

Stress Management Strategies- An Evaluative Study at Bajaj Allianz, Kurnool

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ABSTRACT: *Urbanization, industrialization and the increased scale of operations in society are some of the reasons for rising stress. It is an inevitable consequence of socio-economic complexity and to some extent, its stimulant as well. People experience stress as they can no longer have complete control over what happen in their lives. The telephone goes out of order, power is shut down, water supply is disrupted, children perform poorly at school etc, we feel frustrated and then stressed. Stress in the workplace is now widely recognized as a major problem facing Corporate Sector in India. The present world is fast changing and there are lots of pressures and demands at workplace. These pressures at work lead to physical disorders. A growing number of companies are offering some form of stress management interventions. However, for those seeking to introduce stress management activities, too little in the way of guidance and direction has been available. This study aims to help BAJAJ ALLIANZ Ltd to better understand the sources and dynamics of stress at the worksite and examine how they can reasonably assess, implement, and evaluate their stress management options.*

KEYWORDS: *Stress, Stress Management, Stress Management Strategies*

I. INTRODUCTION

20th century has been regarded as the period of incredible change in human history. Philosophers and scientists have been various names to this period. Peter Drucker has called it “The Age of Discontinuity”, John Galbraith has called it “The Age of Future Shock” and Hari Albrecht called it “The Age of Anxiety”.

Stress has become the 21th century buzz word, from the high pervading corporate echelons to the bassinets of teaching infants’ nurseries we find this word liberally used. Stress is part of modern life. Various events in life cause stress, starting with the birth of a child and enduring with the death of a dear one.

The word stress is derived from a Latin word “**stringere**”, meaning to draw tight. From the view point of physical sciences, the phenomena of stress are evident in all materials when they are subjected to “force, pressure, strain or strong-front”. Every material steel, rock or wood has its own limit up to which it can withstand stress without being damaged. Similarly human beings can tolerate certain level of stress. Stress is highly individualistic in nature. Some people have high levels of stress tolerance for stress and thrive very well in the face of several stressors in the environment. In fact, some individuals will not perform well unless they experience a level of stress which activates and energizes them to put forth their best results.

For every individual there is an optimum level of stress under which he or she will perform to full capacity. If the stress experience is below the optimum level, then the individual gets bored, the motivational level of work reaches a low point and it results to careless mistakes, forgetting to do things and thinking of things other than work during work hours and also leads to absenteeism which may ultimately lead to turnover. If on the other hand, stress experience is above the optimum level, it leads to too many conflicts with the supervisor or leads to increasing errors, bad decisions and the individual may experience insomnia, stomach problems, and psychosomatic illness.

Stress refers to individual’s reaction to a disturbing factor in the environment. It is an adaptive response to certain external factor or situation or what can be called environmental stimuli as reflected in an opportunity, constraint, or demand the outcome of which is uncertain but important. In short stress is a response to an external factor that results in physical, emotional, behavioral deviations in a person.

Stress is an all pervading modern phenomenon that takes a heavy toll of human life. Different situations and circumstances in our personal life and in our job produce stress. Those can be divided into factors related to the organization and factors related to the person which include his experience and personality traits. Job related factors are work overload, time pressures, poor quality of supervision, insecure political climate, role conflict and ambiguity, difference between company values and employee values. Person related factors are

death of spouse, or of a close friend, family problems, change to a different line of work, prolonged illness in the family, change in social activities, eating habits, etc.,

Personality traits are ‘Type A’ personality. They are impatient, ambitious, competitive, aggressive, and hardworking. They set high goals and demands of themselves and others. And they are particularly prone to stress inducing anticipatory emotions such as anxiety.

2 .RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Analytical approach is used by the researcher with the help of research instrument of well structured questionnaire and data is collected from the employees in BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE.

3. DATA SOURCES

- a) **PRIMARY DATA:** The primary data in the present study is collected through questionnaires and oral interviews
- b) **SECONDARY DATA:** The secondary data for this study are already available in the firm's internal records, annual report, brochures, and company's website. However there are disadvantages to the fact that the researcher cannot personally check the data so it's reliability may be questioned.
- c) **DATA COLLECTION METHOD:** The data collection method used in this research is survey method. Here the data are systematically recorded from the respondents.

4. Research Design: Sampling Method , non-probability ,stratified sampling technique was used with employees of BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE as the Sample Unit and sample size of 300 employees from different departments .

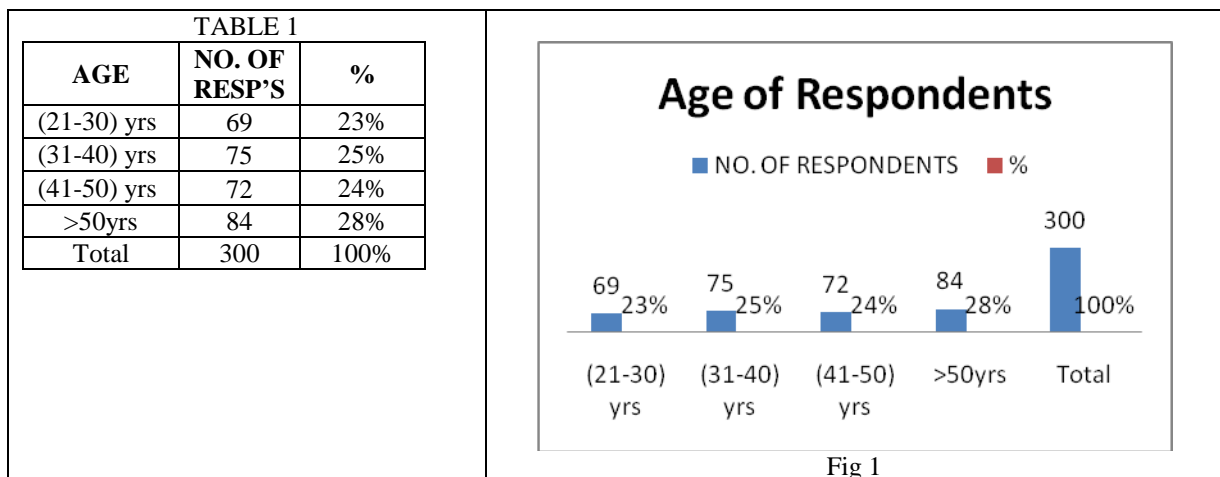
- a) **Statistical Methods** used include % analysis, Bars & charts, and Pie diagrams
- b) **Statistical tools** used are Chi-square test and weighted average method

5. AREA AND PERIOD OF SURVEY:

The project is being done for a period for three months from April 7, 2013 to May 12, 2013 and the survey was conducted in BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE, Kurnool.

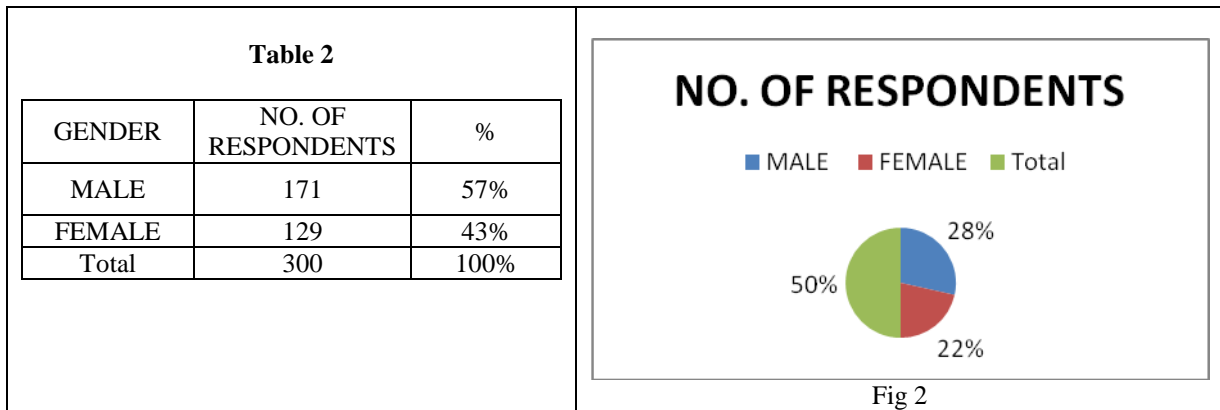
6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

