CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 ORIGIN OF STRESS

The concept of stress was first introduced in life sciences in 1936 by Hans Selye. During the last two decades the term “stress” has come to be widely used in relation to work organizations. Manson (1975), reviewing literature on stress, concluded that there was confusion and a lack of consensus regarding its definition. The term “stress” has been used variously to refer to (a) stimulus (external force acting on the organism), (b) response (changes in the physiological functions), (c) interaction between an external force and the resistance opposed to it, as in biology and (d) more comprehensive combinations of the above factors.

After four decades of research, Selye concluded that series of four closely related processes occurred under conditions of stress namely re-adaptation, reformulation, readjustment or realignment. The process is essentially that of change through which the individual tries to establish normalcy. The specific responses are always accompanied by non-specific ones which Selye labeled as stress. In view of the fact that each process following stressors help in the process, Selye recognized that stress had great adaptive value and labeled stress response as ‘the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS).

General, because the symptoms are non-specific, for example when one does not get a promotion one had set eyes for a long time or when one is fired from one’s job stress is created.

Adaptation, because the reactions help one to face changes in situation.

Syndrome, since they tend to occur as a cluster, which can be differentiated from other symptomatic cluster.

GAS, the first scientific formulation or model of how stress acts on the individual, consists of three stages:
Stage-I: Alarm Reaction

Occur upon sudden exposure to any noxious stimulation to which the individual is not adapted. The reaction has two phases, viz.

**Initial shock phase,** which is an immediate reaction in which resistance is lowered, accompanied by signs of injury such as increased heart rate. Other symptoms are loss of muscle tone, decreased temperature and decreased blood pressure etc.

**Counter shock phase,** which is a rebound phase in which defensive mechanisms become active. After the initial shock the body is caught unaware and it springs back into action. The phase is marked by the mobilization of physical resources for defensive purposes.

This alarm reaction is so potent that if the organism is made to maintain it for a few hours, it can lead to adrenalin discharge, gastrointestinal ulceration or sometimes it may lead to death also. The reason is that the alarm reaction literally devours of any stress–combating event. If a living being survives this phase, the second stage sets in.

Stage-II: Stage of Resistance

The maximum/full adaptation to the stressors occurs during this stage. The manifestation of this phase is completely opposite to that seen in stage 1. This is the stage when the organism becomes attuned to the stressors and there may be consequent improvement or even disappearance of symptoms. Gradually, he learns to cope with all the change exigencies. His power of resistance builds up and increases to levels above normal. At the same time, he resists any further exposure to the stressors. After more exposure to the noxious agent, the acquired adaptation is lost. The stage of exhaustion sets in.
Stage III: Stage of Exhaustion

At this stage, the adaptation energy is exhausted, signs of the alarm reaction reappear, the resistance level begins to decline irreversibly and the organism collapses.

According to Seyle, his work enabled him to develop a very satisfactory code of conduct. His three stage model can be used to develop a universal code of conduct. Such a code postulates that one’s adaptation energy is finite and should not be destroyed through over work. The model can be used to design achievement through the pleasant stress of fulfillment i.e. eusertess, without the harmful consequence damaging but inevitable stress or distress. The point of the code is not to abolish stress, but to master it. It is a matter of choosing, not an undemanding life style, but a eustressfully rather than distressfully damaging one.

1.2 DEFINITION OF STRESS

According to Selye (1956), “any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium is stress”. From this definition it is clear that stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it.

Arnold (1960) defined stress as “any condition that disturbs normal functioning”.

Cofer and Appiey (1964) defined stress as “the state of an organism where he perceives that his well being is endangered and that he must divert all energies to its protection”.

According to Lazarus (1966) “stress refers to physiological, behavioral and cognitive responses to events appraisal as threatening or exceeding one’s coping responses and options”.

Wolff (1968) defined stress as “a dynamic state within an organism in response to demand for adaptations”.

3
Beehr and Newman (1978) defined stress as “a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change (disruptor enhance) his or psychological and/or physiological conditions such that the person (mind or body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning”.

According to Marshal and Cooper (1979) “Stress is a stimulus or situation to which man reacts with learned coping mechanism activated by homeostasis principle and fuelled by energies which are in finite supply”.

