CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research and practice focusing on occupational stress has steadily increased during the last decade and a half. Researchers and practitioners approach the topic from many different perspectives and orientations including medical, engineering and sociological (Beehr & Franz 1987; Beehr & McGrath, 1992). Literature on stress reveals that there is confusion and lack of consensus regarding its definition (Agarwala, Malhan & Singh, 1979; Mason, 1975; Vingerhoets & Marcelission, 1988). Contributing to the general confusion regarding the word stress is the fact that it has been treated as a stimulus, a response and an interaction between the two (Asthana, 1983; Parker & De Cotiis, 1983). The different uses of the term have, of course, been important in developing a body of knowledge about the different components to the stress process but their somewhat artificial separation has not facilitated any understanding of the transactional nature of stress or the mediating psychological processes through which the transaction takes place (Dewe, 1992; Pestonjee, 1992).
At the empirical level work-stress research continues to be influenced by definitions that focus only on the different components of the stress process (Dewe, 1986, 1989). At the conceptual level, researchers now agree that work stress should be viewed as relational in nature (Lazarus & Launier, 1978), involving some kind of interaction between the individual and the environment. Stress therefore arises from a judgment that particular demands are about to tax or exceed the individual’s resources for dealing with them, thus threatening well-being (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982).

Many researchers treat the term stress as the label for a variable, but they often do not agree on what that variable is. Stress has been used by researchers as a term for both stress producing events and conditions (SPEC) variables and strain variables (Beehr & Franz, 1987; Invancevich & Matteson, 1980). Stress has also been used to label an intervening process, either psychological or physiological between a SPEC and strain. Because of the wide variation in the definition of stress employed in various studies, the term stress now functions to label an area of study rather than to label a specific variable (Beehr & McGrath, 1992).
The burgeoning research on job stress is evidence for the growing concern with the consequences of stress in the workplace. It is well known that work related stress is damaging to the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations (Greenglass, 1993). Individual consequences of stress that have been extensively studied include the negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being. During the past decade, considerable research has focused on the causes and consequences of organizational stress (Ahmad & Khanna, 1992; Barnes, 1992; Beehr & Newman, 1978; Cooper & Payne, 1980; Joseph, 1989; Mitra & Sen, 1993; Perrewé, 1991; Singh, 1993; Srivastava, 1993, 1995; Tharakan, 1992; see also Pestonjee, 1992; Sharma 1988, Sharma & Sharma, 1989).

Reactions to stressful situations particularly coping have received much attention during the recent years. Recent conceptualizations of the coping process have emphasized flexibility in a person's manner of coping with different stressors as indication of effective adaptation (eg.Cohen, 1984; Krohne, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos & Billings, 1982). Flexibility means 'changing the coping strategies one uses in response to the demands of different stressors and/or in response to the same stressor, as demands change over the course of a stressful encounter'. By contrast, high levels of
consistency or rigid patterns of responding across different stressful episodes and over reliance on certain strategies are supposed to be characteristics of less competent individuals or of maladaptive responses to stress (cf Mischel, 1984). Field research has demonstrated that most individuals exhibit a flexible way of coping in the sense that they either tend to use more than one strategy in a given situation or change their coping behaviour in response to changing situational demands (eg. Cohen, 1984).

The main construct related to reactions to stressful situations is coping. Researchers usually distinguish between two major coping strategies, emotion focused and problem focused (eg. Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1984). According to Endler and Parkes (1990), emotion oriented coping is person oriented, and includes emotional reactions such as self-blame and fantasies. Task oriented coping involves trying to understand the situation and attempting to solve the problem. Avoidance oriented coping strategies include avoiding the problem either by doing something else (distraction) or seeking out other people. Pareek (1976, 1982, 1993) suggested two types of coping strategies which people use to deal with stress. One category consists of persons who decide to suffer from, accept or deny the experienced stress, or put the blame on somebody (self or others) or something
for being in that stressful situation. These are passive or avoidant strategies and are termed as dysfunctional styles of coping. The other category consists of persons facing the realities of stress consciously and taking some action to solve the problems themselves or with the help of other people. These are active approaches and are termed as functional styles. Folkman et al. (1986) have proposed eight coping strategies: confronting coping, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful problem solving and positive re-appraisal. In general the process of appraisal refers to those elements that “imbue a stressful encounter with meaning for the person” (Holroyd & Lazarus, 1982). Two important interacting processes are involved. The first (Primary Appraisal) refers to what is at stake (Folkman & Lazarus 1988). It is where the significance of the situation is evaluated in terms of individual well-being (Lazarus & Delongis, 1983) and the recognition that individual resources are about to be taxed. Secondary appraisal on the other hand is concerned with what can be done (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986, 1988). It refers to the efforts taken to manage the demands or shape the experiences. The two processes are highly interdependent and shape each other.