6.1: AGE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES



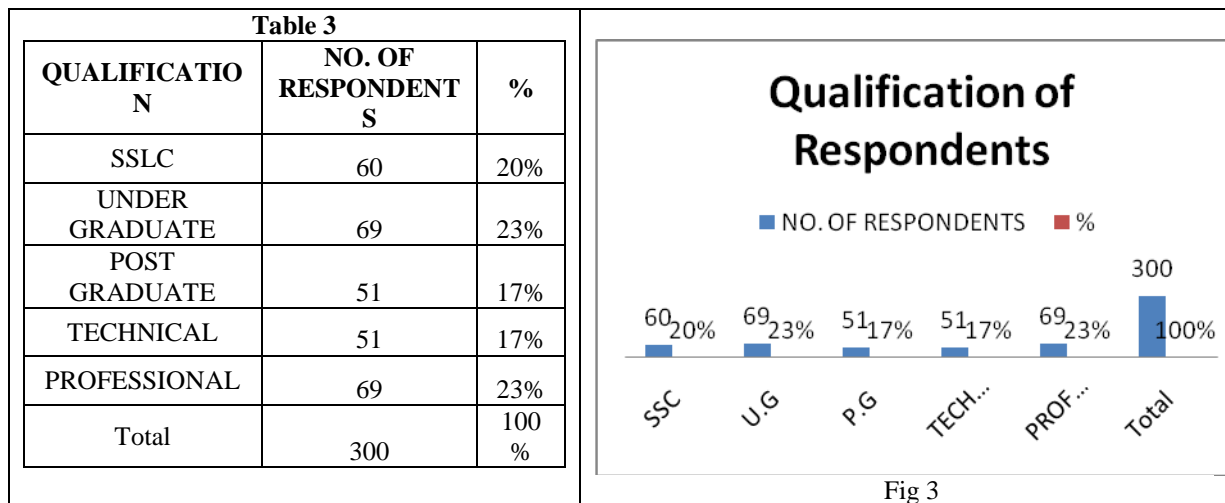
Inference: It is observed from the survey that 25% of the respondents are between (31-40) yrs, 24% of the respondents are between (41-50) yrs, 28% of the respondents are above 50 years and 23% of the respondents are between (21-30) yrs.

6.2: GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES



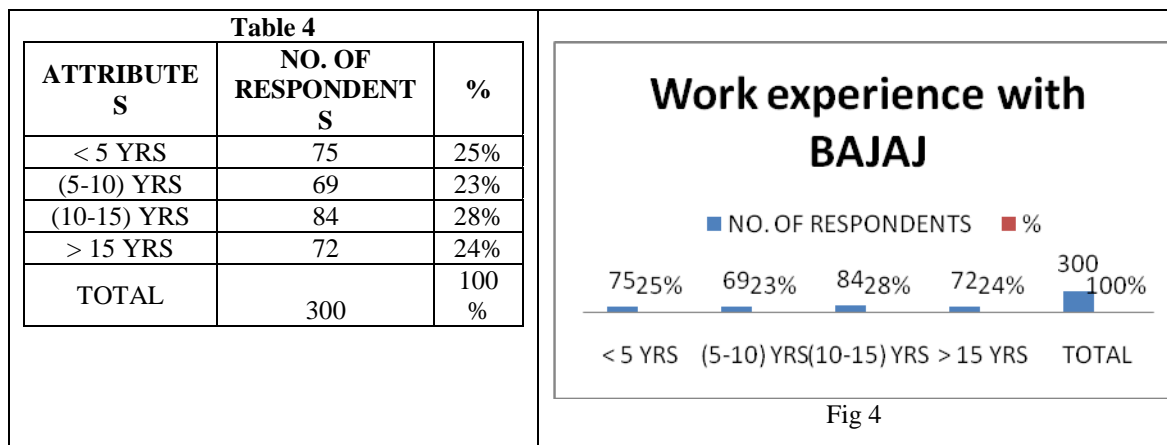
Inference: It is found from the survey that 57% of the respondents are male and 43% of the respondents are female.

6.3: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES



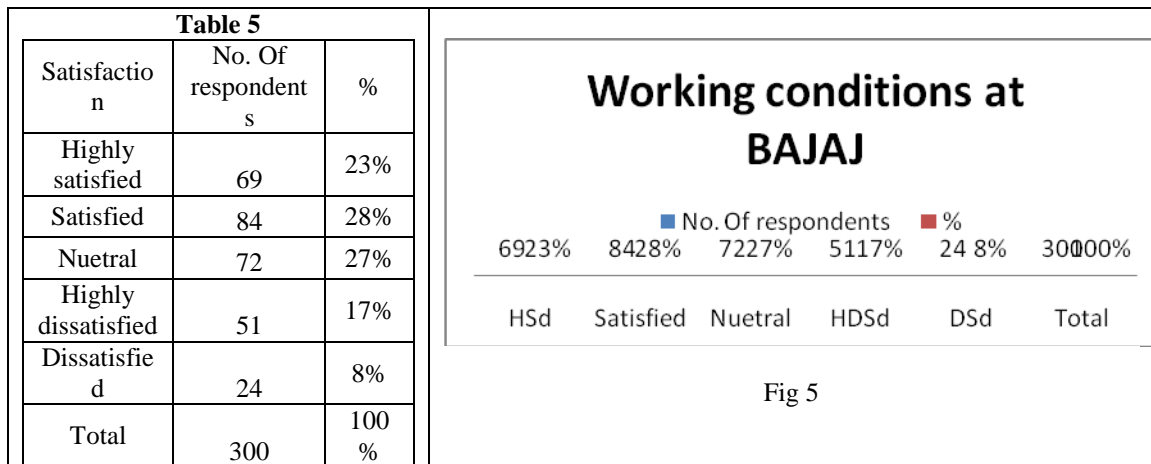
Inference: It is evident from the survey that 69% of the respondents are professionally qualified, 23% of the respondents have graduation, 17% of the respondents have post graduation and technically qualified, 20% of the respondents have only done finished SSLC.

6.4: WORK EXPERIENCE WITH BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE



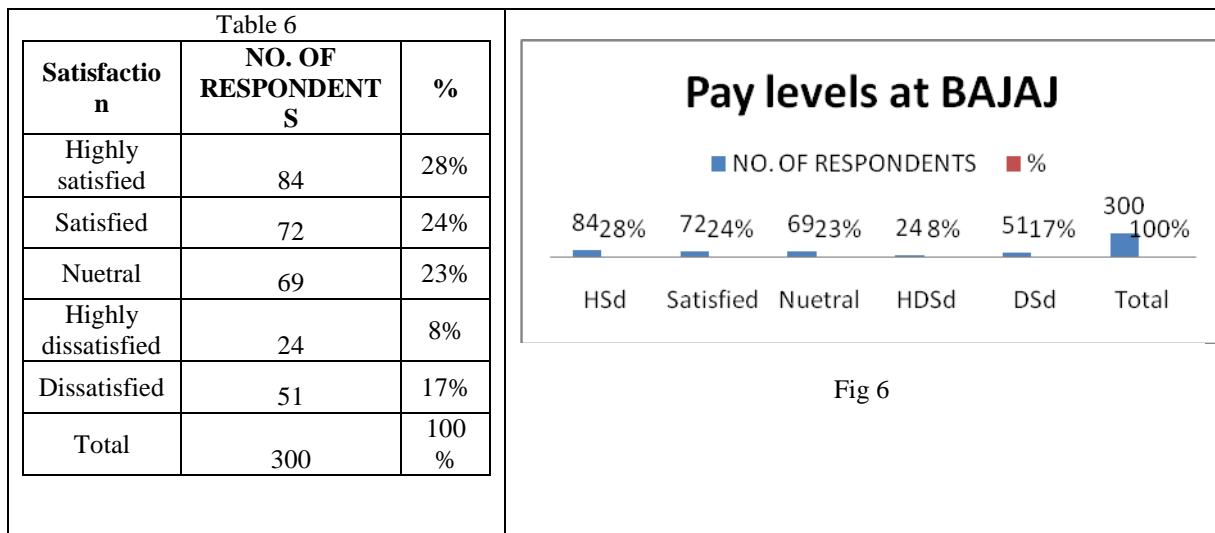
Inference: It is found from the survey that 24% of the respondents have more than 15 years of experience, 23% of the respondents have (5-10) yrs of experience and 28% of the respondents have their experience between (10-15) yrs remaining 24% of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience.

