CHAPTER 2

DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS

In every research concepts are defined and elaborated to emphasize and clarify the specific meaning and aspects of the terms used in the study. Therefore, all the established and elaborated concepts in addition to terms technically used in this study are defined and vividly described as follows.

THE MAJOR CONCEPTS

Life Style

Life style is one of the most embracing concept with which psychology has to deal. According to Adler (1920) man is a self consistent unity. This unity and sovereignty can be seen in his thinking, feeling and acting, in his so called, conscious and unconscious and in every expression of his personality. This self consistent unity is called the style of life of an individual. Every human being is a self consistent being and thus a goal directed and purposeful whole. Ways towards the goal and overcoming the problems of life differ with each individual. In order to understand an individual we must understand his life style. Each individual has his own life style. If one knows about the style it becomes easier to predict how a person would react in a particular situation. Adler called an individual’s characteristic approach to life ‘the style of life’. He expressed this concept in various writings as self or ego personality, individuality, the unity of personality, an individual’s form of creative activity, the
method of facing the problems, one’s opinion about one self and the problems of life on the whole attitude towards life. (Ansbacher and Ansbacher, 1956 p. 174).

The style of life can be defined as the core, repetitive pattern of thinking, feeling and acting that characterize the individual’s unique attitude towards the task of life. In order to understand style of life the attitudes towards self, difficulties, others, other sex and towards life in general must be identified. The understanding of human personality involves, recognizing that each individual’s behaviour has a social meaning, in unified and contains definite patterns a life style. Life style is a basic component of personality. “Our choice of life style springs from, but is not absolutely limited by our personality” (Dahms, 1980 p.63) life style is characteristic behaviour patterns and attitudes that differentiates one person from another. It is the uniqueness of personality each individual’s develops a stable self structure and a consistent life style. Fundamental to the individual’s self structure are the three assumptions he develops about himself and the world namely:

1. **Reality Assumption**- His views of things as he thinks they really are, of the kind of person he is and the nature of the world he lives in.

2. **Value Assumption**- His view of the way things should be right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or undesirable.

3. **Possibility Assumption**- His concept of how things could be the possibilities of change, personal growth and social progress.

The above mentioned assumptions provide the individual with a sense of self identity of who or what he is, ‘self ideal’ a picture of what he should be, ‘self esteem’ an object respect for, or a favourable impression of oneself, ‘self fulfillment the extra fact of fulfilling one’s ambitions and desires through one’s own efforts. The individual’s patterns of assumptions lead to consistent
ways of perceiving, thinking, acting to a characteristic modus operandi or style of life. To understand a person, it becomes necessary to understand the life style, discovering the assumptions which are causing difficulty in coping with the situations of stress and thus helping the individuals to overcome the stressful situations of life more effectively. The concept of life style in this investigation has been taken in this reference.

Personality and life style are very closely interwoven, describing the same psychological features of an individual but a few characteristics for distinction between the two concepts are essential. Personality is more stable, in the form of a trait emerging out of self structure, and the self structure in turn develops on the basis of experience, relationships and model’s limitations. Personality is the core configuration having relatively stronger roots of cognitive and affective aspects. However conation part cannot be ignored totally. Life style emphasizes more toward the motivated actions and striving behaviours. Very often life style and personality do not deviate from each other but occasionally on account of pressures – personal or social life style behavioural patterns differ even drastically from what are specified by particular personality make-up, because life style indicators are purposive, goal directed and motivated.

Individuals are not passive victims of hereditary and environment. Life style is an active creative process in which individuals attribute meaning to life experiences they have faced. They create out of this raw material the subjective reality to which they respond. The process of development of life style begins in infancy. As children become conscious of felt insufficiencies in the face of normal everyday task especially when they compare themselves to
adults or older children. As a result they experience inferiority feelings. These feelings become motivation for striving towards superiority i.e. desire to develop, to strive, to achieve and even to compensate for defeats in one direction by striving for success in another. Individuals learn to cope with difficulties in life through the support and encouragement from others. It however, individuals who do not receive proper support, encouragement and co-operation their feelings of inferiority become exaggerated and they are likely to be discouraged and may adopt a fictional goal that is equally exaggerated to compensate for their deeply felt inferiority. The life style is the way in which individuals approach or avoid the tasks of life and try to realize their fictional goals.

