INTRODUCTION

The role of women in maintenance and advancement of society has always been fundamental and proactive. Culturally determined and socially conditioned perceptions about women along with dominant position occupied by men pushed women to subservient place. The dynamism of modern working women encompasses equal opportunity in jobs. Now a days, employers give preference to women in various jobs because of their dedication to work, loyalty to the organization. The ongoing Information Technology revolution and globalization has opened up a new range of opportunities for the educated woman. Contemporary personality research has provided extensive evidence of value neutral sex differences in personality. This knowledge paved way for analytical investigation of some gender referenced psychological processes which not only constitute the personality of women but play dynamic role in adaptation in personal, interpersonal and social spheres of life. Researchers have revealed that females represent their experiences differently than males, such as females representing experiences in relatively interpersonal, subjective and immediate ways while responding to a range of tasks. On the other hand, males represent experiences of self, others, space and time in individualistic, objective and distance ways.

In the present scenario role segregated and segmental identity of women has put them in a situation where females have to perform multiple roles and adapt to diverse kind of psychological environments. In contemporary society the women’s employment is considered necessary like that of male employment but it is influenced by certain factors like social, marital and familial roles etc. The job of women tends to intrude into their socially attributed primary responsibilities relating to home. They are always under pressure to rearrange their traditional roles of wife, mother and home maker in order to accommodating their nontraditional roles of a earner (Shergill, 2010). These pressures tend to predispose women to some kind of cognitive overload and life stresses, sometimes leading to reduced psychological wellbeing.
Despite of this, women seem to exercise better volitional controls over their behaviors. Psychologists evoked the term ‘Self Regulation’ for self directed behaviors and volitional acts. It is in this context that it becomes important to understand the process of Self regulation in women. Self regulation refers to executive function of self which makes decisions, initiate actions and exert control over internal as well as external processes relating to self. The role of self-regulation is acute especially in modern cultures as people now are faced with more choices and decisions every day than people of times past (Schwartz, 2000). The very identity of an individual in contemporary society seems to be a product of his/her self-regulation. Processes such as altering one’s own behavior, resisting temptation and changing one’s moods are characterized by the terms like “self control” and “self regulation” which entails effort by the self to alter its state and responses (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004)

The issue of volition has been a central core in the writings of William James (1892), Wundt (1910) and Freud (1923). The concepts of ‘Will’ and ‘Ego’ as dynamic state variables became the object of scientific scrutiny also. At one time the rise of positivism, mechanism and reductionism in psychological enquiry eclipsed the interest of psychologists in these phenomena. However in the context of paradigmatic shift in direction of conative revolution, as Kuhl (1970) puts it resurgence of interest in voluntary action management in terms of self-regulation, its empirical analysis and its integration within mainstream psychology, drew serious attention of psychologists from diverse fields like personality (Mischel, 1973; Carver & Scheier, 1981; Mischel et al, 1989; Cantor & Zirkel, 1990; Singer & Bonanno 1990), motivation and emotions (Deci, 1980; Bandura 1991; Gollwitzer, 1990; Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985; Kuhl & Kazen-saad, 1998) social psychology (Beckmann & Irle, 1985; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Higgins et. al 1986; Koestner et al, 1992; Markus & Wurf 1987), abnormal and clinical psychology (Glessner, 1984; Hilgard, 1986; Joseph, 1992; Kanfer & Scheff, 1988; Karoly & Kanfer, 1982; Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Meichenbaum, 1985; Semmer & frese, 1985 Watson &

Self-regulation involves the self acting on itself to alter its own responses with the goal of producing a desired outcome; both conscious and unconscious processes are involved in it. Hence, the process of self-regulation involves overriding a natural, habitual, or learned response by altering behavior, thoughts, and emotions. This process includes interrupting a response by changing or modifying it, substituting another response in its place, or blocking an additional response from occurring (Baumeister, 1998; Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994).

Diversity of perspectives and broad spectrum of range of enquiry about self regulation has contributed to multiplicity of descriptions of the concept of self regulation. In view of an absence of consensus Karoly (1993) offered the following multi elemental definition of self regulation to serve as a concepted roadmap for empirical research.

“Self-regulation refers to those processes, internal and/or transactional, that enable an individual to guide his/her goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances (contexts). Regulation implies modulation of thought, affect, behavior or attention via deliberate or automated use of specific mechanisms and supportive metaskills. The processes of self-regulation are initiated when routinized activity is impeded or when goal-directedness is otherwise made salient (e.g. the appearance of a challenge the failure of habitual action patterns etc). Self regulation may be said to encompass up to five interrelated and iterative component phases: 1. Goal selection, 2. Goal cognition, 3. Directional maintenance 4. Directional change or reprioritization, and 5. Goal termination”
Psychologists have been studying self and identity for a long time but the realization that any account of self will be incomplete without understanding of how self maintains control over itself and make the adjustment that it deems best to maintain harmony with its internal and external environment (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004) has given impetus to research in self regulation. The types of goals that people attempt to achieve (Deci & Ryan, 1991) and perceptions of their ability to perform goal-directed behaviors (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia, 2001) play important role in cognitive and affective processes that accompany self-regulatory functions. Delay of gratification is an important goal of self-regulation because it requires overriding one’s most pressing and salient impulses of doing whatever will bring immediate gratification.

