Chapter-I

Introduction
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The day-to-day life is governed by a number of negative psychological states such as frustration, stress, conflict, alienation, anxiety, overcrowding, pollution, unemployment etc., and these have become regular features of life. Arising stress at workplace home, society or place of living undoubtedly has detrimental effects on the behavior of the people. In the world of work every occupant faces job stress, whether he is a teacher, doctor, engineer or an executive. Teaching has been identified as a stressful occupation. Teachers face a number of strains like disciplinary problems, students’ apathy, overcrowding in classrooms, excessive paper work, inadequate salary and lack of administrative support. These problems linked with their occupation are frequently expressed in physical as well as psychological symptoms.

In many ways, teacher’s stress is no different to that for anyone else. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines stress as: “The reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed up on them”. Just like anyone else, teachers get stressed when they feel they are not coping with their workload or other pressures of the job.

Not every teacher suffers stress. But there is concrete evidence that teaching is one of the most stressful jobs possible. In a survey assessing the stress levels of various jobs by the Health and Safety Executive, the teaching profession came out on the top. The report, The Scale of Occupational Stress:
Further Analysis of the Impact of Demographic Factors and Type of Job, published in 2000, found that 41.5% of teachers reported themselves ‘highly stressed’, while 58.5% came in to a low stress’ category.

Stress in teachers has also been recognized in the courts. In 1999 Secondary School Teacher Muriel Benson won a landmark case when she won $47,000 in compensation for stress. Since then the NUT has backed more than 90 cases where teachers have won compensation for stress. Actions have been taken on behalf of a teacher who will never be able to work again through mental distress. Stress experts acknowledge the pressures of teaching. Cary Copper, BUPA Professor of organizational Psychology and Health at the University of Manchester’s Institute of Science and Technology, says “teaching is not intrinsically stressful in the same way as the job of a bomb disposal officer. Although the School day may be shorter then most office working days, teachers put in many more hours in the evening and at weekends preparing lessons, making work and organizing extracurricular events.”

Stress is a complex phenomenon. It is a very subjective experience. What may be a challenge for one person, will be a stressor for another. It depends largely on background experiences, temperament and environmental conditions.

**STRESS: NATURE AND CONCEPT**

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Hans Selye in 1956. It is a concept borrowed from the natural sciences. Stress has been conceptualized in the following ways.

(i) as an external force which is perceived as threatening.

(ii) as response to a situation demanding an individual to adopt to change, physically or psychologically.
(iii) as an interactional outcome of the external demand and internal resources, and
(iv) as a personal response to a certain variation in the environment.

Selye (1956) was the first researcher who proposed an integrative stress theory. According to Selye’s stress theory, stress was understood as non-specific physiological responses, which are caused by environmental stimuli. As Selye’s stress theory focused on the mechanism of biological stress, no psychological factors were taken into account. However, recent studies on stress have found the important role of psychological factors in understanding the occurrence and the modification of stress responses.

Among many psychological stress theories, Lazarus Transactional Model or Theory (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is the most widely accepted one. According to Lazarus, “stress is as a transactional process from environmental demands to the occurrence of responses under the influences of coping behavior, social support, and a number of cognitive variables such as controllability”. A demand from the environment is called a stressor. Stressors refer to the internal and external stimuli, which are aversive and threatening for an individual. Responses, which are caused by stressors, are called stress responses, including behavioral, cognitive, and physical aspects.

Biochemical stressors suggested by Selye directly cause physical stress, whereas psycho-social stressors themselves do not cause psychological stress directly, but through intervening cognitive factors. Such intervening cognitive factors include the following three components:

(1) appraisal of significance: how we perceive the significance of the
events according to an individual's needs and expectation;

(2) appraisal of harmfulness: how we perceive the harmfulness of the events when the events are significant for an individual's life; and

(3) appraisal of coping and controllability: how an individual copes with the events to decrease the influence resulting from the events.

Lazarus (1960) maintains that stress occurs when there are demands on the person, which tax or exceed his adjustment resources. McGrath (1976) adopted interactional approach in defining stress. According to him stress involves interaction of person and environment.

The extent to which the situation is stressful depends on several factors. First, it must be perceived by stressors. Second, it must be interpreted by him in relation to his ability. Lastly it must be perceived by the potential consequences of stressfully coping with demand leaving the situation unchanged.

McGrath (1976) further argues that the situations have potentials for stress when they have demands which are perceived to threaten to exceed the person capacities and resources for meeting it, under condition where he has expected a substantial differential in the rewards and cost from meeting the demands versus not meeting it.

Different people view stress in different ways. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as a "relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being".

The nature and consequences of the stress phenomenon have been systematically presented by Pestonjee (1992) who has identified the
following three important sectors of life, in which stress originates:

(i) Job and organization sector: Work environment and policies task, responsibility, power and accountability; working hours and atmosphere; compensation and rewards; subordinates, colleagues and superiors.