Adler (1922) offered a vigorously optimistic, humanistic view of life. He offered a value oriented psychology and envisioned human being as capable of profound co-operation in living together and striving for self improvement, self fulfillment and contribution to the common welfare. The greater one’s personal development the more one connects positively to others. The feeling of connectedness can be extended to family, friends, community, it can encompass animals, plants, inanimate objects, until in the largest sense, the entire cosmos.

Unhealthy life styles develop as a result of exaggerated inferiority feelings and insufficiently developed feeling of community or social interest. Such an individual with a negative life style is inactive, lacks social interest, is passively dependent on others lacks self confidence and expects everything to be done by others. Such a self protective style may also take a form in which the individual feels himself overwhelmed with the difficulties of life every such individual restricts his sphere of action. He tries to keep a distance from the real confronting problems of life and
confines himself to circumstances in which he feels he is able to dominate. He approaches every situation and problems of life with fearful anticipation and eventually withdraws from these problems.

The present investigation has taken the concept of life styles based on Adlerian concept. Life style can be described as an array of strategies for dealing with the problems of life. These strategies are acquired through experience in which reinforcement; cognitive organization and identification play an important role. At the heart of each person's style there can be certain strengths and capabilities that enable him to survive and thrive. While all of these strengths and values are virtually or potentially present in the core self and the individual is capable of appreciating and actualizing all of them, he may favour some over others and his values stack with a hierarchy, with one or a few being more potent than others. These values are the motivating and organizing tendencies that become central for each personality style guiding his perceptions, attitudes, emotional responses and behaviours. They are at the root of whom he is and who he is striving to become. Thus, it becomes essential to explore and assess an individual's life style for developing an adequate and comprehensive understanding of that individual as a self-consistent, self-directed entity whose focal structure is reflected in all his behaviours and belief leading to specific coping patterns in small or big stressful situations. The following life style themes have been assessed which are presumed to be the positive themes for growth and self enhancement of the individual among these, six themes namely challenger self dependent, responsibility conscious, rational, relaxed and amiable were considered more potent than others for confronting a stressful situation. Practically these themes are not seen in isolation in any individual, rather they exist in a unique constellation.
1. **Challenger**

The challenger is an active, energetic, strong-willed, outgoing forceful person who accepts the challenges of life and is able to endure stress. They assume leadership roles spontaneously. Nothing is impossible for them and are capable of achieving success in whatever tasks of life they encounter with. Valliant (1977) found that the challenged are never preoccupied with stress, though they are besieged by many sever ones. Wheeler (1993) in the Basis A inventory describes taking change as a style similar to this theme.

Persons low on this theme is the avoiding or the recoiler kind. They avoid the problems of life to avoid defeat and they always prefer to be isolated and develop a self-protected life style. They have minimum involvement in life and have a stress-avoidant life style (Valliant, 1977).

2. **Self Dependent**

Individuals high on this theme are self-sufficient and do not depend on others for the fulfillment of their needs. They are confident in solving the problems of life themselves and own the responsibility of the successes and failures of their life. Valliant (1977) believed that challenged types are more likely to develop such kind of self-directed life style as they are more energetic and active.

Individuals low on this theme are very dependent on others and take a passive approach to life. They always want others to fulfill their needs. They often blame others for their failures. Adler’s (1922) ‘getting type’ resembles this theme. Demanding dependence strategies are developed to force others to render services.
3. **Responsibility Conscious**

Individuals high on this theme like assuming responsibilities and feel capable of fulfilling their duties. They are deeply committed to work and do not blame others for their failures. They are trustworthy people who generally follow the accepted code of conduct. Kobassa (1995) also reported high degree of stress resistance among the committed persons.

Individuals who are low on the responsibility conscious theme are escapers. They have no real commitment to life. They cannot assume responsibility and always try to stay out of trouble. They are often resigned, less active and home a passive approach towards life.