6.5: PHYSICAL WORKING CONDITION OF THE ORGANIZATION



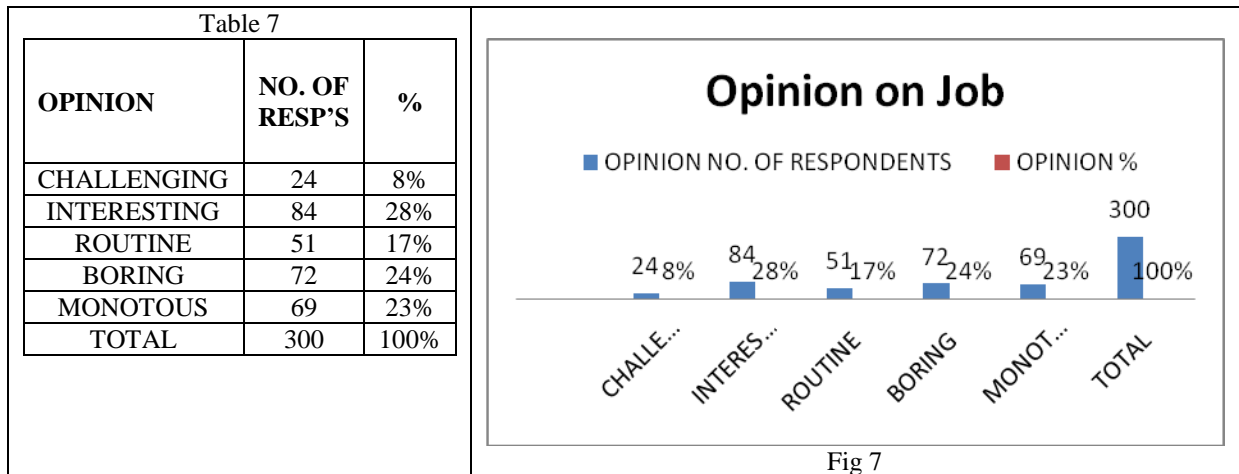
Inference: It is found from the survey that more than half of the respondents (28%) are satisfied with the physical working condition of the organization. 27% of the respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the physical working condition of the organization, 23% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the physical working condition of the organization, 17% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied wth physical condition provided and 8% respondents are dissatisfied with physical working condition of the organization.

6.6: OPINION ABOUT THE PAYPACKAGE PROVIDED BY THE ORGANIZATION



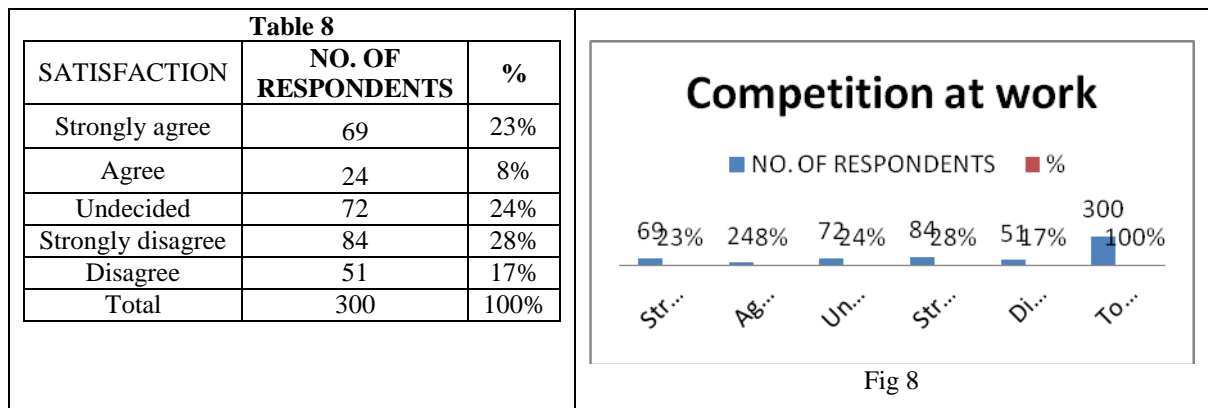
Inference:It is evident from the survey that 28% of the employees are highly satisfied with the pay scale provided, 24% of the respondents are satisfied with their pay scale, 23% of them are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 8% of them are highly dissatisfied, and 17% of the respondents are dissatisfied with the pay scale provided.

6.7: OPINION ABOUT THE JOB



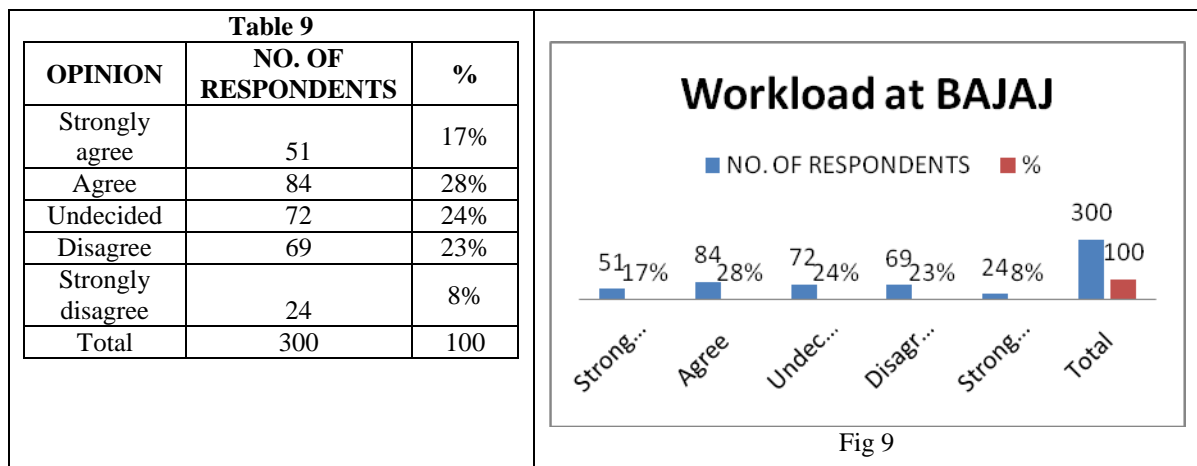
Inference: It is observed from the survey that 28% of the respondents feel the job interesting, 24% of them feel it boring, 17% of the respondent feel it routine, 23% of them feel it boring and 8% of them feel it challenging.

