes in reporting relationships may occur. Such changes to the organizational climate or structure may precipitate a stressful environment among the employees. The employees' stress may

cause negative consequences, including absenteeism, burnout, lack of trust, performance problems, or an erosion of positive communication and interaction. The following example is one familiar in a university context: A university may find that it is experiencing increasing financial difficulties. Therefore, an executive decision is made to initiate a hiring freeze and begin program consolidation. As employees leave and positions are left unfilled, the remaining employees assume extra assignments. The stress of an increased workload and the learning curve to acquire new skills leaves the remaining employees overworked and fearful for their jobs, as they worry that their positions will be eliminated or redesigned. The stress felt by employees can be manifested in many ways. One consequence could be that the incumbents become resentful and overly protective of their jobs. The individual may abandon any sense of team spirit and refuse to share information or resources with colleagues. Another potential outcome is that employees lose faith in the organization, and their performance suffers due to a feeling of lack of control.

Organization is becoming more and more complex with increased competition and high uncertainty of both internal and external environment. Change has become order of the day and both employees and organizations are finding it difficult to cope up with the place of changes. The changes are so fast that any skills are competencies may become obsolete any time and thus it may necessitate learning. Employees are feeling pressurized in different ways due to this highly uncertain and dynamic environment. This is creating mental tensions due to many threats in the form of skill obsolescence due to technological changes, fear of losing jobs due to skill obsolescence, and also tension due to need of learning new skills which they may feel more complicated. Apart from this organizations are also restructuring continuously due to competition, and also due to technological changes, and this has

led changes in the organization set up. This is also creating fear in employees in the form losing jobs due to downsizing, or need to take up new jobs due to relocation employees to different jobs. Employees are also pressurized in terms of stiff and challenging targets which may be creating work pressure and in turn job stress.

However, this study aims is to determine the causes of stress and its impact on employee performance and to suggest ways and means to reduce the stress at work place and to enhance the employees capabilities to involve enthusiastically in the productivity of the organisation.