Researchers agree that some coping strategies are generally more effective than the others in stress
situations (see Suls & Fletcher, 1985). However, there is still a debate as to which coping strategies are more effective than the others in stress situations. (Lobel, Gilat & Endler, 1993). Generally, it is believed that emotion focused strategies may increase emotional distress, while problem focused may decrease emotional distress (Felton & Revenson, 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Mitchell, Cronkite & Moos, 1983; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). However an opposite trend has also been reported (eg. Ahmad, Bhatt, Ahmad, 1990; Baum, Fleming & Singer, 1984; Ghadially & Kumar, 1980; Gupta & Murthy, 1984; Srivastava & Singh, 1988). Relatively little is known about the relationship among situational demands and reliance on certain coping strategies or shift from one strategy (eg. avoidance) to another (vigilance) respectively (Kohlmann, 1993). It has been suggested that the relationship between problem focused coping and anxiety reduction depends on the extent to which the individual believes that he or she can control the situation and minimize the stress by using appropriate coping strategy (Aldwin & Revenson, 1987).

Research has shown that women are subjected to greater number of work-related pressures when compared to their male counterparts, (Davidson & Cooper, 1987). A considerable body of research also indicates that there
are specific problems and pressures unique to women in managerial and non-traditional spheres (Cooper & Davidson, 1987; Greenglass, 1985; Greenglass & Burke 1989). Further data point to the additional stress women disproportionately experience, compared to men, from conflicts between job and familial responsibilities (Bryson & Bryson, 1978; Greenglass, 1985; Koch, Boose, Cohn & Mansfield, 1991; Sekaran, 1986) mainly due to women’s disproportionately greater responsibility for home and family (Pleck & Staines, 1982; Pitrkowskki & Ripetti, 1984). The extent to which the women experience deleterious effects of job stress depends not only on stressful events but also on the resources they employ to deal with them (Greenglass, 1993). Available evidence indicates that women cope differently from men in different contexts (Billings & Moos 1981, Stone & Neale, 1984). Female professionals have been found to use more adaptive coping (Greenglass, Burke & Ondrack, 1990; Parasuraman & Cleek, 1984; Tung & Koch 1980) while some other studies show an opposite trend. (Long, 1990; Torestad, 1990). Such an evidence suggests that gender also determines the efficacy of coping styles.

Specific attention has been paid to teacher stress in the last few decades (Kinnunen & Salo, 1994). Teaching has been identified as a particularly stressful
occupation (Dunham 1978; Greenglass & Burke, 1988). According to a number of studies (Blase, 1986; Borg & Riding, 1991; Fernandes & Murthy, 1989; Raschke, Dedrick, Strathe & Hawkes, 1986), the most readily identifiable stressor facing teachers is pupil misbehaviour which includes problems of class management (e.g. managing difficult classes, maintaining discipline) and pupils' negative attitude towards school work. Other main stressors are similar to those of other occupations e.g. pressure on time (heavy work load), poor working conditions (Blase, 1986; Dewe, 1986; Okebukola & Jegede, 1992), poor pay (Borg, 1990; Kniveton, 1991; Raschke et al., 1986) and poor staff relations (Zabel & Zabel, 1982). Other stressors include role conflict and role ambiguity as well as lack of control over school events (Capel, 1987; Dewe, 1985; Fimian & Blanton, 1987, Schwab, 1981; Schwab & Twanicki, 1982; Ushasree & Jamuna, 1990). Coping research, which is concerned with the ways teachers cope with these stressors (Dewe, 1985, Kinnunen, 1988; Seidman & Zager, 1991), has mainly shown that certain coping strategies (e.g. avoidance) are associated with higher stress and lower well-being whereas others (e.g. problem solving) with lower stress and better well-being. (Bhagat, Allie & Ford, 1991; Greenglass & Burke, 1989; Holt, 1987; Houtman & Bakker, 1991; Olff, Broschot, & Godaert, 1993; Parkes, 1990; Pierce & Molloy, 1990).
There is, however a paucity of meaningful research on teacher stress and coping strategies in India (Dang & Gupta, 1994; Sharma, 1988). Though there has been some research in the stress coping strategies in the organizations (Gupta, 1989; Kaur & Murthy, 1986; Mishra, 1991; Sahu & Misra, 1995; Srivastava, 1991; Srivastava & Singh, 1988), some work is required on women professionals, particularly teachers. Using Pareek's Role PICS (0) it was found that all professional women most often adopted the defensive style to cope with role stress and that dysfunctional and avoidance styles were used twice as often to cope with role stress than functional or approach-oriented styles. Women entrepreneurs, however, used the approach-oriented style more than professional women (Gupta & Murthy, 1984; Surti, 1983). In a study of female professionals from different organizations (hospitals, universities and banks) it was seen that in keeping with gender appropriate norms, women used more active, indirect strategies of coping (Abrol, 1990; Ghadially & Kumar, 1989). In addition to the identification of the moderating role of gender-role orientation (Ushasree, Reddy & Vinolya, 1995), participation in opinion seeking (Mehra & Mishra, 1993) and locus of control (Ahmad & Kapoor, 1995; Husaini & Neff, 1981; Pestonjee & Singh, 1981; Smith, 1985) on stress-well-being relationship,
coping strategies/styles have been quite frequently investigated for their moderating influence on such a relationship of stress and health (Burke & Greenglass, 1988; Cushway & Tyler, 1994; Koeske, Kirk & Koeske, 1993; Olff, Broschot & Godaert, 1993, Pareek, 1993; Singh, 1988, Srivastava & Singh, 1988). It has also been seen that women, as compared to men use more approach coping styles (Ahmad, Bhatt & Ahmad, 1990). Another study on Indian teachers (male & female) showed that cognitive coping was used to deal with stress (Abrol, 1990). Barring such a few attempts the area of stress and coping vis-a-vis psychological well-being continues to be neglected particularly with respect to female teachers. This means that within same gender, the stress coping strategies can vary with the nature of the occupation.