Farmer, Monannan and Hekuler (1984) defined stress as “Stress consists of any event in which environmental demands, internal demands or both, exceed the adaptive resources of the individual, social system or tissue system”.

According to Beehr and Bhagat (1985) stress includes stressors and strains. The term stressors refer to the environmental stimulus and the term strain refers to the individual’s response which can be physical, psychological or behavioral indicators of ill health and well being of an individual.

Life Stress arises due to stressful life events like divorce, death of spouse or close family members, partition of joint family, marriage, losing a job and going to jail etc.

Organizational Stress refers to the total of the various types of role stresses experienced by employees in their organizational role, namely, Role Ambiguity, Role Stagnation, Role Overload, Role Erosion, Role Conflict, Resource Inadequacy and Personal Inadequacy.

1.3 POTENTIAL SOURCES OF STRESS

There are three categories of potential stressors: environmental, organizational and personal.
Environmental Factors

Just as environmental uncertainty influences the design of an organization’s structure, it also influences stress levels among employees in that organization. Changes in the business cycle create economic uncertainties. When the economy is contracting, for example, people become increasingly anxious about their job security. Technological change is a type of environmental factor that can cause stress, because new innovations can make an employee’s skills and experience obsolete in a very short time, computers, robots, automation, and similar forms of technological innovation are a threat to some people and cause them stress. Terrorism is an increasing source of environmentally – induced stress in the twenty-first century.

Organizational Factors

There is no shortage of factors within the organization that can cause stress. Pressure to avoid errors or complete tasks in a limited time, work overload, a demanding and insensitive boss, and unpleasant co workers are few examples.

Task demands are factors related to a person’s job. They include the design of the individual’s job (autonomy, task variety, degree of automation), working conditions, and the physical work layout. Working in an overcrowded room or in a visible location where noise and interruptions are constant can increase anxiety and stress. Increasingly, as customer service becomes ever more important, emotional labour is a source of stress.

Role demands relate to pressures placed on a person as a function of the particular role he or she plays in the organization. Role conflicts create expectation that may be hard to reconcile or satisfy. Role overload is experienced when the employee is expected to do more than time permits. Role ambiguity is created when the role expectations are not clearly understood and the employee is not sure what he or she is to do. International demands are pressures created by other employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationship can cause stress, especially among employees with a high social need.
Personal Factors

The typical individual works about 40 to 50 hours a week. But the experiences and problems that people encounter in those other 120 plus network hours each week can spill over to the job. National surveys consistently show that people hold family, personal relationship, troubles with children as examples of relationship problems that create stress for employees as these aren’t left at the front door when they arrive at work. Economic problems created by individuals overextending their financial resources is another set of personal trouble that can create stress for employees and distract their attention from their work.

Daily Hassles

Major life changes occur infrequently; everyday hassles obviously happen all the time and thus may be the most significant sources of stress. These minor annoyances range from missing a commuter train to work, losing a wallet or living with an irritating roommate. Everyday hassles or mundane irritants and stressors negatively affect physical and mental health to a degree that exceeds the adverse consequences of major life events. Research also suggested that an overly anxious person may overreact to daily hassles in a way that magnifies their impact. Daily hassles also have been demonstrated to interact with long term background stressors such as job satisfaction, commuting and living conditions.

1.4 STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND STYLE

Strategy

In a competitive world companies are forever trying to discover more cost effective ways of transacting their business. The reduction of payroll costs is often a prime target. Depending on market conditions, different strategies are appropriate from time to time. Strategies of expansion or investment can be equally stressful for both managers and employees caught up in them. Mergers, acquisition and divestments can be especially stressful.
Redundancies are the most stressful for most employees, especially the older ones who will find it difficult to get new employment. For those who remain, reorganizations, transfers, reallocations, increased workload, and retaining are some of the problems faced.

**Structure**

The stressors caused by structure include:

- **Bureaucracy**

  Bureaucracy structures are inherently stressful for those who have to work in them. Bureaucratic organizations, by their rule-bound nature and autocratic management styles stifle initiative and creativity. Close control of activities, strict discipline, frequent monitoring of results, rigid hierarchical structures, and lack of participation, all contribute to high level of stress.

- **Functions**

  Frequent interactions with people outside one’s function may create stress. People in other functions often do not understand job outside their own areas and as a result make unreasonable demands and impose deadlines that are difficult to meet. Because of conflicting objectives, personality clashes and territorial infighting, interdepartmental conflict and power struggles are normal aspects of most organizations and ongoing sources of stress.