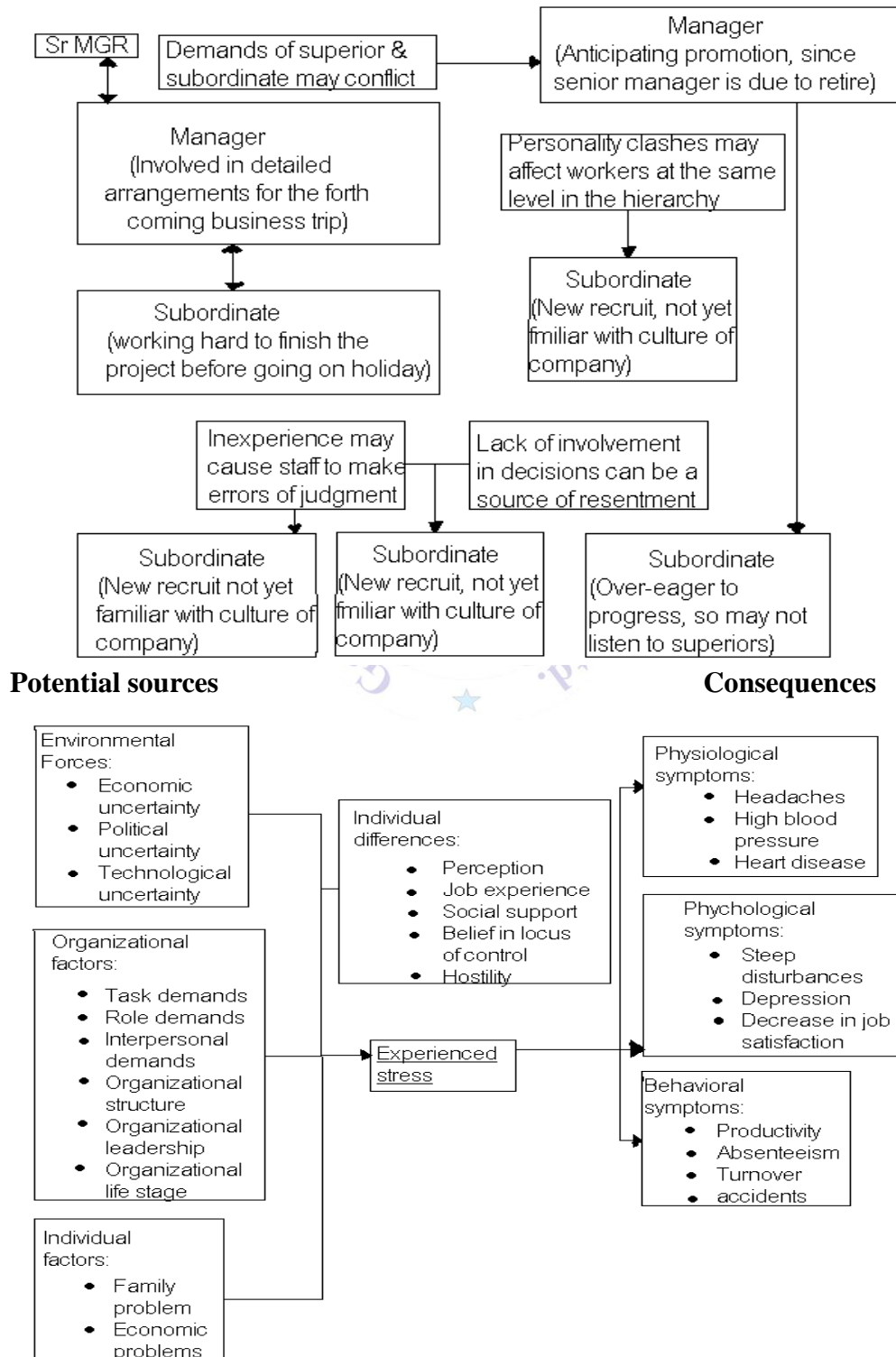


Fig 1: Causes and Consequences of Stress

Stages and Symptoms of Stress

Selye (1946) was the first to describe the phases that the body goes through in response to a threat. The general adaptation syndrome model states that the body passes through three stages. The first stage is an alarm reaction. The body prepares for a potential emergency. Digestion slows down, the heart beats faster, blood vessels dilate, blood pressure rises, and breathing becomes rapid and deep. All bodily systems work together to provide maximum energy for fight or flight. The second stage is resistance. If the stress continues, the body

builds up a tolerance to its effects. The body becomes habituated to the effects of the stressor, however, the bodies adaptive energies are being used as a shield against the stressor. The third stage is exhaustion. When the body's adaptive energies are depleted, the symptoms of the alarm reaction reappear, and the stress manifests itself as an illness, such as ulcers, heart ailments, and high blood pressure. During the first or second stages, the removal of the stressor will eliminate the symptoms.