4. **Rational**

Individuals high on the rational theme are endowed with reason, are intelligent, value wisdom, knowledge and give preference to logical analysis and scientific observations. They detach themselves from personal preferences and their objective vision keep them aligned with reality. They are creative, rational, speculative, analytical minded. Robert (1976) described them as ‘cool intellectual style’.

Individuals low on this theme are impulsive they expend less energy on securing and weighing information objectively and undertake action with little thought or action. They are restless, quick to move and live spontaneously with their feelings and emotions and respond without any hesitation or reflection.
5. **Amiable**

Individuals high on this theme are sociable, friendly, loving, amicable and participating persons. They naturally move towards people with love and affection. They believe that through love relations, work becomes easier. They have a deep sense of belongingness and community feeling. They avoid confrontations in any relationships. According to Adler (1925) the socially useful type is the only positive life style. Wheeler (1993) has used the same theme in the Basis A Inventory as ‘belonging social interest’.

Individuals who are low on the amiable theme lack feeling at social interest and do not feel connected with the world. They are socially alienated and at times may exhibit self destructive behaviours. They are seen as lonely, sad, depressed and anxious human beings.

6. **Relaxed**

Individuals high on this theme are easy going and do not care for results. Relaxation exist in all their actions. They do not brood over past and are calm, serene and peaceful in thoughts. Comfortable start makes them successful in life.

Individual low on this theme are always tensed. Relaxation does not exist in their actions. They are always in some sort of emotional turmoil. They brood over the past and are overwhelmed with the stressful events. They dwell and thrive on the past or future and their difficult experiences may be in the past but they relieve them.
7. **Contented**

Individuals who are contented do not crave for materialistic gains. Their desires are restricted to bare necessities of life. They are satisfied with what they have and are not affected by the status of others. Change for the sake of progress in materialistic sphere is not important to them. They value peace, harmony and often resist change and prefer things to remain stable.

Individuals who are low on this theme are possessionist. They are highly materialistic and want to acquire more and more. They crave for more possessions, are never satisfied, and always affected by the status of others. They always seek for variety and excitement in life and therefore live in a condition of stress and turmoil.

8. **Flexible**

Adaptability is the essence of the theme individuals can adapt themselves in any kind of situation. Situational demands lead to modification in their actions. They are susceptible to change, are manageable, adaptable and versatile and supple by nature. They prefer to take alternatives, if hindrances come in the ways of attainment of goals.

Individuals who are low on this theme are rigid, harsh, unyielding and conventional in their behaviour. They are obstinate, resolute and not susceptible to change. They become stubborn and willful and do not modify their behaviour or make any sort of adaptations in life.
9. **Perfectionist**

Individuals high on this theme have an insatiable desire to excel. They want to be systematic, orderly beyond reproach. They are vigilant and preoccupied with details. They have high expectations of others as well as themselves. They follow a specific code of conduct and judge others from the same.

Individuals who are low on this theme do not have an insatiable desire to excel. They are imperfectionist, not orderly, very careless in whatever endeavour they undertake. They are unplanful, unorganized and ambiguous about their work. They neither have high expectations about themselves nor from others. They do not follow a specific code of conduct.

10. **Compassionate**

Individuals high on compassionate theme are systematic, merciful and tender hearted persons who are always ready to make people comfortable when tensed. They like to be supportive to others are always co-operative, empathic, good natured and effective listeners. Valliant (1977) pointed out that the receptive nurturant life style is the culturally prescribed life style for women.

Individuals who are low on this theme are not compassionate. They are not sympathetic, tough-hearted, insensitive individuals. They feel fulfilled by disparaging the other person. They are never supportive.
11. Recognition Seeker

Individuals high on this theme are actively engaged in various strategies to him the approval and praise of others. They feel very comfortable in the company of others, especially those who approve and appreciate their actions. Their behaviour is marked by approval seeking success oriented, agreeable, accommodating and socially sensitive behaviours.

Individuals who are low on this theme are not concerned about the opinions of others. They do not bother what others think about them. As such they are not driven to succeed or motivated by the need of approval from others. They do not need the recognition from others to feel good about what they do.