6.8: OPINION ABOUT THE COMPLETION OF THE WORK AT THE SPECIFIED TIME



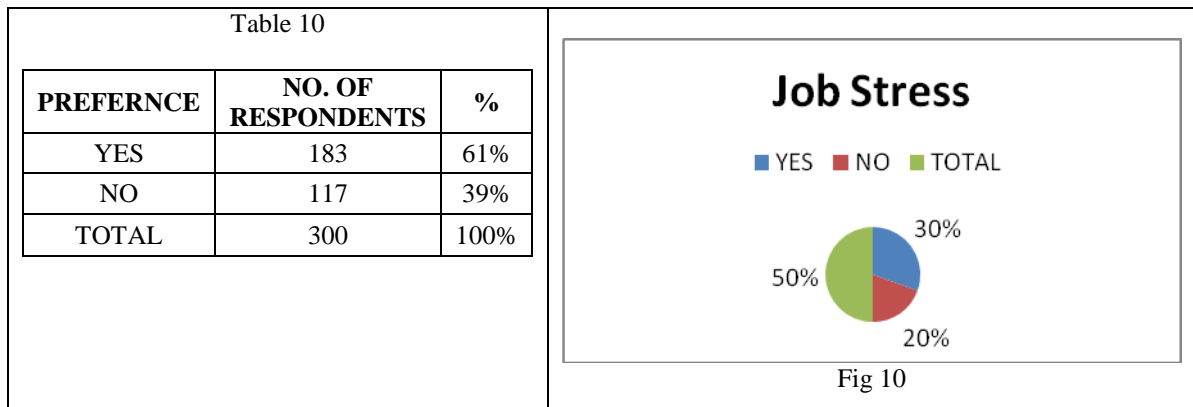
Inference:It is found from the survey that 23% of them strongly agree that they can complete the work at time, 8 % of them agree that they can complete work at time, 24% of them have no idea, 28% of them strongly disagree that they cannot complete the work in time, 17% of them disagree that they cannot finish the work in time.

6.9: WORK OVERLOAD



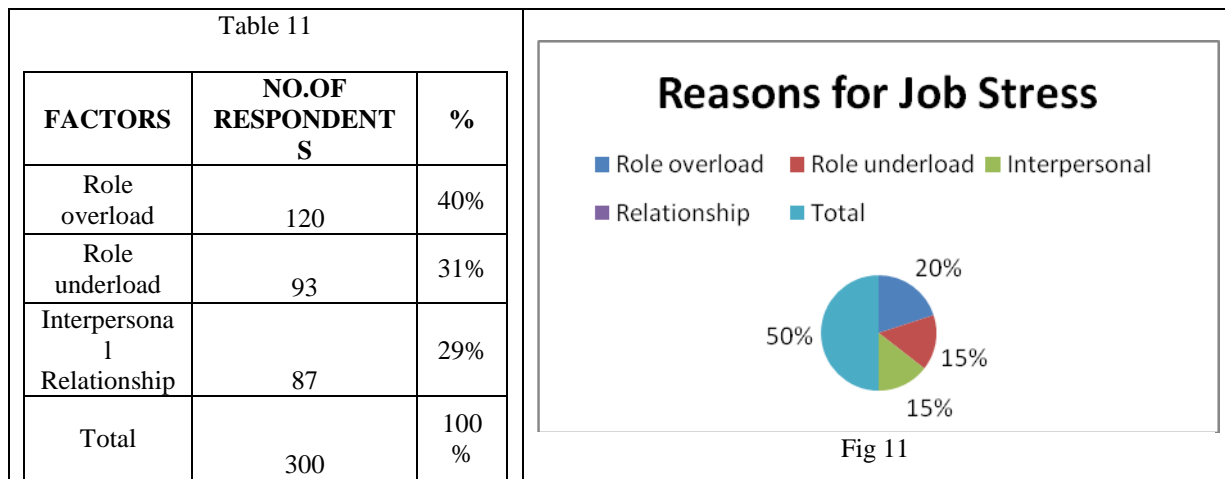
Inference:It is observed from the survey that 17% of the respondents are overloaded with work, 24% left it undecided and 23% of the respondents say that they are not overloaded with work.

6.10: STRESS IN JOB



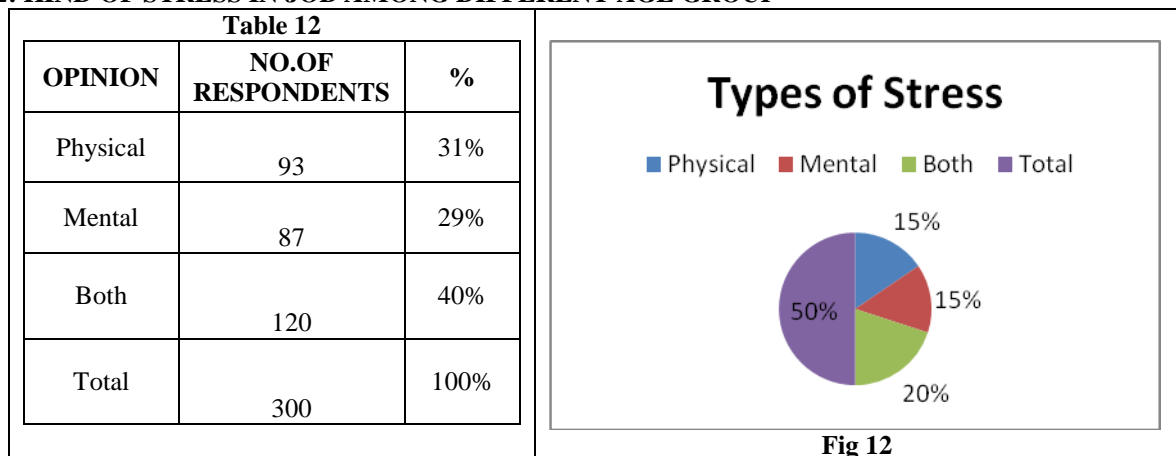
Inference:It is evident from the survey that 61% of the respondents suffer stress and 31% of the respondents do not suffer stress.

6.11: STRESS CAUSING FACTORS AMONG EMPLOYEES



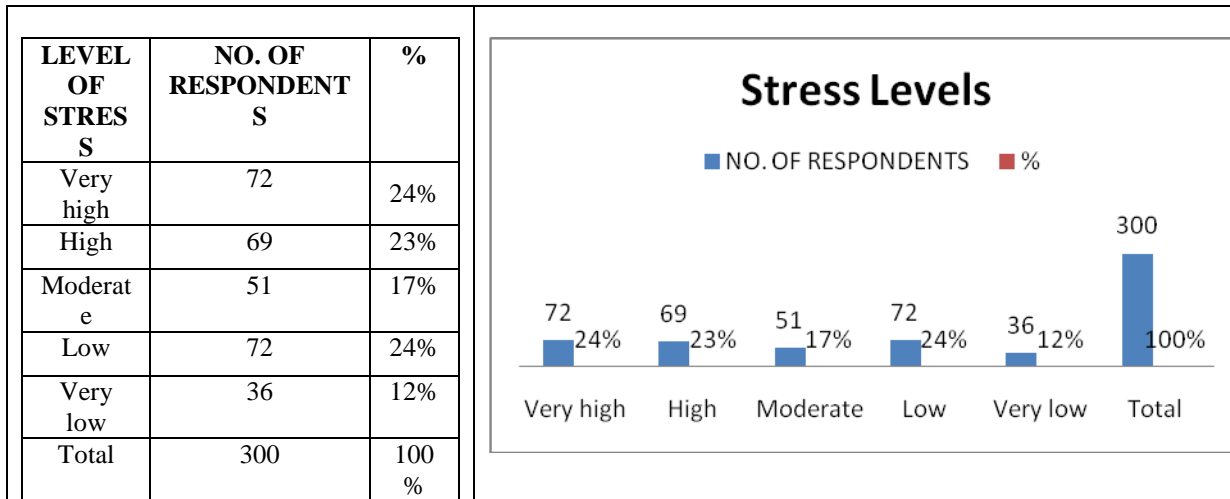
Inference:It is observed from the survey that for most of the respondents of all the level of employees role overload is the major stress causing factor; the second place goes to the role under load and then comes the interpersonal relationship

6.12: KIND OF STRESS IN JOB AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUP



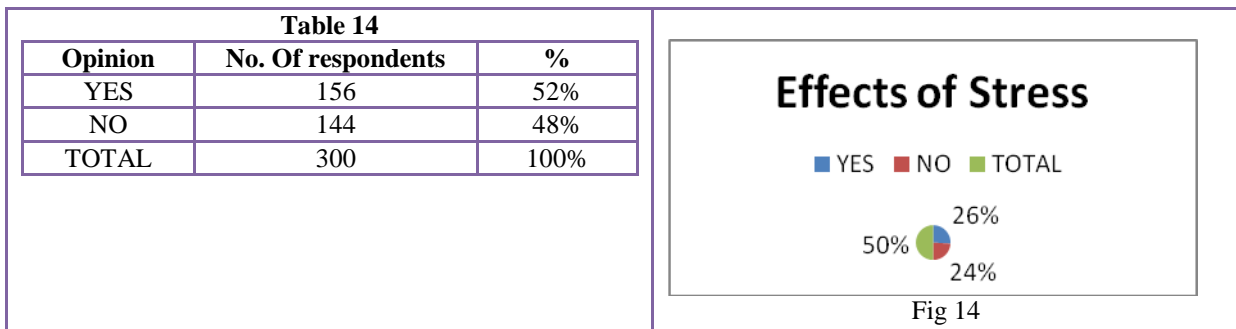
Inference: It is found from the survey that 31% of them suffer physical stress, 29% of them suffer mental stress and the remaining of them suffer from both the stress.