- **Politics**

  To achieve anything worthwhile in organizations, one must get the support and co-operation of other people. People achieve objectives by forming coalitions with others. Failure to do this successfully can cause frustrations, resentment and ultimately stress.
Management Styles can be a Stressor

Managerial styles can be autocratic, democratic or participative. In practice, the autocratic style is prevalent, even though lip-service is widely paid to the participative style of management. The modern workplace is a major source of stress because of its long hours, culture, heavy workloads and harassment.

1.5 CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

Stress has its consequences. It has been observed that moderate level of stress has positive effect on the outcome of work as well as maintaining a sense of well being, while prolonged stress results in disrupted homeostats affecting the individual as well as the organization in general.

Stress shows itself in a number of ways. For instance, an individual who is experiencing a high level of stress may develop high blood pressure, ulcers, irritability, difficulty in making routine decisions, loss of appetite, accident-proneness, and the like. These subsumed fewer than three general categories:

Physiological Symptoms

Stress could create changes in metabolism, increase heart beating rates, increase blood pressures, bring on headaches, and induce heart attacks.

Psychological Symptoms

Stress can cause dissatisfaction. Job-related stress can cause job-related dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction in fact is “the simplest and most oblivious psychological effect” of stress. But stress shows itself in other psychological states—for instance, tension, anxiety, irritability, boredom and procrastination. The evidence indicates that when people are placed in jobs that make multiple and conflicting demands or in which there is a lack of clarity about the incumbent’s duties authority and responsibilities, both stress and dissatisfaction appears.
Behavioral Symptoms

Behavior-related stress symptoms include changes in productivity, absence, and turnover, as well as changes in eating habits, increased smoking or consumption of alcohol, rapid speech, fidgeting, and sleep disorders.

Stress is caused both by external and internal factors. Wolff (1968) described stress as an inherent characteristic of life. He also alluded to the individualistic nature of stress, giving considerable importance to the idea that different stressors will have different meanings for different individuals in line with his past experiences and his personal characteristics.

Stress can be viewed in terms of the state of a person’s individual mechanism resulting from the interaction between external pressures and the internal characteristics of the individual. Stress is thus the difference between the actual pressure and one’s perception of that pressure.

Organizational stress originates in organizational demands which are experienced by the individual. Mismanaged organizational stress can produce individual strain which is detrimental for the human resources in the organization. This has negative economic implications such as poor quality of work, low productivity, and absenteeism. When an organization is able to manage stress, it can lead to improved performance, worker satisfaction, involvement and productivity.

It may be assumed that women engaged in different types of professions may be differing in the types of role stress they are facing, as Long and Porter (1984) points out, the psychological consequences or role accumulation depends not only on the number of roles occupied but also on the nature of particular roles, because roles differ in social value and in the patterning of privileges and obligations associated with them.

Stress has been approached in at least four different ways. Firstly, as the stimulus or external force acting on the organism; secondly, as the response or change in the physiological function; thirdly, as the interaction between an external force and the resistance to it; and finally, as a comprehensive phenomenon encompassing all the three.
1.6 MEANING OF “JOB STRESS”

Job stress is the stress experienced by a particular individual in a particular job. Beehr and Newman define job stress as “a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning”.

Job stress can be positive or negative. The positive stress is called as “Eustress” and negative stress is called as “Distress”. “Eustress” is one where the situations offer an opportunity to the individual or gain something. “Distress” is associated with heart-disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital break down, absenteeism, child abuse and host of other social, physical, organizational and emotional problems.

Stress is therefore, not something damaging which should be avoided but it can be beneficial by handling the stress situation in such a way that a person experiences the positive feelings of “Eustress” and reduces the negative effects of “Distress” in the performance of a job.