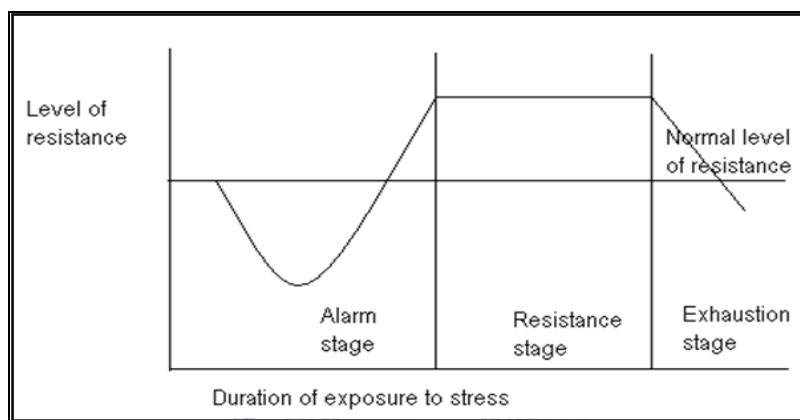


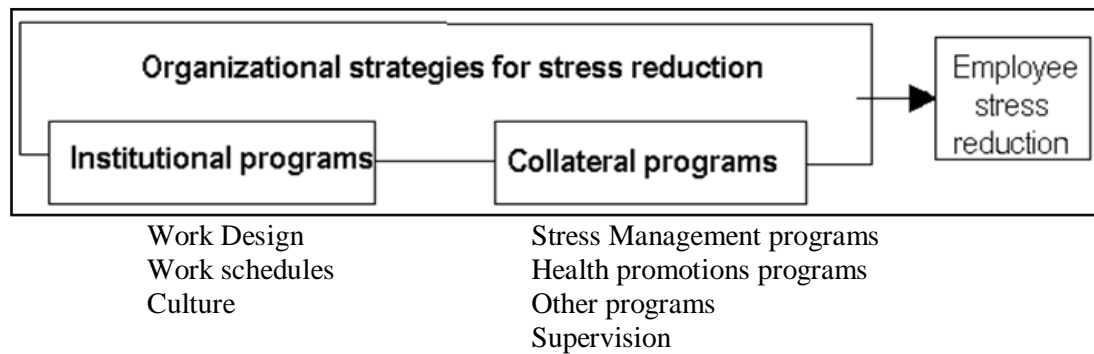
Fig 2: The stages of level of stress

Stress management at organizational level

Organizational arrangement strategy for prevention, reduce, and relieve of stress at workplace represents properly rearrangement of working conditions within an organization through job design, and creation of healthy workplace. Positive effects of this sort of intervention should be in long-run. It is created for employers, for organization, in order to create better and satisfying conditions. It contains educational trainings and sets of arrangements. Employers and organization will reach within the organization regarding to job design, and healthy workplace environment standards by acknowledging and understanding time management, goal and work-roles, responsibility and authority, arrangements and ability, ambiguity and errors, meaning, stimulation and reward, beneficial support, and team building. They

will also get know about environmental, socio-cultural, and lifestyle factors which influence and create organizational stress. Environmental factors refer to evaluation regarding ergonomic norms and standards, and application of these norms and standards. Socio-cultural factors refer to work-family balance, satisfaction with work, communication, emotional and social support, and moral at workplace. Life-style factors refer to breaks within working time, and health education. All of these should be done in order to prevent, relieve, and reduce stress.

The most effective way of managing stress calls for adopting stressors and prevent occurrence of potential stressors.' Two basic organizational strategies for helping employees manage stress are institutional programs and collateral programs.



Organizational Profile

Back in 1887, in Kozhencherry a quiet hamlet surrounded by plantations in the Southern state of Kerala, India, Mr. Ninan Mathai started a retail business along with his plantation ventures. In time, his sons took over the reins and re-established the business. With their youthful vision and combined strength it soon flourished. In 1939, the brothers established the Muthoot Chit Fund Enterprises, providing small and medium loans to farmers and merchants. In a short span of 10 years it became the largest business house of its kind in Kerala. They soon moved into full fledged banking operations. They specialized in gold loans and advances to small enterprises and individuals on quick and easy terms. This ensured rapid growth. The brothers then decided it was time to bifurcate and thus was born the Muthoot Pappachan Group, founded by his youngest son Mathew M. Thomas or Muthoot Pappachan as he is fondly known. Under his watchful eye the group has since diversified into financial services, hospitality, flight catering, travel services, IT infrastructure, property development, the automotive sector and alternate energy. A simple and devout man Muthoot Pappachan espoused a nine point formula that stood by him in realizing his goals. They are love, peace, happiness, kindness, helpfulness, patience, pleasantness, faithfulness, and self control. These ethics have been a guiding light to the path of his successors and have permeated every strata of the Muthoot Pappachan Group. The same values still govern every decision in the Group.

MuthootFincorp Limited is a finance company catering to the financial needs of retail and institutional customers. It is registered with the Reserve Bank of India as a systemically important non-deposit taking non-banking finance company (NBFC) with a paid up capital of Rs 181.25 crores and a Net Owned Fund of Rs 766.50 cr as on 30.09.2011. MuthootFincorp Limited focuses on providing a host of financial services through a wide network of over 1458 branches pan India. It has a diverse mix of retail offerings in the areas of Consumer loan products and investment advisory services. These include Gold loans, Home loans, Auto loans, Loans against Property, Investment products and Advisory Services. Muthootfincorp limited consists of Seven Board of Directors.