Dwelling upon the broad impact of self regulation on an individual’s behaviour researchers have tried to investigate its implications outside the intrapsychic domain of functioning also like interpersonal functioning (Baumeister et al, 1994; Richards & Gross, 2000; Carver & White, 1994; Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999; Ciarocco, Sommer & Baumeister, 2001; Finkel et al, 2001) Just as self-regulation is crucial to personal functioning, it is equally important for an individual’s effectance in interpersonal relations. Several self-regulatory explanations can be given regarding the emanation of aggressive behaviors among people with high self-esteem after threat. It may be that the response to the threat is an urge too great to resist; or attempting to cope with the threat in a non-aggressive manner quickly depletes regulatory resources, thereby allowing aggressive tendencies to emerge; or the emotional component of the threat is so aversive that feeling better by any means becomes the top priority. Whatever the root cause, people with high self-esteem do not always show appropriate self-regulation in response to ego threats, as evidenced by their higher rate of interpersonal violence. Thus indirect evidence indicates that a variety of interpersonal processes involve the regulation of emotions, thoughts or behaviors.
Chronic, habitual, or preferred level of self-control has been shown to have direct effects on functioning in a broad range of domains. Previous research suggests that people differ in their predetermined, inherent self-regulatory faculties, some people being naturally more efficacious than others. Finkel and Campbell (2001) found that at both a trait and state level, high self regulation was related to more accommodation (ability to react constructively, not destructively – to the potentially destructive behaviors). That is, people who reported higher levels of self-control also reported more accommodative tendencies. Vohs, Ciarocco, and Baumeister (2001) found that being depleted of self regulatory resources led to differences in desire for self disclosers to an unacquainted partner.

On the other hand failures at self regulation have been found to have serious consequence for the concerned person. Various deviances in human behaviour like addictions, eating disorders, emotional problems, crime and violence, all stemming from one’s inability or failure to control one’s impulses imply some kind of failure of self regulation. For example, poor self-regulators are subject to rejection by peers, high possibility of divorce, and general maladjustment at work place. For example, people who are poor at self-regulation are less successful in accommodating to their partners and coworkers (Finkel & Campbell, 2001). Children with poor self-control are less accepted and less popular with peers (Maszk, Eisenberg, & Guthrie, 1999). Poor self-regulation may also play a key role in adolescent risk-taking. For example, in longitudinal studies, lower levels of self-regulation in early adolescence were associated with higher levels of sexual risk-taking in mid-adolescence (Raffaelli & Crockett, 2003), and, among boys, poor self-restraint in preadolescence predicted higher rates of misconduct (Feldman & Brown, 1993). Likewise, deficient self-regulation has been implicated as a central cause of criminality (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Longshore, 1998; McGuire & Broomfield, 1994) Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister (2003) found that rejected people had a distorted sense of the passage of time. Time perception is linked to effective self-regulation. As self-regulation deteriorates, time is perceived as moving more slowly (Vohs & Schmeichel, 2003),
just as it does among rejected persons. Likewise, rejection causes people to avoid self-awareness (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2003), whereas self-awareness is vital for effective self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1981). Self-regulation also benefits from meaningful thought, such as comparison with standards (Carver & Scheier, 1981). Rejected people exhibit decrements in meaningful thought (Baumeister et al., 2002). Thus, the pattern of effects of rejection is broadly consistent with the notion of impaired self-regulation. Generally people tend to respond to their social exclusion/rejection with either an improvement or an impairment of self regulation. Self regulation, further activate vital mechanism for producing adaptive and socially desirable behavior.

The basic mechanisms underlying effective self-regulation in the service of long-term goals function likewise in all situations, for example, in threatening interpersonal situations that activate anxious rejection expectations, the challenge for high ‘Rejection Sensitivity’ people is the inhibition of their hot, automatic response tendencies (e.g., lashing out, retaliation) for the sake of desired long-term relationship goals (Ayduk & Mischel, in press). Here effective self-regulation involves the ability to attenuate the frustration and aversiveness of a stressful situation by preventing oneself from focusing attention on the emotion-arousing aspects of threatening stimuli. It is thus through strategic and flexible attention deployment that people can transcend the impulse to behave in a reflexive and automatic manner in a here-and-now perspective (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1997) and opt for reality oriented and efficient ways of altering their behaviours.

COMPONENTS OF SELF REGULATION

Baumeister & vohs (2007) suggested the following four components are involved in the process of self regulation, namely, standards, Monitoring, Strength, Motivation

Commitment to standard – refer to change that individual makes in one’s behavior based on some ideal, goal or demand that he/she interprets from society or from oneself. Change occurs when people feel that they do not meet these standards
(Baumeiser & Bushman 2008). Self Regulation requires these standards to be clear. When standards are ambiguous or conflicting self regulation becomes difficult (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

**Monitoring** – refers to keeping track of behaviors in order to successfully self regulate them. Self regulation is a cyclic process in the sense that prior performance is used to make adjustments during current efforts (Zimmerman, 2000). Baumeister & Bushman (2008) used TOTE (test, operate, test exit) as a feedback loop of self regulation. One begins by comparing the self to the standard, If one does not meet the standard he/she begins to make changes to comparable standard, Again the self is compared to the standard, the cycle continuous until the two are in line. It is at this point that the person can exit, ceasing self-regulation of that specific behavior.

**Self regulatory Strength** – is commonly referred to as will power (Baumeister & vohs, 2007). Certain amount of strength is required to change the self. Studies have found that blood glucose which is the brain’s main source of fuel is an important contributor to self regulatory strength. Its usage is likely to make it temporarily depleted. i.e., each individual has a limited supply of willpower, when this supply is low self regulation is not effective (Schmeichal & Baumeister, 2004).

**Motivation** – In order to self regulate one’s behavior, one must have motivation to meet the goals and standard. Even if the other components of self regulation i.e. standards, monitoring and full strength are present, lack of motivation i.e lack of caring about the goal can cause the failure to self regulate (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007)

Some amount of each of the four components must be present for self regulation to be successful. However, later on Vohs & Baumeister (2010) felt contended with three components only viz. **goal setting or initiation** – the process by which individuals decide which goal to pursue; **goal operator** – the process by which individuals alter their thought, feelings and behavior to make progress towards achieving their goal; **goal monitoring** – the process by which the individuals evaluate the degree to which they are making progress towards achieving their goals.
DOMAINS OF SELF REGULATION

In psychological literature relating to self regulation five types of phenomena over which people seek to exert control (Forgas, Baumeister & Tice, 2009) have been identified.