12. Artless

Individuals high on this theme are straight forward, honest and frank in their opinion. They are genuine and unpretentious persons. They do not manipulate with facts or indulge in flattery such person freely express their emotions and feelings. They value originality, authenticity and individuality and do not exaggerate or dramatize events.

Individuals low on this theme are artful, shrewd, cunning and dishonest. They are manipulative, very polished and fabricate with facts artfully. They use manipulative tactics to pursue their goals or seek benefit from others. Jones (1964) described this theme as an ingratiating style.
Stress

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Hans Selye in (1936). It is a concept borrowed from the natural sciences. Derived from the Latin Word ‘Stringere’, stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person. In psycho-biology, stress refers to some stimuli resulting in a detectable strain that cannot be accommodated by an organism whenever it is in access and which ultimately results in impaired health or behaviours.

Psychologists of different persuasions have given the following definition of the term stress.

(A) Stimulus oriented approach-Stress is regarded as an external force which is perceived as threatening. According to Selye (1956) any external event or any internal drive which threatens to upset the organism’s equilibrium is stress.

(B) Response oriented approach- The nature of stress, it is claimed, can be understood best in terms of the way people perceive and ascribe meaning to stress producing situations, the values they attribute to actions and way they interact with events. The response oriented theorists describe how stress is reacted to and how people function under stress. The way it is presumably experienced is inferred from the response made to it. Psychiatrists have identified four phases in the reaction to stress.

1. The initial phase of anticipatory threat.
2. The impact of stress.
3. The recoil phase.
4. **The post traumatic phase.**

The biologically oriented approach to stress is also response oriented i.e. it views the reactions of the organism as attempts to come in terms with the environment.

(C) **The psycho–dynamic approach**

This approach considers events (both external and internal) which pose a threat to the integrity of the organism leading to the disorganization of personality as stress. Stress may be induced by interpersonal or intrapsychic factors resulting in anxiety.

The socially oriented psychologists believe that the intrapsychic needs call into play, mechanisms of perceptual selection, defense and vigilance. There are wide variations in reactions to stress and the capacity to tolerate it between persons and in the same individual on different occasions. Hans Seley’s ‘General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) has been widely held as a comprehensive model to explain the stress phenomenon. The three stage model states that when an organism is confronted with a threat, the general physiological response occurs in three stages, namely alarm reaction, stage of resistance and stage of exhaustion. (See Table 2.1)
TABLE 2.1
A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AS TO HOW STRESS AFFECTS AN INDIVIDUAL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Physical Side of Stress</th>
<th>The Cognitive Side of Stress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Selye’s ‘GAS’ Model)</td>
<td>Our interpretation of potentially stressful events greatly affects our reactions to them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Stage-1:</strong> During the alarm stage the body prepares for immediate action.</td>
<td>(1) <strong>Primary Appraisal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Stage-2:</strong> During the resistance stage the body draws on resources at an above normal rate to cope with a prolonged stressor.</td>
<td>- If the event is not perceived threatening, than no stress experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Stage-3:</strong> During the exhaustion stage the body’s capacity to cope with stress is depleted and susceptibility to illness increases dramatically.</td>
<td>- If the event is perceived as threatening, then he engages in secondary appraisal of the situation.</td>
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No doubt Selye’s general adaptation syndrome provides a framework for understanding physiological response to stressful events but it fails to consider the importance of cognitive processes in determining whether we interpret a specific event as stressful. Moreover intra-psychic or social (inter personal/ inter social)
factors which contribute as major stressors in human beings have not been included in this approach. When confronted with the same potentially stress inducing situation, some persons experience stress, whereas other do not. Cognitive appraisal seems to play an important role as emphasized by some recent psychologists (Croyle, 1992; Lazarus and Folman, 1984; Mendolia and Kleck, 1993; Tomaka et al. 1993). These psychologists have also provided evidence for the important role of cognitive and social processes in shaping our response to the stressors in the environment.