6.13: LEVEL OF STRESS



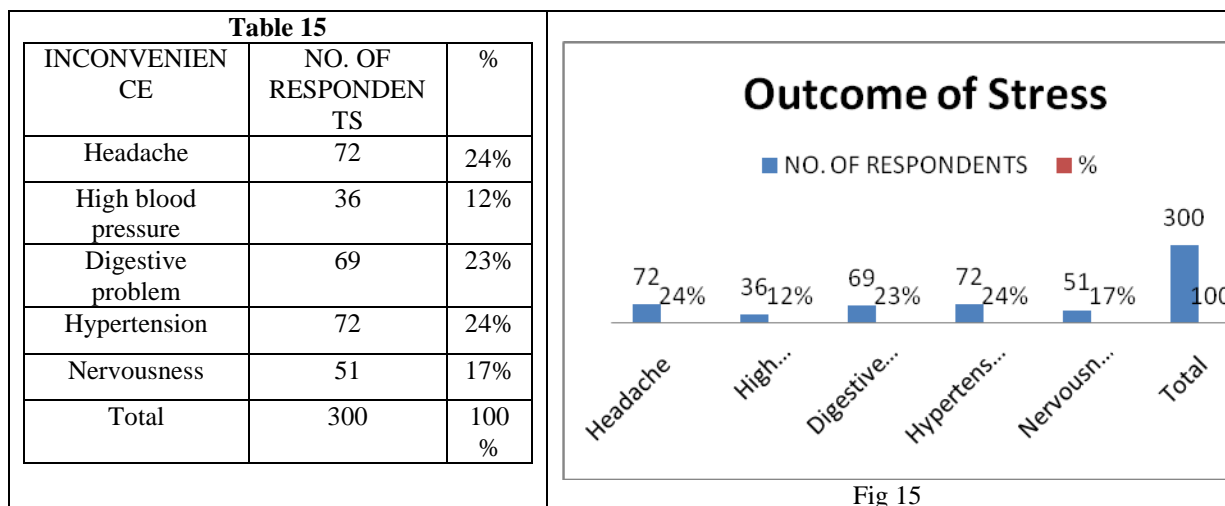
Inference: It is found from the survey that 17% of the respondents have moderate level of stress, 24% of the respondents have high level of stress, and only 12% of the respondents have very low level of stress.

6.14: PHYSICAL INCONVENIENCE DUE TO STRESS



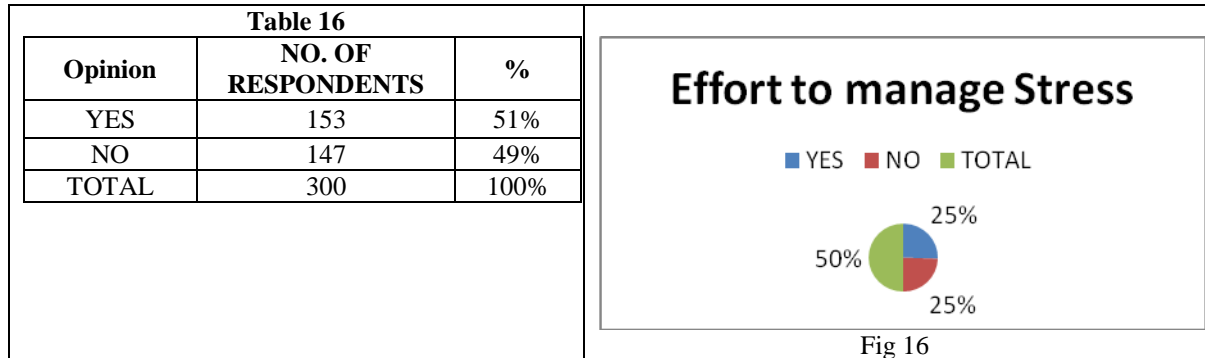
Inference: It is evident from the survey that 52% of the respondents suffer from physical inconvenience due to stress and 48% of the respondents do not suffer stress.

6.15: KIND OF INCONVENIENCE



Inference: It is observed from the survey that most of the respondents 24% suffer from headache and hypertension and second comes the digestive problem due to stress, then comes the nervousness and only less % of the respondents suffer from nervousness and digestive problems.

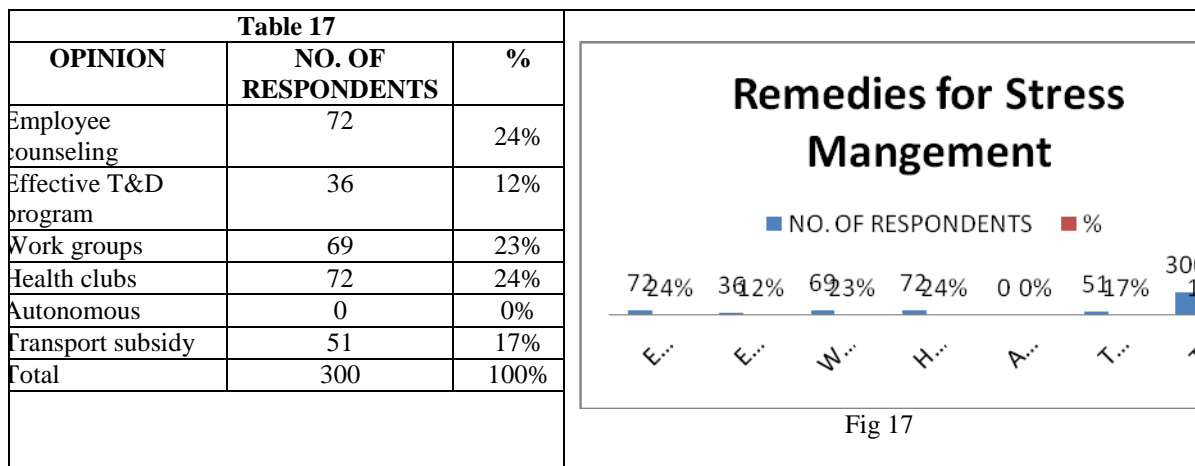
6.16: ORGANIZATION STEPS TO MANAGE STRESS