1. People often seek to control their thoughts; these efforts include guiding reasoning towards and away from particular conclusions. It involves suppressing unwanted thoughts and it is dependent on person’s temporary affective state at that time. It also include the control of the effects of automatic, subconscious, cognitive process (Wyland & forgas, 2007; fiedder at al 2009).

2. People may attempt to control their emotions and moods: This includes efforts to enhance, terminate or prolong either positive or negative feeling states. Such affect control mechanisms can be either spontaneous & automatic (Forgas & Ciarochi, 2002) or conscious & effortful (Denson, 2009). Termination and escape from bad mood states is most challenging task while dealing with cases of affect regulation failure.

3. Impulse Control: Impulses are essentially an automatic response activated by situational cues via latent motivation. Person cannot regulate the impulses but behavioural implementation of it. Hence impulse control implies restraining oneself from acting out the pressing tendencies. Individual differences in impulse intensity also play important role in determining the likely success of self regulation efforts. (Baumeister et al 1994; friese et al, 2009).

4. Regulation of Motivation: summoning the commitment and mental resources to perform the task undertaken. In fact the whole process of self regulation is about motivation. However different motivations can be at work for the same act of self regulation e.g. motivation for self control or motivation for self enhancement (Sedekides, 2009; Fishbach, 2009; fitzsimons et al, 2009)
5. **Regulation of performance:** Since many social roles and circumstances involve performance of tasks, purpose of self regulation is to optimize the performance. Performance regulation include putting forth maximum effort, persisting in face of failure, avoiding deficits caused by internal or external factor, maintaining speed and accuracy cues, selecting best strategy while performing

In order to comprehend the dynamics of self regulatory mechanisms a brief overview of its models of self regulation is given below.

**TYPES OF SELF-REGULATION**

1. **Autonomous self-regulation and**
2. **Controlled self-regulation.**

*Autonomous self-regulation* is characterized by feeling as though the behavior, emotion, or cognition being regulated is regulated for reasons that a person values, finds meaningful, and wholly endorses

*Controlled self-regulation* is characterized by feelings of internal or external pressure that conflict with what one would choose otherwise (e.g avoiding shame, interpersonal rejection, or physical punishment). This form of self regulation is more difficult and fatiguing & consuming of limited self-regulatory resources (Moller, Deci, & Ryan, 2006).

To account for the phenomena of self regulation in a systematic manner some authors proposed theoretical models. Following is the brief description of some important ones.

Deci & Ryan (1985, 1991) further identified four types of self regulation.

1. **Identified regulation** – reflects a conscious valuing of a behavior goal or regulation, such that the action is accepted or owned as personally important.
2. **Introjected regulation** – relatively controlled form of regulation in which behaviors are performed to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancement such as pride.
3. **External regulation** – performed to satisfy an external demand or reward contingency.

4. **Integrated regulation** – integration occurs when identified regulation are fully assimilated in the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one’s other needs and values.

**THE STRENGTH MODEL OF SELF CONTROL (BAUMEISTER, VOHS, & TICE, 2007)**

The term Self Control and self regulation has been used by the writers interchangeably, Baumeister et al 2007, consider self control to be deliberate, conscious, effortful subset of self-regulation. They preferred the term self regulation for homeostatic processes of the body but not self-control. Self control enables a person to restrain or override one response, thereby making a different response possible.

Behavioral and impulse control problems, has been seen to be linked with inadequate self control (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Gottfredson and Hirsh, 1990; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004; Vohs & faber, 2007). Emotional problems, school underachievement, lack of persistence, various failures at task performance, relationship problems and dissolution can be associated with depletion of self control according to this model.

**Limited Resources**

Baumeister & colleagues, 2007 assumes that self regulation of any type takes energy or inner resources but that the ‘**self regulatory strength is a limited resource**’. They observed that self control appeared vulnerable to deteriorate over time from repeated exertions, resembling a muscle that gets tired. The implication was that effortful self- regulation depends on a limited resource that becomes depleted by any acts of self control, causing subsequent performance even on other self-control tasks to become worse.

The laboratory evidence for depleted resources in self regulation was reported by Muraven, Tice and Baumeister (1998) and Baumeister, Bratslavsky,
Muraven, and Tice (1998). In one study, watching an emotionally evocative film while trying either to amplify or to stifle one’s emotional response caused poorer performance on a subsequent test of physical (handgrip) stamina, as compared to watching the film without trying to control one’s emotions. In another study, suppressing a forbidden thought weakened people’s ability to stifle laughter afterward. In another resisting the temptation to eat chocolates and cookies caused participants to give up faster on a subsequent frustrating task, as compared to people who had not exerted self control. All these studies pointed towards the conclusion that the first self control task consumed some kind of psychological resource that was therefore less available to help performance on the second self control task.

The analogy between self-control and a muscle was suggested by the early findings that self-control performance deteriorates after initial exertions, just as a muscle gets tired from exertion. Just as exercise can make muscle stronger, there are signs that regular exertions of self-control can improve will power strength (Baumeister et. al., 2006). These improvements typically take the form of resistance to depletion, in the sense that performance at self control tasks deteriorates at a slower rate. Targeted efforts to control behaviour in one area, leads to improvements in performance in other unrelated areas. Daily exercises in self control gradually produce improvements in self control as measured by laboratory tasks. The finding that these improvements carry over into tasks vastly different from the daily exercise shows that the improvements are not due to simply increasing skills or acquiring self efficacy from practice.

Multiple lines of work have identified procedures that can moderate or counteract the effects of ego depletion. Inducing a state of positive emotion such as humor seems to have that effect (Tice, Baumeister, shmueli, & Muraven, 2007). At the positive end, self-control is associated with good adjustment, secure attachment, and other favorable psychological states. (Tangey et al 2004). At the negative end, poor self control is associated with elevated rates of psychopathological complaints and symptoms, as well as in creased vulnerability to various substance abuse and
eating disorders (Tangney et al., 2004). Adaptive behavior depends partly on self-control. Some processes, such as rote memory, being fairly automatic and independent of executive control, and these appear to be relatively unaffected by depletion. But logical reasoning, extrapolation, and other controlled processes depends on control by the self, and performance on these tasks dips sharply when people are depleted (Schmeichel, Vohs & Baumeister, 2003).