Recently, stress is used to refer to the highly energized psycho-physical state when an organism is faced with a situation that threatens or places unusual physical or psychological demands on it. The extremes of this highly energized state are:

**Hyper Stress** - Hyper stress in which there is over activation or heavy demands in terms of time and responsibilities.

**Hypo Stress** – Hypo stress in which the individual suffer from lack of activation characterized by lassitude and boredom. Present day researchers visualize the phenomenon of stress in a new perspective. Kets de Vries (1979) Pestonjee (1987), Mathews (1985) believe that each individual needs a moderate amount of stress to be alert and capable of functioning effectively. When stresses are left unchecked and unmanaged they can create problems in performance and affect the health and well being of the organism and may create psychological disturbances as well. Because of the positive stress an individual can develop:

1. New self-understanding.
2. New approach to problems.
3. More realistic goals and expectations.
4. Increased stress tolerance.
5. Increased competencies.
What contributes to stress? A wide range of conditions and events seem capable of generating such feelings.

- **Stressful life events**- Most of us experience traumatic events and changes at some time or the other in our lives. Holmes and Rahe (1967) investigated the impact of stressful life events upon health. Death of spouse, divorce, marital separation were found to be more stressful life events than change in the sleeping habits, eating habits, school recreation, residence etc. Cohen and Smith (1993) also found that stressful life events may have severing impact upon health and well being of individuals. Rowlison and Felner (1988) found that greater the no of stressful life events experienced by an individual, more was the adverse effects on health. Life events stress are concerned with situational encounters and the meaning that a person may attach to such events (death of loved one, painful divorce, separation, daily hassles of life, stress related to job and career and certain aspects of physical environment.

- **Hassles of daily life**- Daily life is filled with countless minor sources of stress that seem to affect the psychological well being of the individual. William S et al (1997) found that minor hassles of everyday life perhaps because of their fragrant repetitive nature may actually prove even more important for many persons and have even more adverse impact on the health of the individual.

- **Environmental sources of stress**- Natural events or disasters namely flood, earthquake, accidents, air crash etc. many also contribute to stress. The survivors of these devastating events often experience the severe psychological aftermath termed, posttraumatic stress disorder. Kaniasty and Norris (1993), Kase (1990) have taken interest in studying such kinds of stress. Lindy, Green and Grace (1987) pointed out the commonly reported psychological problems that follow
large scale disasters namely nightmares, flashbacks, distress at exposure to
reminders of these events, irritability, difficulty in concentrating and in general
unresponsiveness. Human produced disasters which are due to human error also
produce lot of stress (Baum and Fleming, 1993). They produce long terms effects
for example exposure to toxic chemicals can increase risk of developing cancer or
produce genetic change (Vaughan, 1993).

- **Work related stress**- Job stress is a condition worth interacting with worker’s
characteristic to disrupt psychological or physiological homeostasis. The stresses
related to job may be caused due to many factors namely role ambiguity, role
overload, lack of participation in decision making, conflict with other employees,
lack of support from co-workers difficult or unpleasant work environment etc.

Some technical terms used in this investigation as defined by the scale
developed by Srivastava and Pestonjee regarding stress are as follows:

**Psycho-social stress**- Psycho-social stress is the experience of stress from various
distressing or adverse social situations. The extent of individual’s feelings of basic
component of psychological stress (such as pressure, tension, anxiety, conflict,
frustration etc.) resulted from perceived stress situations (such as adversities
hardships, threats, affiliations failure, constraints, excessive demands, conflicting
roles etc.) in various spheres of social life. Tense or strained inter-personal
relationships, economic constraints, excessive demanding responsibilities and
expectations from others, marriage-related problems, adverse social situations, legal
or property related disputes or problems. Perceived or imagined threats to social and
economic status or prestige may be the psycho-social stressors.
Stressful life events arising from crucial life events taken place in respondent’s life in the last one year e.g. death of a close family member or spousal marital separation, discord, or divorce, serious personal illness or illness of some close family member, major theft in the house, physical assault, sexual harassment, financial crisis, significant decrease in the income, problems related to law and police, unemployment, academic failure, marital conflict or broken engagement or love affair etc. were taken into consideration.