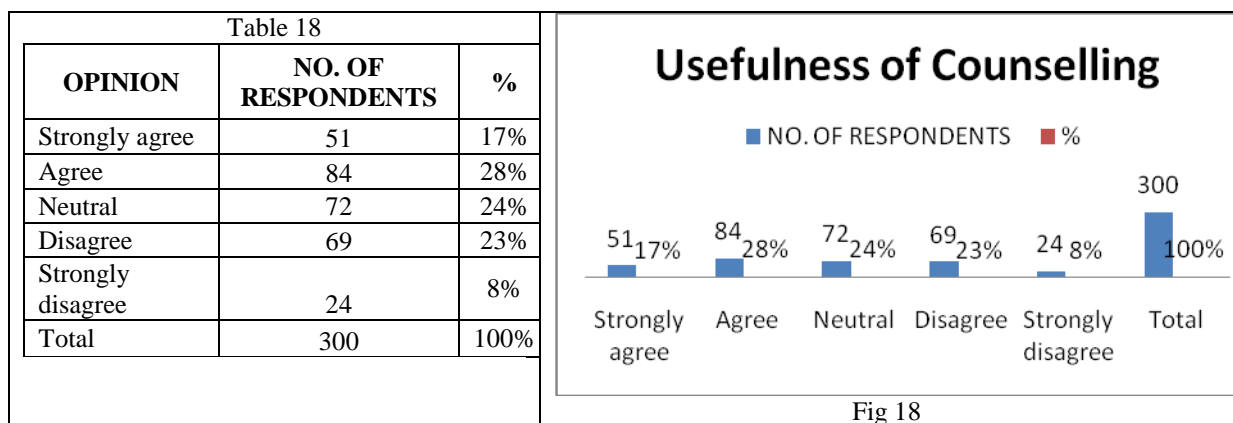
Inference:It is evident from the survey that 51% of the respondents agrees that their organization is helping them in overcoming stress, and the 49% of them are not satisfied with the help provided by the organization to overcome stress.

6.17: PROGRAMS THAT COULD BE ADABTED TO MANAGE STRESS

Inference: It is observed from the survey 24% of them recommend employee counseling,12% of them need effective training, 23% need work groups, 24% need health groups, and the remaining need transport subsidy



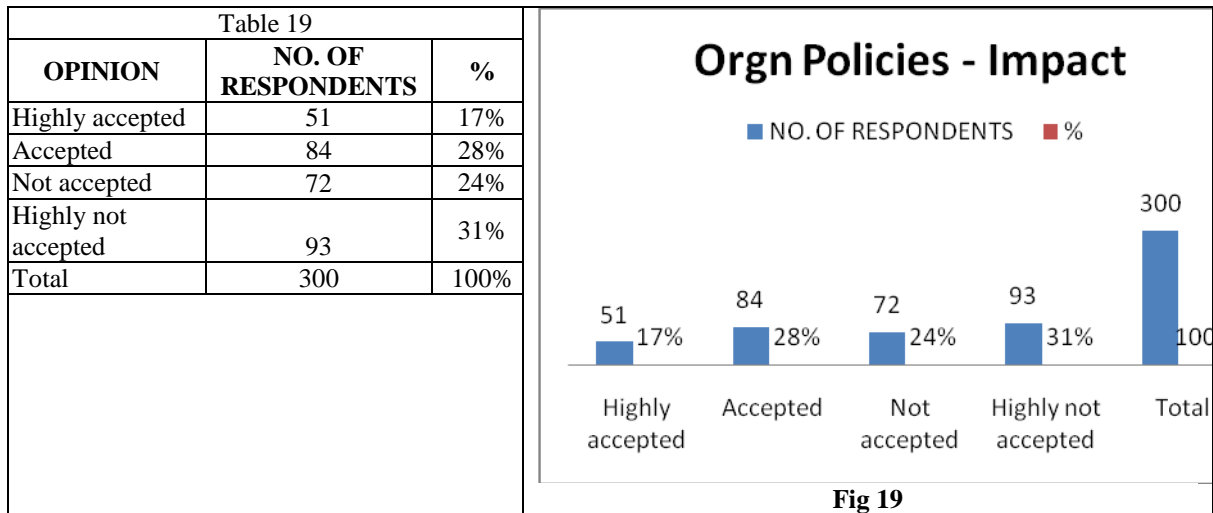
6.18: OPINION ABOUT COUNSELING TO REDUCE THE STRESS



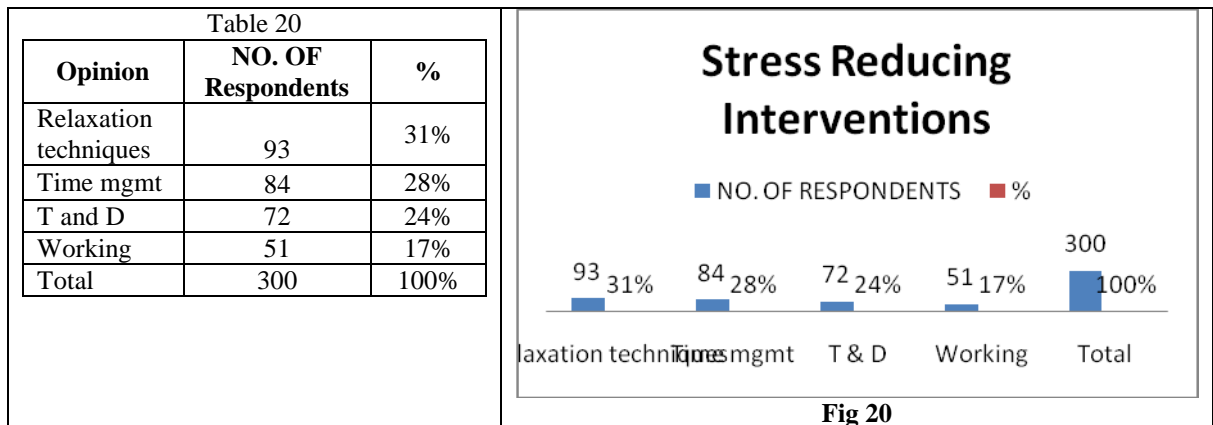
Inference: From the above we can find that 17% of them strongly agree that counseling can overcome stress, 28% of them agree that they can overcome stress through counseling, 24% of them don't have any idea, 28% disagree and the remaining disagree.

6.19: ORGANIZATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE STRESS FREE

Inference: It is observed from the survey that most of the respondents accept that the companies policies are stress free, 28% of them have accepted that organization policies are stress free, 24% of them have not accepted it, 31% of them have not accepted that their organization policy is full of stress.



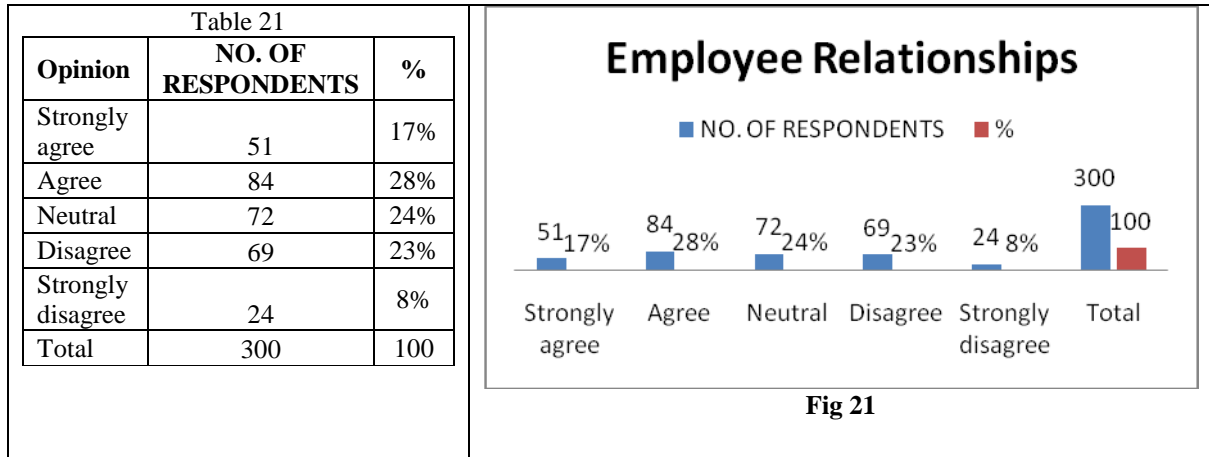
6.20: BEST INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE STRESS