The existence of a single energy resource as suggested by Baumeister, Vohs & Tice (2007) suggests that self theory must move beyond merely cognitive models. The self is more than a network of cognitive schemas.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE MODEL OF SELF REGULATION (BANDURA, 1991)

Human behavior is extensively motivated and regulated by the ongoing exercise of self-Influence. The major self regulative mechanism operates through three principal subfunctions. These subfunctions include self monitoring of one’s behavior its determinants, and its effects; Judgment of one’s behavior in relation to personal standards environmental circumstances; and affectional self-reactions.

Structure of the system of self regulation of motivation and action through internal standards as suggested by Bandura.

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**Self Monitoring Subfunctions**

Self observation serves at least two important functions in the process of self regulation. It provides the information needed for setting realistic goals and for evaluating one’s progress towards them. A number of factors, some relating to the attributes of individuals, others to the behavior and still others to the nature and type of self monitoring can affect the likelihood that observing how one behaves will enlist self reactive influences. One such factor is the temporal proximity. A second factor is the informativeness of performance. Motivational level is still another factor mediating the effects of self observation.

The degree and directions of change accompanying self monitoring will partly depend on whether attention is predominantly focused on one’s successes or failures.

**Judgmental Subfunction**

Observing one’s pattern of behavior is the first step toward doing something to affect it, but in itself such information provides little basis for self directed reactions. Personal standards for judging and guiding one’s actions play a major role in the exercise of self directedness. Whether a given performance is regarded favourably or negatively will depend upon the personal standards against which it is evaluated.

Personal standards are developed from the information conveyed by three principal modes on influence (Bandura, 1986). That is on the basis of how significant persons in their lives have reacted to their behavior. Then some independent indicators of adequacy. And the judgemental component of self regulation concerns the valuation of activities. People do not care much how they do in activities that have little or no significance for them.

**Self Reactive Influences**

Performance judgements sets the occasion for self reactive influence. Self reactions provide the mechanism by which standards regulate courses of action. The self regulatory control is achieved by creating incentives for one’s own actions and by anticipative affective reactions to one’s own behavior.
depending on how it measures up to an internal standards. One of the factor that differentiates people who succeed in regulating their motivation and behavior to achieve what they seek from those who are unsuccessful in their self regulatory efforts is the effective use of self incentive. (Perri & Richards, 1997; Zimmerman 1989). People who reward their own attainments usually accomplish more than those who perform the same activities under instruction but without self incentives, are rewarded non contingently, or monitor their own behavior and set goals for themselves without rewarding their attainments (Bandura 1986, 1991).


According to Carver & Scheier, behaviour begins with the concept of goal and the process of feedback control. People choose paths that are compatible with other aspects of their life situations.

A Feedback loop which is the unit of cybernetic control is a system of four elements in a particular organization: an input function, a reference value, a comparator, and an output function.

![The Structure of Feedback Loop](image-url)
An input function in this model act as which is a sensor is equivalent to perception. The reference value is a second bit of information. Reference values in the loop are the value, which people are interested in as goals. A comparator makes comparisons between input and reference value. The comparison yields either the discriminably different values from each other or absence of any difference. Following the comparison is an output function. This is equivalent to behaviour, although sometimes the behaviour is internal. If the comparison yields “no difference,” the output function remains whatever it was. If the comparison gives “discrepancy”, the output changes according to Carver & Scheier (2002).

There are two kinds of feedback loops, corresponding to two kinds of goals. In a negative or discrepancy-reducing loop, the output function is aimed at diminishing or eliminating any detected discrepancy between input and reference value, which creates conformity of input to reference. This conformity is seen in the attempt to approach or attain a valued goal.

The action of discrepancy-enlarging processes in living systems is typically constrained in some way by discrepancy reducing loops. An avoidance loop creates pressure to increase distance from the anti-goal. The movement away occurs until the tendency to move away is captured by the influence of an approach loop. This loop then serves to pull the sensed input into its orbit. The rebellious adolescent, trying to be different from his parents, soon finds other adolescents to conform to, all of whom are deviating from their parents.

The negative feedback loop exerts a kind of gravitational pull on the input it is controlling, pulling that input closer to its ground zero. The positive loop has a kind of anti gravitational push, moving sensed values ever farther away.

The real life situations people confront are often more complex. There are several potential values to move toward. One positive value won’t always capture or constrain all the avoidance attempts. Self-focused attention, leads to more comparisons with salient standards (Scheier & Carver, 1983), and it enhances behavioural conformity to salient standards. The standards have ranged from
instructions to personal attitudes to subjective norms (Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1998). On the avoidance side, self-focus has led to more rejection of attitudinal positions held by a negative effects (Carver & Scheier, 1981).

The result of the comparison process at the heart of this loop is manifest phenomenologically in two forms: one is a hazy and nonverbal sense of expectancy i.e. – confidence or doubt; the other is affect, feeling i.e. – a sense of positiveness or negativeness. Overall the behaviour in this model is deprived as goal directed and feedback controlled and goals underlying behaviour form a hierarchy of abstractness.

**CYCLICAL MODEL OF SELF REGULATION (ZIMMERMAN, 1996)**

Zimmerman, 1996 proposed the process oriented view of self regulation, which refers to self generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals. It differs from positions that emphasize a singular trait, ability, or stage of competence. This view explain well why a person may self regulate one type of performance but not another. This personal agency formulation also differs from metacognitive views of self regulation that emphasize only knowledge states and deductive reasoning in choosing strategies. Although metacognition plays an important role, self regulation also depends on self beliefs and affective reactions, such as doubts and fears, about specific performance contexts (Zimmerman, 1995b).