The stress which employees perceive arising from various consistent conditions of job needs to be defined.

- **Role overload**- It refers to that kind of stress when the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant persons and he/she has to do excessive work, things being too difficult and beyond one’s capacity. There is too much accountability in the role and the individual has no time left for personal work.

- **Role ambiguity**- It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations regarding the goal which may arise due to lack of information or understanding about the goals or targets to be achieved. Expectations from the role occupant are ambiguous and not clear. No specific guidelines are provided to the person regarding the execution of duties. Lack of clarity may exist in relation to activities, responsibilities, personal styles and norms.

- **Role conflict**- It means undue interference in one’s ways of working, inadequate facilities for carrying out the tasks, different expectations from different persons about the role, lack of attention by the superiors regarding work strategy or due to drastic change in the execution system may contribute to role conflict.
- **Unreasonable group and political pressure** - Inflexible rules and regulations create stress in the work place and force the individuals to work against his wishes due to political and group pressures.

- **Responsibility for persons** - Stress is also generated when the role occupant is held responsible not only for his work output but for the work output and production of others in the entire set-up. Too much responsibility is laid on his shoulders due to which there is lot of pressure due to persons involved with him.

- **Under participation** - The role occupant plays no role in the decision making process on important issues nor he/she is given opportunity in framing the work strategy or taken in confidence regarding the selections or appointments of people in the work set up.

- **Powerlessness** - This kind of stress is evident when the person feels that he/she has no say in the work-distribution, policy making, appointments and training of employees. The role occupant is not provided adequate resources for performing the tasks expected from his/her role.

- **Poor peer relationships** - Role stress of this kind is generated when the role occupant gets no voluntary support or co-ordination from his co-workers and the individual is forced to work with those people who are not of his/her choice and are always engaged in there activities which are targeted against the role occupant in order to spoil the occupant's image or reputation in the work set up.

- **Intrinsic impoverishment** - It arises when the role occupant feels that he/she does not have the opportunities or the necessary skills and training to perform the tasks effectively. He has to work under monotonous working conditions whereas there are less opportunity for utilizing personal skills and feels dearth of chances to work freely.
• **Low status**- It is the feeling of deterioration in the self image created due to the role which the occupant is holding and especially when his/her role is perceived by the superiors and the co-workers as being of inferior cadre.

• **Strenuous working conditions**- The role occupant feels as if stuck under the working conditions which are full of tensions, strains, pressure and risks. He/she has to work under dissatisfactory work conditions which becomes over taxing for the role occupant.

• **Unprofitability**- When the organizations do not provide wage according to the hard work put in by the role occupant this type of stress is generated. No provisions are made regarding periodic incentives for these individuals to motivate them.

**Coping**

Life is filled with experiences that push our repertoire of thinking feeling and behaving. We are expected to learn and grow from the events that initiate our coping responses, with the implication that coping is a part of the very essence of the human change process. Coping is not only basic for the survival, but it also relates to the quality and ensuing constructive meaning of our own lives. Indeed a fulfilling life is a tale about coping that works, leading to minimum normal level and coping that works well to meet the stress and strains of life. Individuals cannot remain in a continuous state of tensions. Some strategy is adopted by the individual to deal with such situations. The word ‘coping’ has two connotations in stress literature. It has been used to denote the way of dealing with the stress, or the effort to ‘master conditions’
of harm, threat or challenge when a routine or autonomic response is not readily available (Lazarus, 1974a).

Two different approaches to the study of coping have been pursued by various investigators. On the one hand, some researchers for example (Byrne, 1964 and Goldstein, 1973) have emphasized general coping traits, styles or dispositions, while on the other hand for example (Cohen and Lazarus, 1973; Katz, 1970; Wolf and Goodell, 1968) have preferred to study the active ongoing strategies in a particular stressful situation.

Coping Traits refer to a disposition to respond in a specific way in situations that are stressful. They are stable characteristics of persons who transcend all stressful situations. Coping styles implies a broader, more encompassing disposition. Trait and style refer to a characteristic way of handling situations, they are stable tendencies on the basis of which inferences are drawn about how an individual will cope in some or all types of stressful situations. A person's coping style or disposition is typically assessed by personality/life style factors, not by actual observation of what the person says or does in a particular stress situation. The emphasis on process distinguishes this approach from others, which are trait oriented. Psychologists have identified two major ways in which people cope with stress.