Normally there are two statistical techniques to test the moderating effect of a particular variable, subgrouping analysis and hierarchical regression analysis. Taking the lead from Zedeck's (1971) work on the theme of moderators, some researchers have used subgrouping analysis (i.e. Pande & Naidu, 1986; Pestonjee & Singh, 1981) while others have used hierarchical regression analysis (Srivastava, 1985) and still others have used both the techniques (Pestonjee & Singh, 1988; Singh, 1987) while testing moderators of stress-strain...
relationship. The present study has used the subgrouping analysis to test the moderating effect of the two coping strategies (Avoidance & Approach) on the relationship of organizational role stress with the positive and negative indicators of psychological well-being. The sample comprised of women high school teachers, working in various schools located in Shimla town. A special feature of the study is the simultaneous utilization of multiple indices of psychological well-being (PWB) namely anger-expressen, trait-anxiety, and depression (negative indicators of PWB) and job satisfaction, on-the-job, off-the-job facets and PGI well-being Index (positive indicators of PWB).

It is expected that such an empirical investigation in Indian context can have both theoretical and practical implications by identifying functions for psychological well-being particularly in the case of Indian working women i.e. school teachers.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

I. To determine the nature and magnitude of the relationship of perceived organizational role stress with negative indicators (anger-
expression; anger-out, anger-in, anger-control, trait-anxiety and depression) and positive indicators (job satisfaction, on-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job satisfaction and general well-being) of psychological well-being.

II. To determine the moderating effects of the coping strategies (avoidance and approach) on the direction or the strength of the relationship between organizational role stress with negative indicators (anger-expression; anger-out, anger-in, anger-control, trait-anxiety and depression) and positive indicators (job satisfaction, on-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job satisfaction and general well-being) of psychological well-being.

III. To determine the differences between the coping strategies (avoidance and approach) with respect to the organizational role stress, negative indicators (anger-expression; anger-out, anger-in, anger-control, trait-anxiety and depression) and positive indicators (job satisfaction, on-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job satisfaction and general well-being) of psychological well-being.
IV. To determine the differences in the effects of sub coping strategies (avoidance-internality, avoidance-externality, approach-internality, approach-externality) with respect to organizational role stress, negative indicators (anger-expression; anger-out, anger-in, anger-control, trait-anxiety and depression) and positive indicators (job satisfaction, on-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job satisfaction and general well-being) of psychological well-being.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following are the operational definitions of the terms used in the present study:

ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS (ORS)

Role is the position occupied by a person as defined by the expectations of the significant others. In performance of that role, there are inherent problems due to which stress is inevitable. There are ten different role stresses identified by Pareek (1976, 1983).
SELF ROLE DISTANCE (SRD)
This arises from the gap experienced between one's concept of the self and the demands of the role.

INTER ROLE DISTANCE (IRD)
Where an individual occupies more than one role there are bound to be conflicts between the different roles that he occupies.

ROLE STAGNATION (RS)
With the advancement of the individual, the role changes, with this the need to take up a new role becomes crucial. This problem of role becomes acute especially when an individual who has occupied a role for a long time enters a new role in which he may feel insecure. This is bound to produce some stress.

ROLE AMBIGUITY (RA)
When the individual is not clear about the various expectations that people have from his role, the conflict that he faces is called role ambiguity.
ROLE EXPECTATION CONFLICT (REC)

When there are conflicting expectations or demands by different role senders (persons having expectations from the role), the role occupant may feel this stress.

ROLE OVERLOAD (RO)

When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the 'significant' others in his role set, he feels this stress.

ROLE EROSION (RE)

A role occupant may feel that the functions he would like to perform, are being performed by some other role. The stress felt may be called role erosion.