Objectives of the Study

- The objective of the study is to identify the existence of work stress in the organization
- To study the factors causing stress among the employees
- To evaluate the effect of stress on the Performance of the individual employee
- To study the positive and negative impact of Work Stress Management and to suggest measures for coping with stress at workplace

Scope of the Study

As mentioned in the introduction part, this study is majorly intended on the precise study about Work Stress Management is restricted within the organization. The study is conducted on the employees of the organization. Hence the

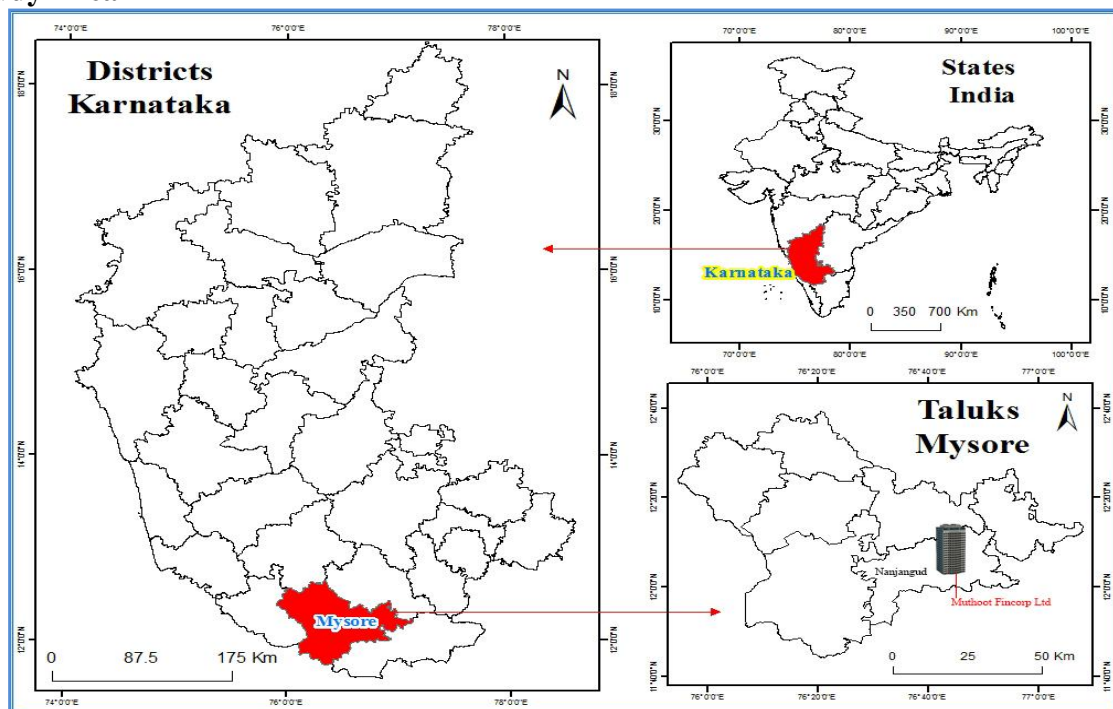
topic has been framed as An understanding of organizational stress, Causes, Consequences and Strategies to manage at Workplace-A comprehensive study in MuthootFincorp Ltd, Nanjangud Taluk of Mysore, Karnataka.

This is not because of non-availability of resources but the nature of the study itself restricts it. It studies the existence or non-existence of stress among the employees in the organization and identifies the factors which are contributing for stress. It also provides the various steps

adopted by the organization for managing the work stress of the employees, which can be used as a future reference for decision-making and policy making with regard to the employees.

The scope spreads over the wide area of Work environment, Social life of employee, Motivation by supervisors, Grievance handling, Leave policy, Respect to individual differences, Performance appraisal, Time management and overall this study reveals about the importance of the morale of an employees.

Study Area



METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR STUDY

The study is based on Descriptive Research Design and concentrated on the response of the 50 employees of the organisation. The sample size as mentioned was 50, this has been chosen on the basis of non-probability method I.e. convenience sample method. Both primary and secondary method was adopted to collect the data. The primary sources was the response or opinion of 50 employees of the organisation which collected through the structured interview scheduled by using closed ended questions and secondary data

was collected through the website of the organisation. The data was collected from various branches of Muthoot Fincorp Ltd, Which were situated in around of Nanjangud Taluk of Mysore District. Finally the collected data was interpreted through tables by adopting percentage method.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: A summary of demographic details of respondents is as follows.

Age Group	No. of respondents	Percentage
20-30	32	64
31-40	8	16
41-50	6	12
51 and above	4	8
Total	50	100

Here 64 percent of the respondents were found to be in the age group of 20-30, 31-40 respondents were 16 %, 41-50 respondents were 12% and remaining 8% of the employee were belongs to the age group of 51 and above.