1. **Passive approach**- In the first approach a person may decide to suffer or deny the experienced stress.

2. **Active approach**- The person may decide to face the realities of experienced stress and clarify the problem through negotiations with other members. (Pareck, 1983b). In other words the same strategies can be described as emotion focused and problem focused. Lazarus (1947, b) has emphasized the Key role of cognitive processes in coping activity and the importance of
coping activity in determining the quality and intensity of emotional reactions to stress. Lazarus (1947) emphasized that individual activity appraises the situation rather than the environmental contingencies manipulating the individual’s behaviour. He focused explicitly on efforts to manage the dynamic constellation of thoughts and acts that constitute the coping process.

Although there are many ways to classify the coping responses, most approaches distinguish between strategies that are active in nature and oriented towards confronting the problem and strategies that entail an effort to reduce tension by avoiding dealing with the problem. Moos and Billings (1982) have organized the dimensions of appraisal and coping included in measurement procedures into three domains.

1. **Appraisal focused coping** - It involves attempts to define the meaning of a situation and include such strategies as logical analysis and cognitive redefinition’s.

2. **Problem focused Coping** - This type of coping seeks to modify or eliminate the source of stress to deal with the tangible consequences of a problem or actively change the self and develop a more satisfying situation.

3. **Emotion focused coping** - This includes responses whose primary function is to manage the emotions aroused by the stressors and thereby maintain effective equilibrium.

Maddi and Kobassa (1984) talked about two forms of coping-

1. **Transformational coping** - It involves altering the events, so they are less stressful. To do this, one has to interact with the events, and by thinking about
them optimistically and acting towards them decisively, change them is a less stressful direction.

2. **Regressive approach**- It includes a strategy wherein one thinks about the events pessimistically and acts evasively to avoid contact with them. Kobassa (1979) noted that there were certain resistance resources that increase the likelihood of meeting stressful events with transformational rather than regressive coping. The most important he pointed was 'personality hardiness', which combines three tendencies namely commitment rather than alienation, towards control rather than powerlessness and toward challenge rather than threat. Maddi and Kobassa (1984) found that more of these resources one has the greater is the buffering effect against stress. These personality aspects are a part of life style which has been probed by the researcher also in this investigation.

Lazarus (1975) has suggested two major categories of coping-

1. **Direct actions** which includes behaviors or actions which when performed by the organism in face of a stressful situation is expected to bring about a change in stress causing environment.

2. **Palliative mode** of coping which refers to those thoughts or actions whose purpose is to relieve the organism of any emotional impact of stress.

Different people employ, compile varied combinations of different strategies to deal with the same kind of stress. Researchers are now interested to find out whether some ways of coping with stress are more effective than others. In his book entitled ‘Stress, Appraisal and Coping’, Lazarus (1984) moved the focus away from the previous psychodynamic defense related
mechanism as well as Selye's innate biochemical reactivity and directed attention forwards active appraised process. Coping was defined as a cognitive transaction between the individual and the environment within a specific context. Lazarus stress and coping model defined coping as 'Constantly changing cognitive behavioural and emotional efforts to manage particular external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". (Lazarus 52p). It proposes coping as process-related rather than trait oriented, it is interactive rather than automated, deconstructs coping from outcome and implies a developmental rather than a mastery model.

In the model detailed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) a person utilizes two levels of appraisal in selecting coping responses.

1. **Primary appraisal** through which an individual evaluates whether the situation is potentially harmful threatening, blocking a goal or presence of a challenge.

2. **Secondary appraisal** when the person perceives the event as threatening or harmful he enters secondary appraisal whenever the available resources are examined to cope with the situation.

Depending upon the person's evaluation of these two cognitive appraisal processes, that individual then decides which coping strategy to implement.

Two major strategies may be used.