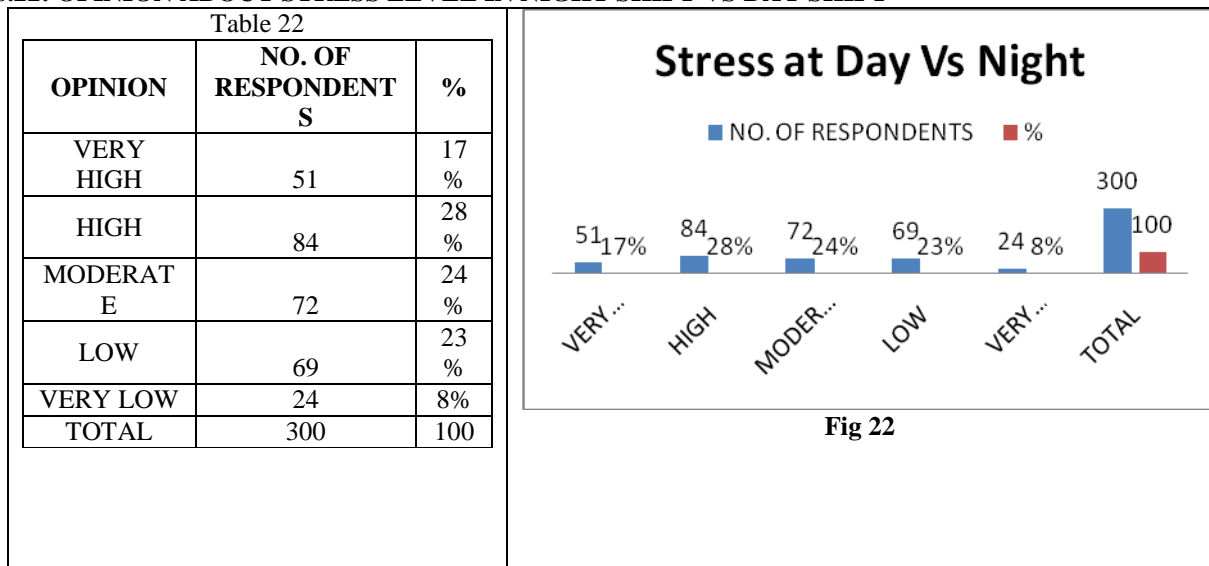
Inference: It is observed from the survey that most of the respondents 31% says that relaxation techniques, 28% of them need time management, 24% says that training is the best intervention, 17% says working intervention is the best thing to overcome stress.

6.21: OPINION ABOUT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Inference: From the above we can find that 17% of them strongly agree that they have strained interpersonal relationship, 28% of them agree that they have strained interpersonal relationship stress, 24% of them don't have any idea, 28% disagree that they do not have strained interpersonal relationship.



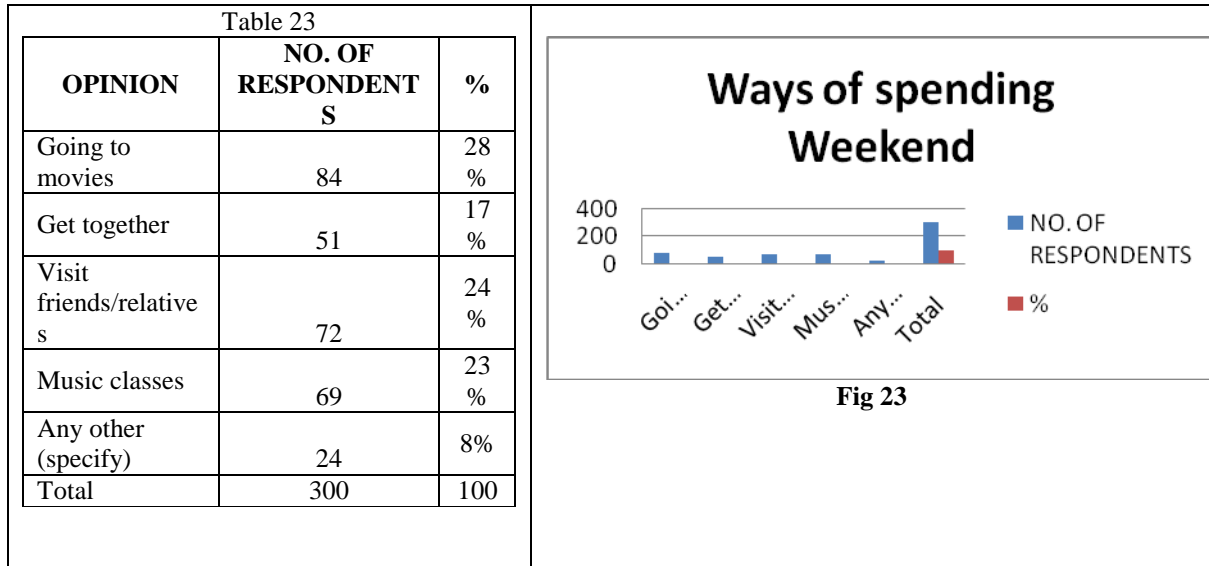
6.22: OPINION ABOUT STRESS LEVEL IN NIGHT SHIFT VS DAY SHIFT



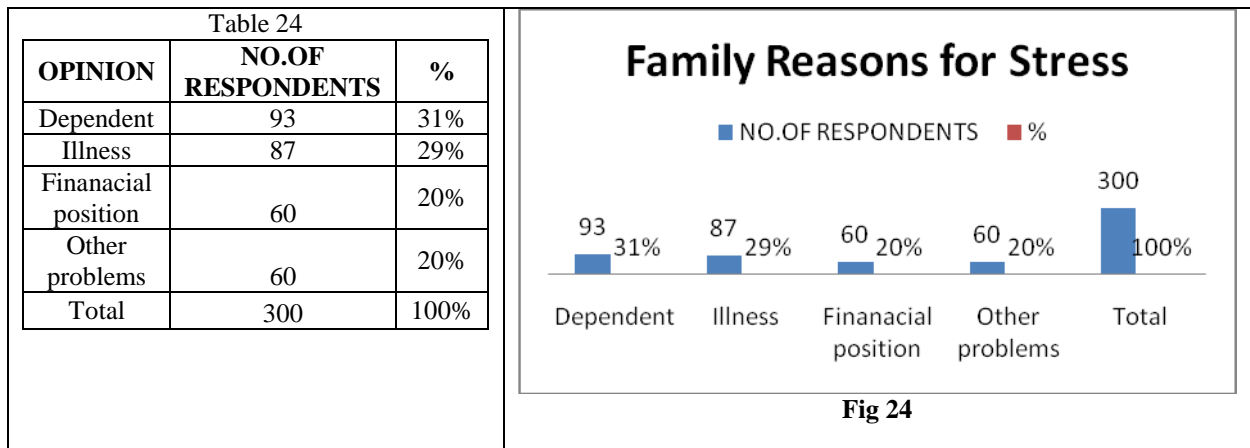
Inference: From the above we can find that 17% of them strongly agree that they have stress in night shift, 28% of them agree that they have stress in night shifts, 24% of them don't have any idea, 23% disagree that they do not have any stress in night shift.

6.23: WAYS OF SPENDING THE WEEKEND

Inference: From the above we can find that 28% of them would like to go to movies, 17% would like to get together, 24% would like to visit friends/relatives, and 23% would like to go to music class and the remaining prefer any other thing.