Table 2: A summary of experience of the respondents was found to be as follows.

Experience	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than 5 years	10	20
5-10 years	20	40
10-20 years	10	20
20 years and above	10	20
Total	50	100

Form the above table it is found that 20% of the employees have got less than 5 year of experience, 40% of the respondents have experience of 5 to 10 years while 20% of them have experience of 10 to 20 years and remaining 20% of them have more than 20 years of experience.

Table 3: Following is the opinion of the respondents regarding whether they have been facing any stressful situation at the workplace.

Experience of stress at workplace	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	20	40
Agree	15	30
Moderate	10	20
Disagree	5	10

From above table, it is understood that there are 40% of the employees highly agreeing about stressful conditions, 30% are agree, 20% are moderately agree and remaining 10% of the employees are disagree for any stressful conditions.

Table 4: Following table shows the views of people on what type of Stress they feel at the workplace.

Type of stress	No. of respondents	Percentage
Physical Stress	22	44
Mental Stress	28	56

This shows that 44 % of the respondents are facing physical stress and 56% of the respondents are facing a mental stress. This is due to advance in technology, less physical work and more work is based on skills this leading to mental stress.

Table 5: Shows that the opinion of the respondents on the stress caused due to targets.

Opinion on targets	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	20	40
Agree	16	32
To some extent	12	24
Disagree	2	4

From the above table we can deduce that, the 40% of employees are highly agree, 32% of employees are agree and again 24% employees expressed to some extent and finally there are only 4% of employees were responded that they are not experiencing any stressful conditions in the organisation due to monatomic.

Table 6: Following table shows the views of the respondents on their relationship with their boss.

Good relation with boss	No. of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	8	16
Good	26	52
Moderate	10	20
Poor	6	12

The above table shows that 16% of the respondents shared an excellent relationship with their boss, 52 % of the respondents have a good relationship, 20% of them have a moderate relationship and remaining 12% of the respondents have very poor relationship with the boss.

Table 7: Following table represents the opinion of the respondents on the issue of role ambiguity at the workplace.

Face role ambiguity	No. of respondents	Percentage
Often	12	24
Sometimes	12	24
Rarely	22	44
Not at all	4	8

It has been found that 24% of the respondents have role ambiguity very often, 24% are sometimes and maximum employees I, e, about 44% are facing role ambiguity rarely and while remaining 8% of the respondents feels rarely been experiencing the role ambiguity at workplace.

Table 8: Showing below is the views of the respondents on the effects of technological changes at workplace

Comfortable with technological changes	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	30	60
Agree	12	24
To some extent	6	12
Disagree	2	4

From the above table it is evident that 73% of the respondents were averse to any type of technological changes while only 27% of them could do away with the changes. This shows that most of the respondents are stressed due to technological changes.

Table 9: Is your organisational culture is supportive?

Organisational culture	No. of respondents	Percentage
Outstanding	23	46
Agree	20	40
Average	4	8
To some extent	3	6

The table revealed that out of 50 respondents 46% of them expressed that organisational culture is outstanding, 40% of them are agreed, 8% are said that average and remaining 6% are viewed that organisational culture supportive only to some extent.

Table 10: Are you satisfied with your job?

Views on Job Satisfaction	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	20	40
Agree	10	20
Average	12	24
Poor	8	16

From the table it is clear that there are 40% of the respondents are highly agree that they are enjoying job, 20% of them are agree that they have satisfaction on the job, 24% of them are saying that the job satisfaction is an average and remaining 16% are saying that the job satisfaction is poor.

Table 11: Opinion on Job insecurity due to stress

Opinion on Job insecurity	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	4	8
Agree	8	16
To some extent	20	40
Not at all	18	36

The table shows that 8% of the respondents are highly agreed to the job insecurity, 16% percent were agree, 40% are said that to some extent and remaining 36% are expressed that they are not suffering from any job insecurity due to stress.

Table 12: Causes for stress

Causes for Stress	No. of respondents	Percentage
Dealing with Customers	20	40
Administration	10	20
Need to hit targets/deadlines	12	24
Long working hours	8	16

The above table shows that 40% of the respondents are facing the stress while dealing with the customers, 20% of them are because of administration, 24% are because of the targets and remaining 8% were because of long working hours facing the stress in the organisation.