1.7 JOB-RELATED STRESS

In recent years an extensive amount of research has been devoted to examining the causes and consequences of job-related stress. These studies are important for two reasons. First almost all people at some time experience stress related to their work. Second, work-related stress may be one of the most preventable health hazard and thereby provides a number of possibilities for intervention. The various sources of occupational stress are as follows:

Work Overload

People who feel they have to work too long and too hard at too many tasks feel more stressed. They also have poor health habits, experience more accidents and suffer more health problems than do other workers.
Role Overload

Work stress sometimes occurs when people attempt to balance several different jobs at the same time and experience role overload. The problems associated with juggling multiple roles simultaneously have been particularly great for women. Two competing hypotheses have evolved for the question of whether having a job as well as a home and family enhances or threatens a woman’s health is sparse and contradictory-scarcity hypothesis, which maintains that they have only so much time and energy and as a result suffer from role overload. Enhancement hypothesis, which argues that the benefits of meaningful work in enhancing a worker’s self esteem outweigh the costs.

Burnout

Burnout has been defined as a job related state of physical and psychological exhaustion that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. More specifically, burnout is a multidimensional syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout is most common among employees who have long-term involvement in work environments, that are highly frustrating and emotionally demanding which gradually leads to a loss of purpose and ambition. Jobs that involve responsibility for products appear to cause high levels of burnout.

Lack of Control over Work

Workers feel more stress when they have little or no control over the procedures, pace and other aspects of their jobs. Occupations which are repetitive, with too many demands and too little authority are more stressful.

Role Ambiguity or Conflict

Role ambiguity occurs when workers are unsure of their jobs or the standards used to evaluate their performance. Role conflict occurs when a worker receives mixed messages about these issues from different supervisors or co workers.
Shift Work

Shift work involves continuous staffing of a workplace by groups of employees who work at different times. Shift workers face disruption of their family and domestic lives as well as of their biological rhythms. Shift work desynchronizes these rhythms and may lead to a number of health complaints, including headaches, loss of appetite, fatigue, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal problems and heart disease.

Gender Harassment

A large number of women employees face sexual harassment in the form of unwanted sexual references or suggestions. A lesser number of women are also threatened physically while on the job.

Inadequate Career Advancement

People who feel that they have been promoted too slowly or that they are not getting the recognition they deserve on the job, experience more stress and have higher rate of illness.

1.8 TYPES OF STRESS

1. Anticipatory Stress is one’s response to expected change, crisis or challenge or tension before test. It is useful in moderate amount because it prepares one’s body and mind for events that are about to happen. Such stress increases sharpness and motivation. Thus, anticipatory stress can be positive, but it can also interfere with present life, as a person might give more attention to ‘what might happen’ than to ‘what is happening’.

2. Current Stress occurs during an experience, for example, mental alertness in the midst of stress. Current stress if harnessed effectively is vital for optimal performance.
3. **Residual stress** occurs after the experience has passed. The body remains in a state of alarm for sometime after a near collision on the highway. Over stimulation, whether pleasant or unpleasant can have the same effect.

### 1.9 ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES FOR MANAGING STRESS

Many companies have introduced systematic programs designed to help employees reduce and or prevent stress. The underlying assumption of these programs is that by minimizing employees adverse reactions to stress, they will be healthier, less likely to be absent, and consequently, more productive on the job—which in turn has beneficial effects as the bottom line.

1. **Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)**

These are plans that provide employees with assistance for various personal problems (eg. substance abuse, career planning, and financial and legal problems). The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MET LIFE), for example, has one of the most extensive EAPs in use today. It offers toll-free telephone consultation for employees who wish to talk about their problems, as well as on-site access to medical and psychological professionals. Employees seeking help are assured that nobody in their company will be able to learn that they have sought the services of the EAP.

One way for employees to access counseling assistance that is growing in popularity is known as e-therapy (or cyber therapy). This involves having employees with psychological problems communicate with trained counselors by way of e-mail, using what has been called “the virtual couch”. Because of the greater flexibility in scheduling that this service provides, along with ready access to professionals with a wide variety of specialties, e-therapy is becoming a popular service for EAPs to provide.

2. **Wellness Programs**

About 56 percent of today’s larger companies have wellness programs. These involve training employees in a variety of things they can do to promote
healthy lifestyles. Wellness programs usually consists of workshops in which employees can learn many things to reduce stress and maintain their health. Exercise, nutrition and weight management counseling are among the most popular areas covered. Companies that have used such programs have found that they pay off handsomely.