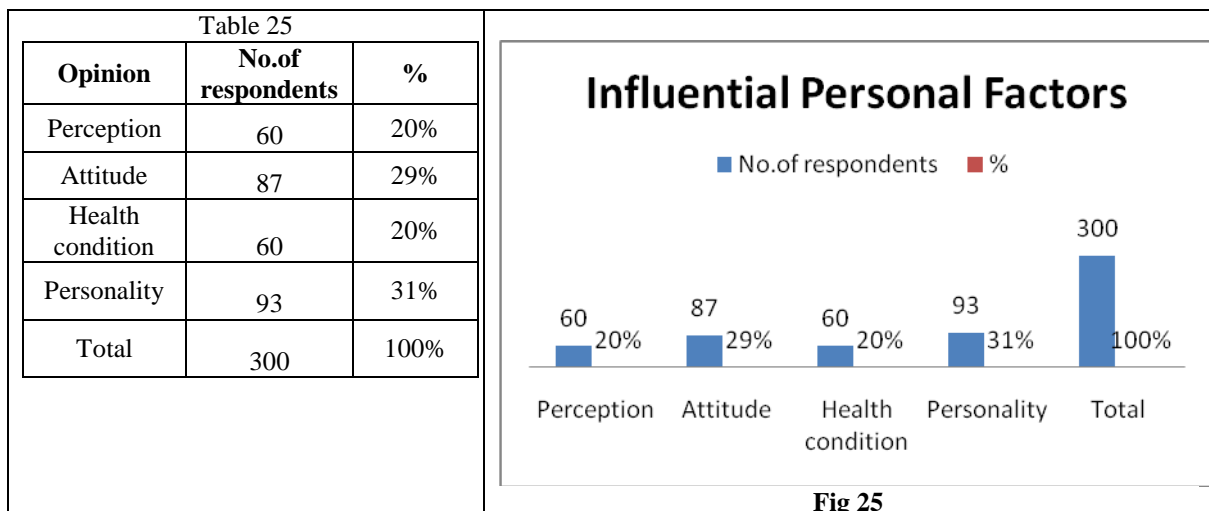


6.24: FAMILY FACTOR WHICH INFLUENCE STRESS



Inference: It is found from the survey that 31% of them says dependency influence stress, 29% says that illness influence stress, 20% of them says that financial as well as other problem influence stress.

6.25: PERSONAL FACTOR INFLUENCING STRESS



Inference: It is found from the survey that 20% of them says perception influence stress, 29% says that attitude influence stress, 20% of them says that health condition influence stress, and the remaining says that personality influence stress.

6.26: STRATEGY TO REDUCE STRESS

Factors	HS	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly DS	Total	%
Yoga	10	10	10	10	11	50	17%
Meditation	10	11	11	17	20	69	23%
Motivation	11	11	10	20	20	72	24%
Counseling	0	0	0	9	0	9	3%
Indoor games	11	20	20	11	11	72	23%
Ohters	2	10	6	10	0	28	6%

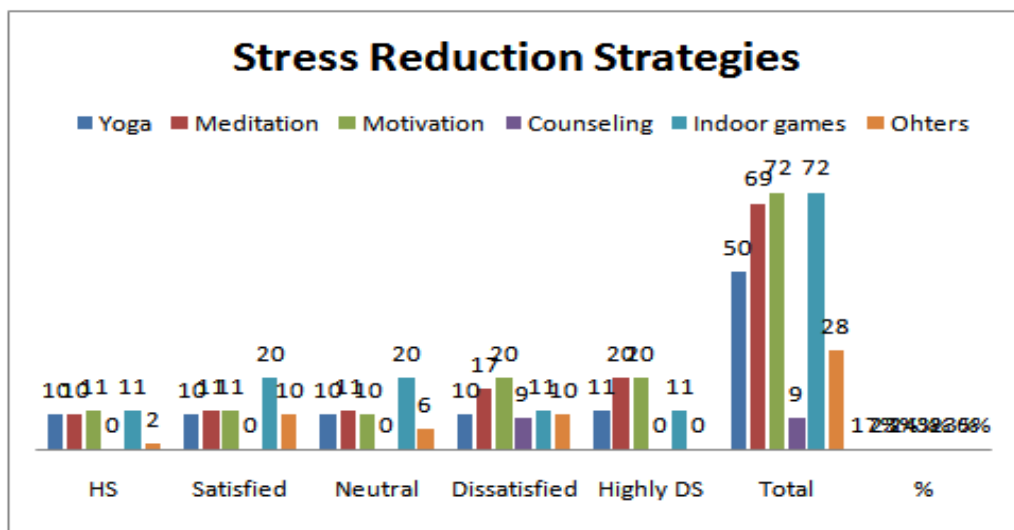


Fig 26

Inference:It is found from the above table that 17% prefer yoga, majority prefer indoor games, and the next majority prefer motivation.

6.27. CHI-SQUARE TEST ON SPENDING WEEKEND Vs STRATEGY TO REDUCE STRESS

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relation between spending weekend and strategy to reduce stress

Alternate Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relation between spending weekend and strategy to reduce stress

CROSS TABULATION : SPENDING WEEKEND Vs STRATEGY TO REDUCE STRESS

STRATEGY SPENDING WEEKEND	YOGA	MEDITATION	MOTIVATION	COUNSELING	INDOOR GAMES	OTHER	ROW TOTAL
Going to movies	-	-	4	-			4
Get together	4	16	8	2			28
Visit to friends/ relatives	8	22	10	10			48
Music classes	-	4	4	2			12
Any other	-	-	6	-			8
Column total	12	42	32	14			100

Degrees of freedom = 12

Calculated value = 27.497

For 12 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance, the chi-square table value is 5.226.

Inference:

Calculated value > Tabulated value..Hence H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted.

Conclusion: There is a significant relation between spending weekend as an effective strategy to reduce stress

II. FINDINGS

- Out of the total sample most of the respondents are male and many are between 50 and above. Most of the respondents are under graduate and have professional qualification.
- Most of the respondents have 10-15 years of long association with the organization.
- Almost all the respondents are satisfied with the physical and psychological working condition of the organization, and only fewer respondents are dissatisfied with the psychological working condition of the organization.
- The Opinion about the training programs conducted by the organization is almost better, according to majority of the respondents.
- Almost all the respondents are satisfied with the pay package provided by the organization and nearly half of the respondents feel that they do a routine job.
- Most of the respondents agree that they can complete their work within the specified time and some of the respondents are undecided.
- Most of the respondents from steels department suffer from physical stress; most of the respondents from accounts department suffer from mental stress, and most of the respondents from civil department suffer from both physical and mental stress.
- Most of the respondents feel only moderate level of stress and some of the respondents feel high level of stress in their job.
- More than half of the respondents have physical inconvenience due to stress and most of the respondents suffer from headache and high blood pressure.
- Almost all the respondents prefer to follow coping strategies personally, to manage stress and they prefer to do meditation and yoga to reduce stress.
- Most of the respondents say that the organization does not take suitable steps to manage stress.
- Employee counseling and effective training & development programs are the company wide programs that could be adapted to manage stress.

III. SUGGESTIONS

- The employees must give importance to time management techniques there by they can complete their work within the specified time.
- Many tasks can be delegated to subordinates without losing effectiveness so that we can reduce the overload of work.
- Adopt the work to home transition strategy. It means instead of carrying the pressures of the work to home, the suggestion is to start the unwinding process during the work day and enter the home in a relaxed and peaceful mind.
- Giving counseling to the employees when they face problems, because counseling is the discussion of a problem that usually has emotional content with an employee in order to help the employee cope within better.
- The organization must introduce Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and stress control workshops accordingly to the level of employees, because there is a strong relation between the level of stress and level of employees. EAP includes counseling employees who seek assistance on how to deal with alcohol and drug abuse, managing personal finances, handling conflicts at the work place, dealing with marital and other family problems, and coping with health problems.
- Engaging the bored employee in aerobic exercise, because it stimulates the brain and the body. Also the employee must do meditation and yoga in their daily life.

IV. CONCLUSION

Stress in the work place has become the black plague of the present century. Much of the stress at work is caused not only by work overload and time pressure but also by lack of rewards and praise, and more importantly, by not providing individuals with the autonomy to do their work as they would like. Most of the employees were not satisfied with the grievance handling procedure of the organization which was found by the unstructured interview.

Organization must begin to manage people at work differently, treating them with respect and valuing their contribution. If we enhance the psychological well being and physical health of the employees, in the coming future, the organization is sure to make not only success financially but also reduce employee turnover and has ample scope of employee retention.

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