Self regulation is described as cyclical because the feedback from prior performance is used to make adjustments during current efforts. Such adjustments are necessary because personal, behavioral, and environmental factors are constantly changing during the course of learning and performance, and must be observed or monitored using three self-oriented feedback loops, namely Behavioral self regulation observing and strategically adjusting performance processes, environmental self regulation refers to observing and adjusting environmental conditions or outcomes. Covert self-regulation involves monitoring and cognitive and affective states, These triadic feedback loops are assumed to be open. Unlike
closed-loop views, which limit self regulation to reducing performance discrepancies reactively against an unchanging standard (Locke, 1991), open loop perspectives include proactively increasing performance discrepancies by raising goals and seeking more challenging task.

**The structure of Self-Regulatory systems**

What distinguishes effective from ineffective forms of self regulation is the quality and quantity of one’s self regulatory processes. The most effective processes have been identified through a variety of empirical sources, including interviews with experts who are known for their self discipline and success (e.g., Ericsson & Lehman, 1996; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1988), clinical studies of individuals experiencing self-regulatory dysfunction (Watson & Tharp, 1993), and experimental research on personal methods of control during demanding performance tasks (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989; Kuhl, 1985). An important issue is to understand how these processes are structurally interrelated and cyclically sustained.

From a social cognitive perspective, self regulatory processes and accompanying beliefs fall into three cyclical phases, viz. Forethought, Performance, and self reflection processes

**Forethought Phase**

There are two distinctive but closely linked categories of forethought: (1) task analysis involves setting of goals and strategic planning and (2) self motivational beliefs that is setting of goals and forethought enhances performance by aiding cognition, controlling affect, and directing motoric execution (Pressley & Wolloshyan, 1995).

**Performance Phase**

Two major types of performance or volitional control processes have been studies to date: self-control and self-observation. Self-control processes, such as self-instruction (Schunk, 1982), imagery (Pressley 1977; Pressley & Levin, 1977), attention focusing (kuhl, 1985), and task strategies, help learners and performers to focus on the task and optimize their effort and found them to be effective.
Self-observation refers to a person’s tracking of specific aspects of their own performance, the conditions that surround it, and the effects that it produces (Zimmerman & Paulsen, 1995). Practicing a skill in a standardized or structured setting can enhance informativeness of the results (Ericsson & Lehman, 1996).

Self-recording is a common self-observational technique that can increase greatly the proximity, informativeness, accuracy, and valence of feedback (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1996).

**Self-Reflection Phase**

Bandura (1986) identified two self-reflective processes viz. self-judgment and self-reactions. Self-evaluative judgment are linked to causal attributions about the results, such as whether poor performance is due to one’s limited ability or to insufficient effort. These attributional judgments are pivotal to self-reflection, because attributions of errors to a fixed ability prompt learners to react negatively and discourage efforts to improve (Weiner, 1979). There is evidence (e.g., Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1996, 1997) that attributions of errors to learning strategies are highly effective in sustaining motivation during periods of better performance because strategy attributions sustain perceptions of efficacy until all possible strategies have been tested (Bandura, 1991).

Self-evaluative and attributional self-judgments are linked closely to two key forms of self-reactions: self-satisfaction and adaptive inferences (Bandura, 1991). Highly self-regulated people value their intrinsic feelings of self-satisfaction from a job well done more highly than acquiring material rewards (Bandura, 1997).

Adaptive inferences direct people to new and potentially better forms of performance self-regulation (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1992). While, defensive inferences like helplessness, procrastination, task avoidance, cognitive disengagement, and apathy serve primarily to protect the person from future dissatisfaction and aversive affect. Garcia and pintrich (1994) have referred to such defensive reactions as self-handicapping strategies, because, despite their intended protectiveness, they ultimately limit personal growth.

These self-reactions affect forethought processes cyclically and often dramatically impact future courses of action toward one’s most important goals.
KANFER’S THREE STAGE MODEL OF SELF REGULATION

Self regulation as an ability to plan, guide and monitor one’s behavior in reference to changing circumstances. It Those processes are heightened by self focused attention (Carver, 1979; Carver & Scheier, 1981; Miller & Brown 1991).

Kanfer’s theoretical formulation of self regulation proposed that self regulation can be achieved through an integration of comparison processes. He distinguished between automatic processing and controlled processing. Automatic processing refers to those cognitive processing which are associated with well learned activities that do not require continuous decision making. On the other hand controlled processing requires attention and continuous decision making and “marks the onset of self regulation” (Kanfer & Gaelick, 1986).

Kanfer proposed a three stage model of self regulation. The first stage of this model is Self Monitoring which includes deliberate and careful attention to one’s behavior. For instance, an individual suffering an AUD might monitor his daily alcohol consumption for some period of time. The individual has established certain rules. On the basis of these standard he judges self behavior.

The second stage of Kanfer’s model comes from the individual’s comparison of current behavior, and his personal standards. This self evaluation process may produce a discrepancy between what the individual is doing and what the individual believes he should be doing. If self monitoring is faulty, or personal standards are vague, discrepancy cannot be recognized.

Self reinforcement, stage, refers to the individual’s reaction to the process of self evaluation. The major function of the self reinforcement stage is motivation. Discrepancy between actual and desired state is partly dependent on the degree of motivation which favors the behavior change.

SEVEN STAGE MODEL OF SELF REGULATION (Miller & Brown, 1991)

Miller and Brown (1991) expanded Kanfer’s three stage model of self regulation and put forward that successful behavior is dependent upon seven components of self regulation.
The first process of self regulation involves informational input. The source of information is self monitoring and self focused attention. External cues also provide the information.

The effective use of informational input triggers a recognition that current behaviors are not working, and that a change is required. It involves an awareness of one’s behavior that may not occur during automatic processing.