3. Absence Control Programs

Acknowledging that employees sometimes need to take time off the job to relieve stress, a few companies are offering absence control programs-procedures that give employees flexibility in which they will be taking time off work. Typically employees take time off work when they are suffering from problems caused by stress, but absence control programs allow employees to take time off before these problems develop. Importantly, they recognize that such absences are important and should not be considered ground for indiscipline, for example, some companies offer employees a predetermined number of days known as a ‘paid leave bank’ from which they can draw for any reason without having to call in sick.

4. Stress Management Programs

Systematic efforts known as stress management programs involve training employees in a variety of techniques like meditation and relaxation that they can use to become less adversely affected by stress. These are used by about a quarter of all large companies and the companies are trying to combat the effects of stress among employees.

1.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK AND MODELS OF STRESS

Models serve exactly the same function as the architect’s model of a prospective building, A model gives a holistic picture of the phenomenon under study. Thus, a model of stress presents a visual image of the stress phenomenon in totality: the causal factors, the symptoms and the process and the end result. Models are validated theories, a theory decides the avenues of research and these research findings are then orchestrated in the model.
A conceptual framework is a set of ideas, used to structure any planned research work. It is a guide to the researcher in framing the research questions, reviewing the related literature and analyzing the data. Such a framework should be intended as the starting point of any research work. It also helps the researcher to make a logical sense of the factors and variables that have been deemed relevant to the research study.

**Demand Control Model**

This is where high work demands and low job control co-exist. People with high work demands often complain that they work too hard and have insufficient time to get the work done. People with low job control complain that they lack the authority to make decisions about their jobs. They work constantly under psychological pressure to extremely imposed deadlines and may trigger off feelings of helplessness which leads to stress. High levels of control have positive health and work-related outcomes such as decreased anxiety, depression and absenteeism. Senior Managers tend to have more control over their work than middle managers and supervisors and thus are less exposed to this particular stressor. Middle managers tend to be caught in the middle having to deal pressure from above and below. Supervisors have a particularly difficult job, trying to balance the needs of their manager with those of their employees. Blue-collar workers are at greater risk to the affects of stress because they have little control over the work they do. On the other hand White-collar workers have more control over what they do and thus have less stressful jobs.

**Inverted U Model on “Stress and Work Performance”**

This model was developed by Yerkes & Dodson, (1908). The inverted U model on stress and performance shows that less work pressure creates boredom among the employees and they become lethargic. High work pressure causes anxiety and unhappiness and affects employee performance. Normal work pressure pushes the employees to best performance provided the employer facilitate good physical work environment and satisfy the psychological and social needs of the employees.
Load of Information Model

a) Stimulus Overload or Underload Model

Suedfele proposed this model in the year 1979. It links stress not to quality of environmental experiences but also to the structure of experiences. Too much of a good thing may be stressful. A U-shaped relationship is hypothesized between stimulus load and stress, with stress being caused by both stimulus under load and overload. Suedfele had identified several factors for the determination of the optimum level of stimulus load. While physiological arousal is crucial, personality variables such as locus of control, cognitive complexity and extraversion – introversion of the level of stimulation are considered optimal by the person. Other determinants are age and educational level.

b) Optimal Information Flow and Mood

Proposed by Hamilton (1981), it is along the same lines as stimulus overload/underload model. It persists the same type of U-shaped relationship between stress and stimulation. An additional aspect in Hamilton’s model is the proposed relationship between optimal information flow and moods (anxiety at the end, boredom at the low end) reflect a mismatch between what is considered the optimal level and the actually avoidable stimulation). Negative moods will impact behavior negatively. The susceptibility to such negative load is monitored by what are called Attention Regulators (ARs). ARs are voluntary mechanisms acting to either augment or reduce information flow of the individual. These ARs act to either augment or reduce the information available.

2. Interactional Models

An interactive model of stress incorporates both the response – based (GAS) and stimulus model of stress. These models focuses on the relationship between the individual and the environment. The basis of the relationship is a cognitive one. Thus whether an event will be stressful or not, will depend not on the objective characteristics of the event but on the subjective perception of those characteristics. This includes:
a) Cognitive Model of Stress

The cognitive model of stress is proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This model focuses on three major issues:

1. The conditions that determine the perception of any event i.e, the process of ‘Primary Appraisal’. Considering that stress may have either positive or negative effects, the conditions may stem from the person or from the situation. Role conflict would lead to role stress only if the person is equally committed to both roles.