RESOURCE INADEQUACY (RIn)

This is felt by the individual when the sources required for performance of the role are not available.

PERSONAL INADEQUACY (PI)

When a role occupant feels that he is not prepared to undertake the role effectively, he may experience this stress.
ROLE ISOLATION (RI)

In a role set, the role occupant may feel that some roles are psychologically closer to him, while the others are at a much greater distance. The gap between the desired and existing linkages will indicate the amount of role isolation.

Pareek (1993), has grouped these ten role stresses under the following four sub-heads -

(i) Ambiguity Related Stresses - Role Ambiguity (RA) and Role Expectation conflict (REC).

(ii) Stresses of Role Taking-Self-Role Distance (SRD), Role Overload (RO) and Role Stagnation (RS),

(iii) Inadequacy Stresses - Role Erosion (RE), Resource Inadequacy (RIn) and Personal Inadequacy (PI).

(iv) Linkage-Related Stresses - Inter-Role Distance (IRD) and Self Role Distance (SRD).

COPING

When individuals experience stress, they adopt various ways of dealing with it as they cannot remain in continual state of tension. This is called coping (Pareek, 1976, 1993). There are two ways of distinguishing coping-effective and ineffective.
APPROACH COPING

This is an effective coping strategy, which confronts the problem of stress as a challenge and increases the capability of dealing with it. It is also referred to as 'functional' or proactive coping (Pareek, 1976, 1993) or problem focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1980). Approach mode is characterised by one of the following - (a) hope that things will improve, (b) efforts made by the subject to solve the situation, (c) expectation from others that they will help or asking for help in relation to stress, (d) jointly doing something about the problem.

AVOIDANCE COPING

This is an 'ineffective' coping or 'escape' coping strategy, which reduces the feeling of stress by denying the reality of stress. It is also known as 'dysfunctional' or reactive coping (Pareek, 1976, 1993) or emotion focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1980), regulation of emotion or distress. Avoidance mode is characterized by one of the following - (a) aggression and blame (b) helplessness, resignation (c) minimizing the significance of
stressful situations by accepting it with resignation (d) denying the presence of stress or finding an explanation for it. Such behaviour helps a person in not doing anything in relation to the stress.


**APPROACH EXTERNALITY**

This is an effective or positive coping strategy where the individual feels that external factors are responsible for the role stress. It also indicates the tendency to expect and get a solution from external sources. Externality may be high or low.

**APPROACH INTERNALITY**

In this coping strategy, the respondent effectively deals with stress by perceiving himself responsible for stress, thereby expecting the solution for stress from within. Internality may be high or low.
AVOIDANCE EXTERNALITY
This is an ineffective or dysfunctional strategy of dealing with stress where the respondent feels the external factors are to blame and shows aggression towards these factors. There is a tendency to expect the solution for stress from an external source. Externality may be high or low.

AVOIDANCE INTERNALITY
In this coping style, the individual deals with stress in a dysfunctional way. Here the expressed aggression is towards himself as there is an expectation of a solution from 'within'. Internality may be high or low.

WELL-BEING/HEALTH
The World Health Organisation (WHO) defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity'. The following are the negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being considered in the study.
INDICATORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

ANGER-EXPRESSİON \((Ax/Ex)\)

Anger is defined as an emotional state that consists of feelings of irritation, annoyance, fury and rage, and heightened activation or an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.

The following three dimensions of anger-expression are operationally defined by (Spielberger, 1988) as under:

*Anger-Out \((Ax/Out)\) : is the expressed anger towards other people or objects in the environment.*

*Anger-In \((Ax/In)\) : Consists of experienced but held-in angry feelings (suppressed).*

*Anger-Control \((Ax/Con)\) : is the control of experience and expression of anger.*

*Trait-Anxiety \((T-Anxiety)\) : Trait-anxiety refers to relatively stable individual differences in anxiety proneness i.e. to differences among people in the disposition or tendency to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening and to respond to these situations with differential elevation in state anxiety. (Spielberger & Sharma, 1976).*

DEPRESSION

Depression is defined as the emotional state of dejection, feeling of worthlessness and guilt, and usually apprehension. It may manifest
itself in psychosomatic disorder as operationalized by the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS: Zung, 1965).

**JOB SATISFACTION**

It is the perception of internal responses (i.e. feelings) and consists of filtered and processed perceptions, that are filtered through the individuals system of norms, values and expectations. (Pestonjee, 1981).

**ON-THE JOB SATISFACTION**

Includes supervisory treatment, equity regarding work load and pay, co-operation of workers and supervision of subordinates, in other words all factors related with the job.

**OFF-THE JOB SATISFACTION**

Covers relations with family members, emotionality, neuroticism, anxiety about health, neighbourhood and all factors not related with the job.