Recognition brings out the second component of the model, self evaluation. It involves the comparison between standard behavior and current behavior. Self evaluation process must produce a sufficient discrepancy for initiating change. When a detected discrepancy is above threshold, the third process, instigation to change, occurs. It refers to triggering a shift from automatic to controlled processing and the consideration of a change goal.

If the self evaluation process creates a perceived discrepancy and an instigation to change, the individual begins to search for alternatives to reduce the discrepancy. This process also involves self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982; Brown, 1998). The identification of at least one alternative that is efficacious and feasible leads to the next process of self regulation i.e. planning. It refers to evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of available alternatives to choose the best course of action. Once a course of action is decided on, another set of regulatory skills may be engaged to confirm behavior to plan.

The sixth stage i.e. implementation comprise of other behavior changes to improve acting according to certain accepted standards (Miller & Brown, 1991). At this stage Kanfer’s conceptualization of self regulation in which specific “controlling” behavior exert influence on the occurrence of other target behaviors (Kanfer & Gaelick, 1986; Karoly & Kanfer, 1982).

Finally, the individual evaluates progress towards the goal in a process of plan evaluation. This process recycles to step one and two. Feedback (information input) is continually received and comparisons regarding current behaviors and standard (self evaluation) are made repeatedly.
All the six above discussed theoretical models of self regulation inspired researchers to unravel the dynamics of self regulation in various contexts which further became guiding light for in depth studies in the area from the pool of view of cognitive functioning, personality, interpersonal and health related resilient functions.

SELF REGULATION AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS

Cognitive functions are a set of abilities that are learned to varying degrees as a person grows and develops mentally. In any domain of psychological functioning of the individual three interrelated components of process viz knowledge acquisition, executive metacomponents and performance component are largely influenced by cognitive functions. Cognitive skills are abilities that are used to learn, understand and integrate information in a meaningful way. Information that is learned cognitively is understood, not just memorized. There are many cognitive skill groups, and each broad category can be broken down into very specific sets of skills.

Some examples of cognitive skills include motor skills, memory, attention, perception and a wide category known as executive skills. Each of these skills can be further broken down into specific mental operations that can be used in different situations or to complete tasks. Primarily, cognitive skills are employed to solve problems, perceive the world in a way that makes sense and is consistent, and to learn new skills and information.

One of the most important categories of cognitive skills involves the executive functions. These are abilities that can help to govern other skills and provide a mental framework essential to learning. Executive functions include sequencing, inhibition, problem solving and flexibility. Some of these skills can be used to support other categories and, more importantly, can help to provide means for integrating the information into the mind so that it could be understood. The ability to regulate one’s cognitive activities underlies the executive processes and functions associated with meta-cognition (Flavell, 1976). Meta cognition has to do
with knowledge and awareness of one’s cognitive strengths and weakness as well as self-regulation, which guides an individual in the coordination of that awareness in cognitive activities (Wong, 1999).

Basic facets of executive functioning (working memory operations, behavioral inhibition, and task-switching) may subserve successful self-regulation. Temporary reductions in executive functions underlie many of the situational risk factors identified in the social psychological research on self-regulation and review that the training of executive functions holds significant potential for improving poor self-regulation in problem populations (Hofmann et al., 2012).

Unger & Stahlberg, 2008, postulates the existence of a cognitive resource that is necessary to engage in self-regulation e.g., the suppression of thought and emotions, the active initiation of behavior, the regulation of emotional states and decision making. If the cognitive resource is diminished by a task involving self-control, achievement in subsequent tasks will be impaired if these tasks also involve same kind of self-control.

Tugba & Pedersen, 2012, reported that students with lower regulation of cognition and objectivity benefited more from the domain-general scaffolds than the domain-specific ones, students with lower prior knowledge, knowledge of cognition, and problem representation took advantage of both domain-general and domain-specific conditions.

Sandrine & Nathalie, 2008, studied the symbolic behavior and the self-regulation in dyads of children with intellectual disability and of normally developing children. The average symbolic behavior in individual and dyadic play contexts did not differ in both groups, but the average self-regulation in the group with intellectual disability was lower than in the normally developing group. Both groups, the higher was symbolic behavior in creativity context, the higher was self-regulation.

Gyurak et al., 2012, reported that higher verbal fluency scores were related to greater ability to regulate emotion in both the down-regulation and up-regulation
conditions. These findings are clear indicator of emotion–cognition interaction, suggesting a link between emotion-regulatory abilities and individual differences in complex executive cognitive functions.

PERSONALITY AND SELF REGULATION

Some theorist prefer to view self regulation as a personality construct by which people seek to exert control over their thought, their feelings, their impulses and appetites, and their task performances. Some authors considered adaptive and powerful human self regulation capacity as the outcome or evolutionary pressures. (Baumeister, 2005).

In psychoanalytical framework Freud (1923), self regulation fell under the domain of ego, which was presumed to mediate among the unconscious impulses of the id, the moral inhibitions and ideals of the superego, and the external demands and constraints of reality, while id is the driving force of personality. The ego serves inherent self regulatory motivations for effectance and competence.

Block, 1971; Block & Block, 1980 have proposed a theoretical framework focusing on two aspects of personality, which they label ego control and ego resiliency. These two aspects reflect individual differences in self-regulation – The ability and tendency to control immediate urges and desires in the service of long term goals and intentions. Ego control and Ego resilience refers to dynamic self regulatory processes which set as generative mechanism that produces individual differences in emotion, thought and behavior (Blocks, 1971; Block & Block, 1980).

Ego control is related to permeability of the self regulation system. Persons with highly permeable systems (under controllers) express their motivations and emotions immediately and directly. They are spontaneous, approach oriented, and original in thought and action, but also distractible and impulsive. On the other hand, people with highly impermeable systems (over controllers) inhibit their motivations and emotions. They are planful and organized.