2. The second issue is related to how the person deals with the situation once it has been perceived as being stressful or the process of ‘Secondary Appraisal’, which determines the nature of coping to be adopted. Two types of coping are possible namely emotion focused coping and problem focused coping. The choice depends on the resources available to the persons health and energy, beliefs about control over the environment (about god or life in general), and problem solving skills, social skills and material resources.

3. The third issue focuses on the outcomes of stress. These refer to the pattern of stress. These may range from emotional experience. Motor manifestation and alterations in adaptive functioning to physiological reactions. A combination of these is also possible. The exact nature of the reaction will depend on the nature of the secondary appraisal or the particular coping strategy decided upon.

b) Person-Environment (P-E) fit Model

Person-Environment (P-E) fit model advocated by French, Rodgers and Cobb (1974) deals with how the characteristics of the person and those of environment affect the well being of the person. The salient features are as follows:

1) Needs – Suppliers fit and Abilities - Demands fit. The first refers to the degree of communication between the needs of the person and the supplies provided by the environment and ability of the person to meet those
demands. P-E fit refers to both the amount of fit between what the person expects from the environment and the extent to which the environment can meet those needs: and the requirements by the environment and the degree to which the person is able to cope with those demands. Both kinds of misfit may act as stresses.

2) Objective fit Vs Subjective fit: The theory proposes a distinction between objective fit and subjective fit. The former includes measures of the P and the E’ free of bias’ introduced by the person, while the latter includes the ‘bias’. This leads to an objective P and an objective E as well as to subjective P is called the accuracy of self assessment. Correspondence between the object and subjective E, where ‘E’ denotes contact with reality. Cognitive distortions produces discrepancies between the objective and subjective components of fit. It is this subjective fit which causes strain leading to illness.

Figure 1.1

Diagrammatic Representation of P-E Fit Model

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-Environment</th>
<th>P-person</th>
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<td>Stressor Agents</td>
<td>Stress Response</td>
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<td>Psychological</td>
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<td>Stimulus</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<td>Behavioural</td>
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Stress Cycle Model

Mc Grath proposed the stress cycle model in 1976. The author conceptualizes five types of stress-task based stress, role based stress, stress intrinsic to behavior, stress arising from social environment in the form of inter-personal
relations, and stress within the present system. Mc Grath developed stress model based on the perception that stress behavior in an organizations is a product of interaction among three sets of variables;

- Physical and technological environment in which behavior takes place.
- Interpersonal relationships within which the behavior take place.
- The self-system of the focal person.

**Transactional Model of Stress**

Cox (1978) regards stress as a personal phenomenon. It emerges from the transaction between the person and his or her situation. Transactional model is based on four components such as personal resources, internal needs and personal values, environmental facilities and support and external environmental demands and constraints. The essential part of the model is the presence of transactions at different situations. A unit of transaction rests on feedback mechanism that attempts to maintain a person’s state of balance or equilibrium conditions.

**Integrative - Transactional Process Model**

The model propounded by Schuler (1982) emphasizes the reciprocity of transactions. It clearly states that transactions are not unidirectional but are essentially reciprocal. This model is an integrative one as it is developed for research in the multi disciplinary areas. The components of this model includes environmental stressors, personal traits and personal responses.

**Role – Episode Model**

Kahn (1964) postulated that urge for identity is a major concern for people. This leads to seek satisfaction at work situation but usually persons are confronted with conditions of conflict and ambiguity. This model identifies role stress, role conflict and role ambiguity. Thus the model incorporates organizational, personal and interpersonal factors that affect role episodes.
Systems Model of Stress

The system Model of stress proposed by Lumsden (1975) attempts to take into consideration all the salient features of the different models, and calls for a systems and analysis of stress. As the name suggests, the emphasis is on the word ‘system’, which signifies an interrelated constellation of parts. The stress system is conceived of as an open system, which is continually interacting with the environment. The stress process is conceptualized as being dynamic and homeostatic in nature rather than a simple equilibrium model.

The coping process over time due to either exogenous (such as natural disasters) or endogenous (such as sensory deprivation or blocking of goals) stressors is divided into 3 parts which are stressor, appraisal and coping. These 3 are related to each other in a cyclical fashion.

The individual copes with the stress by bringing certain changes in his responses. Changes may be psychological or behavioural or interpersonal/social and may be either adaptive or non-adaptive.