1. **Problem focused coping** which includes efforts that are directed at controlling or changing the sources of the stress, example learning of new skills, removing barriers, generating alternative solutions.
2. **Emotion focused coping** strategies are attempts to manage emotional responses to the stressor e.g. wishful thinking, seeking emotional support, social comparison etc.

Folkman et al (1986) has suggested eight types of coping strategies namely confronting distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escaping, planned problem solving and positive reappraisal. Carver et al (1989) identified fourteen coping strategies, namely active coping, planning, suppression of competitive activities, restraint coping, seeking social support (emotional and instrumental) positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, turning to religion, focus on and venting of emotions, denial, behavioural disengagement, mental disengagement, alcohol and drug abuse.

The above coping strategies can be divided into two categories:

1. On the basis of level of operation of coping process.
2. On the basis of the orientation or mode of coping efforts.

On the basis of the above researches and especially findings of Kobassa and Maddi (1984), Lazarus (1975) and Pareek (1983) the present investigation focused on two modes of coping namely emotion focused and problem focused coping. Emotion focused or the passive or the avoidance mode may be in the form of reactive strategy i.e. dysfunctional style, persons belonging to this group decide to suffer from, accept or deny the experienced stress, or put the blame on others or self or something for being in that stressful situations.
The other category consists of confronting, approaching the problem (Problem focused) that is proactive strategy or the functional style of coping in which the person faces the stressful situations in a realistic way takes some action to reduce the stress and takes the help from others. This kind of coping has been approved by most of the social scientists and are supposed to be the most effective and healthy coping strategy in dealing with a stressful in comparison to dysfunctional coping. Although passive or avoidance coping may be passive with respect to the stressor, it often requires active exertion of control over oneself, and so it may draw on the person’s volitional resources first as much as problem focused or active coping. In fact, it may require more total exertion, in so far as the problem may persists. Both the approaches whether emotion or problem focused require the expenditure of the self. Volitional resources and such both may be draining. Thus, coping is an attempt to respond to feelings of discomfort with the aim of removing that discomfort such a definition would cover the possibilities both of mastery of the perceived causes of stress as well as the individual palliative attempts to dissipate the effects of stress.

DEFINITION OF THE TECHNICAL TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

There are numerous technical terms carrying specific meanings in research which need to be defined. These are mentioned below:

1. **Traditional Jobs of Women**

   According to the U.S. Women’s Bureau (1978) four traditional female dominated occupations are social work, nursing, teaching and office work. Non-traditional occupations for women are those that have less than 30%
worker women and include specific jobs such as skilled crafts, technical fields and professions related to science, law and engineering management. These non-traditional occupations offer better pay and opportunities for advancement.

While most women are still earning degrees in female-dominated fields of study, significant shifts can be seen in the proportion of working, earning degrees in which traditionally male-dominated fields such as agriculture, business, engineering, computer and other physical sciences (National Centre for Educational Statistics 1981, Jacob 1986). The traditional jobs by women are very often perceived or extensions of their nurturant and caring roles in some of which do not require specific professional degree or diploma e.g. clerks, receptionists or steno, typist etc.

2. Social Support

Social support denotes the physical and psychological comfort produced by family members, friends, peer-group and relatives to people facing stress. With social support people lead a better physical and mental health and better to cope with the stressful situations as support acts as a buffer and enables the individual to meet the situation effectively. Two kinds of support have been considered important as far as coping is concerned.

(A) Marital quality support- The strongest type of support among women is the spousal relationship. Women who have a happy and healthy marital life due to support from the husband are better able to cope with stressful situations. A couple’s relationship is a growing, changing entity as each member strives to
meet his or her changing needs, asking something from the male and offering something in return. The way the couple communicates and meets their needs creates a unique marital quality support, a harmonious stable marital relationship which leads to better coping than the conflicting, unhappy one.

(B) **Family network support**- Families may be a source not only of support but also of stress. If the interactions among the family members namely husband, children, in-laws and other relatives is positive, and supportive then it acts as a buffering impact on the person to cope with stress. Family social support enhances well being for many women. How much aid and assistance family members provide to one another influences the coping of stressful situations.