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A Descriptive Book Review of the Book – “Stress and Coping: The Indian Experience”, Second Edition

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In the 21st century, it is impossible to lead a successful professional life without “Stress”. A “Stress Free” life is only a dream. But, at the same time, “Stress” is not good for physical and mental health. So, where to draw the line? The answer lies in “Managing the Stress” properly.

The book entitled, “Stress and Coping: The Indian Experience” takes you through the journey of the same. The book starts with a chapter on “What is Stress?” and very beautifully explains the concept like Stress Tolerance Limit, Burnout, General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), Ancient Indian Concepts on the Stress. The author rightly argues that Stress has a positive aspect too – it keeps one alert.

In the second chapter, the book goes on to discussing the relationship between Stress and Physiology and discusses (fairly in depth) about the Psychosomatic Disease and Stress, Cancer and Stress, Psycho-Sexual Disease and Stress, Gastric Ulcer and Stress, Bronchial Asthma and Stress, Anxiety Neurosis and Stress, Endocrinology and Stress and so on. It also covers the Stress and Environment with sub themes like (indicative list only): Industrial Toxicants and Stress and Surgical Stress.

In the third chapter, the author explores the area of life events stress. Very useful inventory coverage is the Dube’s Life Events Scale, which is based on Holmes and Rahe’s scale. It also covers other scholars’ scales on the same like Batlivala’s Life Events Scale, Singh et al’s Life Events Scale etc. Further the chapter talks about various disease and life events scale.

In the fourth chapter, the author talks about the Organizational Role Stress. The chapter aptly covers topics like Personal Coorelates and Role Stress (Like Type A/B and Role Stress). The chapter beautifully gives insights into the India specific research in this area. It also talks about various inventories like ORS scale.

The fifth chapter covers the role stress experienced by executives in Public sector, Private Sector, Bank, Computer Professionals, Supervisors, Air Traffic Controllers, Entrepreneurs, Working Women, Teachers and Students, Police Professionals. This chapter will be very useful to any psychiatrist, counselor who want to know about the stressors felt by the above noted professionals.

The sixth chapter talks about coping styles and strategies. It covers various types of coping like appraisal focused coping, problem focused coping, emotion focused coping and coping profiles of some group like students, supervisors, managerial personnel at various organizational levels etc.

The seventh chapter covers the moderators (variables) of stress like needs needs, locus of control, Type-A, Mental Health, Coping Strategies, Effort and Outcome Orientation, Organizational Climate, Job Satisfaction, Occupational Stress and Other Moderator Variables.

The last but never the least chapter covers the ideas about counteracting stress. It basically covers two categories of discussions: What individuals can do, what organizations can do. Further discussion involves things like Job Characteristics Approach, Role Efficacy, Coping Mechanisms in Indian Managers, Ways to Manage Stress Effectively and so on.

The book's USP is its coverage in the Indian context. While many western authors have written very good books on Stress Management, a need was felt for India specific book on the subject. This book does bridge this gap to a great extent. For the researchers in this area, this book acts like a light house. The book's another attractive point is the coverage (at many places) of how the stress is felt differently by Indian v/s Western Managers. Because India is a country with a very different culture, the western ideas on stress are applicable up to some extent only to the Indian managers.

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