Table 13: Personal Life Problem is leading to Stress

Personal Life Problem is Leading To Stress	Respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	6	12
Agree	12	24
To some extent	12	24
Not at all	20	20

From the above table it is deduced that 12% of the respondents are facing stress due to personal life problem, 24% are agree, again 24% are saying that it may be to some extent and remaining 20% are saying that they are not at all bring family or personal problem to the organization, hence they do not have stress in the organizational environment.

Table 14: Management support to curb the stress in the organization

Management support to curb the stress in the organization	No. of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	22	44
Very good	18	36
Good	8	16
Average	2	4
Total	50	100

From the above table it is clear that there are 44% of respondents expressed that the management is excellent, 36% are very good, and 16% are said that good and remaining 4 % are said that average support is being given to curb the stress in the organization.

Table 15: Able to balance personal and professional life

Able to balance personal and professional life	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	38	76
No	12	24

The above table reveals that there are 76% of the respondents are balancing both of their personal and professional life and remaining 24% are suffering to balance both.

Table-16: Shows that Type of symptoms you feel when stressed

Type of symptoms you feel when stressed	No. of respondents	Percentage
Physical strain	16	32
Anxiety	8	16
Increased blood pressure	8	16
Increased heart beat	6	12
Lack of sleep	8	16
Lack of interest in other activity	4	8

From the above table it is understood that as many as 32 % of the respondents are

suffering from physical strain, 16% and 16% are simultaneously facing the difficulties of anxiety and blood pressure, 12% are suffering from increased from heartbeat, 16% are from lack of sleep and finally 8% of the respondents are lagging to show the interest in their other activities.

Table -17: The technique which is being used to reduce the stress among employees

Training and Development programme	Yes
Yoga	No
Recreation	Yes
Counselling	Yes
Joint goal setting	Yes
Other welfare activities	Yes

The table reveals that except yoga all other activities have been taken to reduce the stress and to encourage the employee engagement in the organisation.

Table -18: Training & Development programs help to cope-up with new technology to reduce the stress

Opinion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	43	86
No	7	14

The above table shows that 86% of the respondents are agreed that Training and

Development programmes are helps in reducing stress and remaining 14% are said no use at all from that type of Training and Development programmes.

Table 19: Is recreational programme helps to you to reduce stress?

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	46	92
No	4	8

The above table reveals that 92 % of the respondents are agreed that they are benefitted and only 8% of them are not benefitted from recreational activities to reduce stress.

Table 20: Is your company organizes any counselling to employees?

Opinion	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	50	100
No	-	-

From the above table it is clear that 100% agree that the company provides some or the other kind of counselling for the purpose of reducing work stress for the employees, so that they can perform better.

Table -21.

Counselling really helps to you to curb /reduce the stress	Respondents	Percentage
Highly agree	35	70
Agree	10	20
Average	5	10
Poor	-	-

From the above data, it is understood that 70% of the respondents are highly agree and 20% agree and 10% say average.

Table -22

Company initiatives are too effective to reduce the stress	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	46	92
No	4	8

From the above information it clear that there are 92% of the respondents agreed that the company initiatives is too effective to reduce stress and remaining only 4% of them are not agreed for the same.

Findings

The following facts about the organisational stress and strategies to reduce the stress were found during the current research at Muthoot Fincorp Ltd, Nanjangud.

- There is in significance relationship between stress & demography factors i.e. age, experience & designation.
- Stiff targets are given to the employees which are difficult to achieve.
- Most of the employees found difficulty in balancing both personal and professional lives as the employees get very little time to spend with their families.
- Stress management strategies are very effective in the organisation
- Since most of the respondents were young, they are less experienced and some of them face job insecurity. This results in stress among them.
- It is found that counselling plays an vital role in the reduction of stress

among the employees.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are recommended to overcome the effect of stress found among the employees.

- Regular counselling and training programmes are suggested for the employees to reduce stress.
- More Welfare measures like yoga and other recreational activities have to be adopted properly.
- Technological change which is a major source of stress can be overcome by arranging regular training and developing programmes for the employees.
- The employees must be given opportunity in setting targets and should be given representation while taking decisions at the workplace.

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