Effort-Reward Model

Another broader model of work stress is Johannes Siegrist’s “effort-reward” model. The model defines threatening job conditions as a “mismatch between high workload (high demand) and low control over long-terms rewards”. Siegrist emphasizes personal control over long-term reward since “distressing experiences often result from basic threats to the continuity of a crucial social role”, among adults, often the occupational role. This is clearly the case with job termination or job instability. However, related conditions of low reward and low security may also be identified, such as forced occupational change, downward mobility, lack of promotion prospects and jobs held with inconsistent educational background. Components of workload in Siegrist’s research includes piecework, shift work, noise, work pressure, and increase in workload.
In addition a psychological component is added to the model. Two relevant coping variables were identified from factor analysis – “Vigor”, a state of active efforts with a high probability of positive feedback, and “immersion” a state of exhaustive coping reflecting frustrated, but continued efforts and associated negative feelings. “Immersion” is considered to increase an individual’s vulnerability to experiences of high demand and low status control.

**Karasek – Demand-Control Model**

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<tr>
<th>High Strain Jobs</th>
<th>Passive Jobs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active Jobs</td>
<td>Low Strain Jobs</td>
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Karasek’s demand–control model of occupational stress has had a large influence on the job design and occupational health literature, in part because it is quite spare, practical and testable. In Karasek’s model workplace stress is a function of how demanding a person’s job is and how much control (discretion, authority or decision latitude etc) the person has over their own responsibilities. This creates four kinds of jobs: passive, active, low strain and high strain.

Job demands represent the psychological stressors in the work environment. These include factors such as: interruption rate, time pressures, conflicting demands, reaction time required, pace of work, proportion of work performed under pressure, amount of work, degree of concentration required and the slowing down of work caused by the need to wait for others.

**1.11 SELECTED MODELS OF COPING**

**Kahn et al.’s Model**

This model of coping refers to coping process that aims at stress reduction as the main theme. Role senders are given clear messages about role perception. Stress is reduced by suitable coping interventions. Coping interventions focus on narrowing the difference between role perception and role expectations. The coping model tends towards achieving role congruence to manage stress.
**Mc Grath’s Model**

This model considers a sequence of behavior of the organizational participants in actively preventing stress or responding to stress induced situations.

**French et al.’s Model**

Here, coping focuses on the activities of the individual directed at changing the relevant environment or changing the personal factors to achieve the best person-environment fit.

**Newmann and Behr’s Model**

This model heavily rests on person-situation differences that decide the effectiveness of stress management strategies. Three stages of interaction are identified. In the first stage stressors interact with personal and situational factors to generate stress. In the second phase, stress interacts with personal factors and situational factors and in the third stage, responses or reactions interact with personal and situational factors to produce the ultimate outcomes.

**Schuler’s Model**

The integrative transactional process model describes the coping trigger, primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, strategy development, strategy implementation, strategy evaluation and feedback as the seven aspects involved in the process of coping. Integrating all these aspects evolves the cycle of coping.

**Pareek’s Model**

This model proposes two styles of coping strategies-dysfunctional and functional coping styles. Coping may be through avoidance of stress stimulating situations called relative strategy. Relative strategy leads to dysfunctional coping. Coping may also be through conferencing or approaching the stress stimulating situations. This is called proactive strategy that leads to functional style.
Moos and Billing’s Model

This model describes active cognitive coping which recognizes cognitive redefinition and logical analysis, active behavioral coping which considers information seeking and positive action taking, and avoidance coping which acknowledges pull back to non acceptance of stress situation. Active cognitive strategy users are less likely to use avoidance strategies to cope with stress.

Moos and Sinha’s Model

This model identifies seven dimensions of coping strategies. They were placed in three categories such as, strategies of action on the sources of stress known as preventive strategies, strategies of action on the symptomatic effects of stress known as creative strategies and strategies of action on the escape from the source and effects of stress known as defensive strategies.

Equity Theory

People expect rewards to be in proportion to the effort expended. They expect to be paid fairly in relation to other employees and similar grades outside the company, if not, feelings of relative deprivation are experienced.

When dealing with others, they also expect to be treated fairly. When they perceive that they have been treated unfairly, they feel distressed and are motivated to restore equity. This is the prime moving force behind many industrial relations disputes concerning wages and working conditions. People who perceive they are being treated fairly at work place are likely to experience emotional distress.