Ego control is a key self regulatory mechanism. Children high in ego control show greater frustration tolerance by behaving more constructively under conditions of frustration than children low in ego control (Block & Martin, 1995). Adolescents
high in ego control show a greater ability to delay gratification. Low levels of ego control predict drug use and smoking behavior (Block, Block & Keyes, 1988; Barefoot, Smith, Dahlstrom & Williams, 1989). Ego undercontrol is positively associated with hardiness and ego strength.

Ego resilience is related to the elasticity of the self regulatory system (Block, 1971; Block & Block, 1980). Elasticity reflects the person’s ability to modulate his/her characteristic level of ego control e.g. resilient persons who tend toward are capable of delaying gratification. Same way resilient person who tend towards overcontrol are capable of emotional expression when situational demands are strong. Ego-resilience is associated with higher order executive functioning and predicts competence in interpersonal relations and emotional functioning (Block & Kremen, 1996)

The ability to self-regulate has both tonic and phasic elements. Personality traits such as conscientiousness capture some of the between-person variance in ability to self-regulate; people who score high on these personality traits also better regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (e.g., Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Self-regulatory ability also fluctuates within people. Self-regulation appears to draw on a discrete energy source that can be fatigued after use, analogous to the way a muscle can fatigue after exercise. Preliminary acts of self-regulation negatively affect performance at a subsequent, unrelated self-regulatory task.

Among the higher order dimension of personality, conscientiousness is the most clearly relevant for self regulation. People who are high on conscientiousness are confident, disciplined, orderly, and planful, whereas people who are low on conscientiousness are not confident in their ability to control their behavior and are spontaneous, distractible, and prone to procrastinate (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Extraverts and introverts differ in the self knowledge they apply to adaptive challenges (Mathews, 1999). Extraversion is also associated with relatively narrow personality traits linked to style of self regulation, including high self-efficacy and

STRESS AND SELF REGULATION

Stress has been a part of human existence since time immemorial but its phenomenal rise in recent years has caught serious attention of researchers from diverse fields. The focus of all these efforts has been to counter the down regulating effect of stress on person’s behavior in cognitive, affective and conative domains. Stress within optimal level has an adaptive value but recently pressures of market oriented economy are stretching people to the limits. Those who have adequate personal coping resources are able to control the effects of external and internal events those who lack these resources, face decrement in their performance across domains. In this context, the capacity for self regulation appears to hold the key for effective coping.

Some theories suggest that demanding conditions impair self-regulation, by undermining autonomy, interfering with skilled performance and working memory, and depleting energy resources. Others, however, suggest that demanding conditions improve self-regulation by mobilizing super-ordinate control processes. Koole, Jostmann & Baumann, (2012) integrates both kinds of theories by proposing that the self-regulatory impact of demanding conditions depends on how people adapt to such conditions. When people are action-oriented, demanding conditions may lead to improved self-regulation. When people are state-oriented, demanding conditions may lead to impaired self-regulation. Consistent with this idea, action versus state orientation strongly moderates the influence of demands on self-regulatory performance. The impact of demanding conditions on self-regulation is thus not fixed, but modifiable by psychological processes.

There is ample empirical evidence that self efficacy and self regulation are positively correlated when studies related to self efficacy reveals its negative relationships with stress. It follows that same is likely to be the case of relationship between self regulation and stress. Several studies have demonstrated that self-
efficacy is a strong predictor of mental health (e.g., Chan, 2002; Cheung & Sun, 2000; Wu, Tang, & Kwok, 2004). There is a negative relationship between self-efficacy and depression and stress and also emotional coping strategy (Endler, Kocovski, & Macrodimitris, 2001; Takaki et al. 2003). Other studies have also shown that low self-efficacy expectations are concomitant with a higher use of emotion-focused coping strategies, including denial and self-criticism (Terry, 1994) and signs of depression and stress and psychosomatic and negative well-being (Bandura, 1997; O’Leary, 1992). Self-efficacy expectations are shown to have a positive correlation with positive attitude, and tension reduction strategies and a negative relationship with psychological symptoms, self-isolation and passive/avoidance acceptance strategies.

In the context of personality, Mohamed (1996) reported that neuroticism and dispositional self consciousness trait are particularly important to people’s reactions to life events. On the issue of appraisal of external demands, two appraisal processes i.e appraisal of external demands (threat, loss and challenge) and appraisal of coping options in terms of perceived control. Personality factors were analyzed (Mathews, Schwean, Campbell, Saklofshe and Mohamed, 2000). The general conclusion drawn from their studies was that neuroticism seems to be related to availability of negative self knowledge, self conscientiousness seem to enhance awareness of self discrepancy and amplify awareness of positive features of the relation.

Mathews et al (1999) identified three dimension of subjective stress state: task disengagement, distress and worry. They suggested that these three dimensions represent three key aspects of person –environment transaction in performance environment i.e. commitment to perform well, overload and self evaluation that is, three stress state dimension may represent three different modes of self regulation. These three modes are an orientation towards achieving personal goals through task directed attention and efforts, minimizing the damage caused by external demands
and self evaluation taking precedence over task demands. There is always a dynamic
interrelationship of these states. This analyses make predictions about
interrelationships between traits cognitive stress processes and stress state responses.

How people are likely the encode information from outside stimuli and then
their self regulatory systems, responsible for the organization of plans, problem
solving styles, rules, standards and self motivating strategies that generate goal
directed behavior (Mischel, 1990) will determine the strength of their adaptive
capacity. Mena & Eyer (2009) also have found that ability to self regulate feelings
and behaviors is limit to the ability to regulate stress levels.

The above discussion of the main issues relating to the self regulation has
made it amply clear that self-regulation which is individual’s repertoire of cognitive
and behavioral construction competencies reflected in his/her ability to engage in
wide variety of skilled, adaptive behaviors including overt actions and covert
behaviors is the most important product of individual’s cognitive competence, real
life experiences, and the social context in which individual is placed. It is a
psychological fact that social as well as coping behaviour is mediated by cognitive
processes of perception, memory, reasoning and problem solving.

In any domain of psychological functioning of the individual three
interrelated components of process viz. performance component, executive
metacomponents and knowledge acquisition component are largely influenced by
cognitive functions. Hence in order to understand self regulation in women their
cognitive functions need to be analyzed. Since it is not possible to cover complete
spectrum of cognitive skills here only limited especially those functions which seem
to have direct and immediate implications for self regulation of women will be taken
up. In this regard three cognitive functions namely, thinking clarity concentration
and recall will be studied. In view of pressures of role diversity and demand
overload it seems that these three cognitive functions take precedence in the lives of
women. Following the theoretical formulation of the construct and developmental
process of self regulation it is contended that difficulties with thinking clarity caused
by cognitive fatigue impair memory function of women which is reflected in the
from poor recall of learned material and decreased concentration would render self regulation dysfunctional. This inference leads to the choice of these cognitive functions as being most relevant for the present investigation.

Negative effects of stress on mental health, coping, job performance, thinking and problem solving in general have been studied at length by researcher (Agrawal, 2001; Bogg & Cooper, 1995; Brown, 1984; Cartwright & Cooper, 1997; Levi, 1971). High stress tends to distort the cognition in that, greater attention is paid to negative aspects of life, inability to concentrate due to constant worry and anxiety, problems in retrieval from memory, reduced responsiveness to incidental data and narrows spans of attention (Aggarwal, 2001). It implies that stressful events or life stressors tend to interfere with normal functions of processing, altering & using the information by self, causing failure at acquisition of new response pattern thereby hindering the process of self regulation. In this sense stress caused by various sources tend to distort the integrative capacity of self which in turn block the process of self regulation. As there are always conjoint demands present on time, energy and resources of women due to their multiple roles as wife, mother, daughter and an employee, Hence the variable of stress take need to be addressed.

So far no attempt has been made to study the process of self regulation in the context of cognitive functions and stress which seen to have important implications for the functional/dysfunctional levels of self regulations. This issue acquires special significance when we look at the reality of the situation of the women, on one hand ample demand overload is present, on the other hand high expectations made on her by everyone. How regulation is maintained in such a pressing circumstances need to be understood. Hence the present study has been planned to find out possible linkage of cognitive functions and life stress with self regulation in women.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

Due to increased pressures in maintaining quality standards of living female participation in the work force has tremendously increased. Despite the different kind of cultural inheritance about the position of women in Indian society as shakti,
the socially conditioned perceptions of men about women in general have put women in subservient position. Irrespective of gender referenced individual differences in males and females society tend to have the same expectations from females as from males ignoring their overload of roles and division of their psychological resources for work, family and society. Despite her multiplicity of roles and pressures to come upto the expectations at all fronts, it has been observed that women seem to exercise better volitional controls over their behaviors as compared to males. The construct of self regulation has been evolved in psychology to account for the mechanisms of volitional control and ego’s capacity to plan and execute adaptive ways of dealing with problem situation. There has been ample evidence that self regulation resources are depleted under stressful life conditions and stimulus overload as well.

It is also a psychological reality that our social as well as coping behaviors are mediated by cognitive processes of perception, memory, reasoning and problem solving. These cognitive functions further influence performance component, executive meta-component and knowledge acquisition component of our behavior.

In the light of above discussed position of women in the present work context, diverse pressures and limited adaptive resources it become important to understand the nature of self regulation in working women. In order to understand this, their cognitive functions need to be analyzed. Since it is not possible to cover the complete spectrum of cognitive skills hence only those cognitive functions will be taken up which have direct and immediate implication for self regulation in women. These include thinking clarity, concentration and recall. In view of role diversity and demand overload it appears that these three functions take precedence in the lives of women.

With role overload, demands and expectations keep women always under pressure, and stress becomes the inevitable consequence of all their seriously affecting their adaptive capacity as well as psychological wellbeing. Hence the variable of stress from the point of view of its effects on cognitive functions and self
regulation will be accounted for. So far no serious effort has been made to look into this dynamics of self regulation in working women. With these concern in mind the study was designed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been planned to address the following objectives –

1. To study the relationship between self regulation, cognitive functions & life stress in women.
2. To analyze the effects of sharp and disrupted cognitive functions on self regulation in women
3. To study the effects of life stress on self regulation in women
4. To analyze the conjoint effects of life stress, thinking clarity and concentration on self regulation in women.
5. To study the effect of life stress on cognitive functions in women.
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Goal directed behavior remained a challenging topic of psychological research. Since many processes are involved in the desirable goal attainment, the issues have been addressed from differing perspective viz. cognitive, behavioural, social, motivational etc. In this context self regulation caught the attention of researchers when they were busy investigating the functions of self in 1990’s again there has been many different ways and contexts in which self regulation was studied. Since self regulation is too large, diverse and important topic, in the following pages an attempt has been made to present a brief review of those empirical studies, which are relevant in the context of present investigation.

PERSONALITY AND SELF REGULATION

Since the term self regulation means different things to different people, using it in their own context researches focused on behavioural aspects of their interest. From the point of view of adaptive functioning in everyday life, (Fichman, Koestner, Zuroff & Gordon, 1994,) in relation to physical and mental health (Davison, 2002a; Davison et al, 2003), and for physiological functioning and self regulation Gross & levenson, 1997 tried to provide some answers to the important questions which are still considered open by researchers. According to Larsen, 2000a, one’s global sense of subjective well being is directly linked with one’s self regulation capacity.

Individual differences characteristics has been another major area of interest of personality psychologists interested in self regulation. Numerous researchers posit that self-regulation capacities reflect temperamental characteristics (Eisenberg et al, 2003; Kochanska et al; 1997; Rothbart, Derryberry, & Posner, 1994; Zahn-Waxler et al; 1996).

High levels of distress may interfere with children’s ability to use optimal strategies for dealing with challenging tasks and situations that require self-regulation. (McCabe, Cunnington & Brooks, 2004).