1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The working population constitutes a major section of the community. Industrialization and automation of industrial processes in our country have resulted in rapid changes in the psycho-social environment at work place and in the reactions of the workers to this environment. Exposures to these factors depend on various external factors like Organizational climate, various management processes, and the physical and psychological conditions at work.
The modern world, which is paid to be a world of achievement, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere, whether it be a family, a business organization or enterprise or any other social or economic organization. The extent of stress is, however, a matter of degree. Some organizations are more harmonious whereas others have greater friction and tension.

In recent years psychologists have witnessed an upsurge of interest in the study of stress and stress management... There are two major things the investigators have found that a large percentage of human suffer from stress and researchers and applied psychologists have found that stress causes many psychological and physical problems.

Researchers have argued that occupational stress as a result of its detrimental effect on the health of the individual leads to low productivity, high absenteeism, and more tiredness, low enthusiasm for work, low creativity and dissatisfaction with work. By taking up employment, women have to play a dual role as housewife and earner (Hamlatha and Suryanarayana 1983). Today’s working women are expected to be an inspiring companion to her husband, proficient in the care of children and able in the handling of family budget. She is also expected to pursue a career, show skill and intelligence and be as competent as male in job.

Recent times have seen dramatic changes in the traditional society of India. Our family life, social attitudes and behavior are undergoing a series of changes. The advent of industrialization, socio-educational advancement and the transformation of society from an agrarian rural economy to an urban industrial one ushered in a new area of roles and definitions of women’s work. The old order which confined women to the home has been or is in the process of being replaced by a new one. The modern women are seeking newer and wider horizons. They have now started playing an important role in many walks of life (Gorwaney, 1977).

Behavior under stress is one of the major concerns of present times. People’s life is becoming more and more stressful today representing a serious cost for society, both in human and monetary terms. Though stress at work has become a prominent and pervading feature of modern organizations, the individual as well as the organization cannot remain in a state of continuous stress.
India is a developing country and Indian organizations have many complexities in different fields which are generated by so many factors. The complex industrial organizations can be a great source of stress for managers. Stress is becoming important for individuals and also for organizations because of its negative effects.

The studies so far made in this field by both Indian and Foreign authors highlight on the causes of stress, outcomes of stress, coping strategies, stress management techniques and job satisfaction. None of them have dealt with factors like management policy, goal achieving, performance evaluations, role of women contributing towards stress especially among women.

With the increase in the number of working women donning important roles in the work place, it becomes pertinent to study the level of stress amongst the women employees. Thus the following study on stress level keeping in mind the above impacting factors on women employees becomes absolutely important. The researcher has identified the objectives enumerated below to get an indepth understanding on effect of these factors on women stress level and its remedies.

1.13 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Study factors causing Stress among women employees.
2. To classify working women based on their perception on stress.
3. To establish the association between the various clusters of stress.
4. To study the influence of demographic variables on stress related factors.
5. To construct a conceptual Model.

1.14 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to Chennai city only
2. The study includes only women employees working in an organization.
3. “Non-Work” stressors and “Life events” Stressors have not been considered. Since the preview of this research is limited to a study of only “JOB STRESSORS”. 

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4. The same respondent may express a different view, as human behavior changes with changing time. However this limitation is inherent in all studies in behavioral sciences.

1.15 CHAPTER SCHEME

The thesis is presented in six chapters; a brief description of the contents of these chapters is given below:

Chapter I - Introduction

Deals with introduction to the topic of stress containing importance of study, Objectives of the study, methodology, limitations and models of stress.

Chapter II - Review of Literature

Review of literature explores the previous research works on the various elements of stress in general and organizational stress in particular.

Chapter III – Research Methodology

Research methodology deals with study area, questionnaire design, pilot study, scale development, data collection, data analysis and hypothesis.

Chapter IV – Analysis of Factors of Stress

Deals with Factor analysis – Cluster analysis – Association of cluster test which are applied on the primary data.

Chapter V – Analysis of Stress Level

Deals with Discriminant analysis – Correlation – T-test – Percentage analysis test which are applied on the primary data.

Chapter VI – Summary and Conclusion

Deals with summary of findings, suggestion and conclusions obtained through statistical analysis.