(ii) Social sector: Political and cultural factors; religion and caste; region and language; civic amenities and recreational avenues; health services and educational facilities.

(iii) Intrapsychic sector: Temperament, attitudes, values and beliefs; aspirations and desires; health problems and abilities.

The available scientific literature reveals that studies on stress can be placed into one of the three groups representing the main approaches to the problems of its definition and its nature. The first approach describes stress in terms of the person’s “response” to disturbing or noxious environments. The second approach describes stress in terms of the “stimulus” characteristics of those disturbing or noxious environments. The third approach views stress as the reflection of ‘lack of fit’ between the person and his environment. Stress in this form is studied in terms of its antecedent factors and its effects. It is seen as an intervening variable between stimulus and response.

Stress is a part of life and is generated by constantly changing situations that a person must face. The term “stress” refers to an internal state, which results from demanding, frustrating or unsatisfying conditions. A certain level of stress is unavoidable. In fact, an acceptable level of stress can serve as a stimulus to enhance performance. However, when the level of
stress is such that the individual is incapable of satisfactorily dealing with it, then the effect on performance may be negative.

Stress may be seen as having two dimensions to it. First, there is the experiential aspect. This can be described as an unpleasant feeling, which people have when they feel in a psychological state of distress or tension. This state relates to the way they perceive their present situation. Prolonged exposure to stressful situations where the individual begins to feel increasingly inadequate can be harmful. When the internal balance in a person’s life is lost, the person is suffering from stress. Second, there is the psychological aspect. According to some psychologists, in threatening situations the body responds with a “fight or flight” syndrome. Confronted by a challenging situation, a person’s body releases a charge of adrenalin, which helps to equip it to either face the danger or run. Muscles become tense in readiness for action. Hormonal responses such as a rise in adrenalin can also occur when a person encounters desirable demands or when physical or mental effort is called for. Life without demands or excitement would be dull and boring. However, there is an optimal level of arousal beyond which physiological responses become unbalanced.

STRESS DEFINITIONS

Response based definitions of stress: This approach defines stress in terms of psychological responses that occur in difficult situations. Hans Selye (1979) defines stress as the “non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. He meant that a pattern of responses could be produced by any number of different stressful stimuli or stressors. Selye’s primary concern was for the physiological mechanism and thus has led to a close association between response based and physiological models of
Second, he believed that this defence reaction progresses with continual or repeated exposure to the stressor, through three identifiable stages: (i) the alarm reaction, (ii) the stage of resistance, and (iii) the stage of exhaustion. Together these identifiable stages represent his general adaptation syndrome.

According to Grinker and Spiegel’s (1945), stress is “any circumstance that threatens or is perceived to threaten our well-being and thus tax our adaptive capacities” (quoted in Culbertson, 1985).

Caplan et al. (1975) defined stress “as any characteristic of the job environment, which is based upon a threat to the individual. Kagan (1971) defined stress as a pattern of adaptive physiological reactions.”

Schuler (1984) defines stress in terms of perceived dynamic state involving in certainly about something important. Zimbardo (1988) defined stress as “the pattern of specific and non-specific responses an organism makes to stimulus events that disturb its equilibrium and tax or exceed its ability to cope”. “Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them”. [United Kingdom Health and Safety Commission. London. 1999]

**Stimulus based definitions of stress:** This approach focuses on the stimulus conceptualizing stress in environmental terms as an event or a set of circumstances that requires an unusual response with in this framework. Researchers have studied catastrophic events such as tornadoes, earthquakes, or fires, as well as more chronic stressful circumstances such as imprisonment or crowding. They have also studied the relationship between
the accumulation of stressful life events (such as job loss, divorce or the death of a spouse and the risk of subsequent physical illness) and they have tried to identify the characteristics of a situation that make it stressful.

MacGrath (1970) defined stress as the imbalance between the perceived demands placed on an individual and his or her perceived capability to deal with the demands. Roes (1976) has pointed out that Selye admitted himself that he should have called the reaction “strain”. So that it would agree with the physics use.

In this approach stress has been explained by using the engineering model. Engineering analogy is represented by Welford (1976) or performance demand model of stress. Welford proposed that stress arises whenever there is a departure from optimum conditions of demand which the person is unable or not easily able to correct. Most organisms including man appear to have evolved that they function best under the condition of moderate demand. If a man’s performance is less than maximal this may be due to both too high or too low a level of demand. This demand, if it is beyond the level of human coping acts in the same way as extremely heavy load would act on structures i.e. producing “cracks” analogous in the human being a disease.

**Stress as Interaction:** The interactional approach to defining stress focuses on the statistical interaction between the stimulus and response. This approach, described as “structural” (Stahl, Grim, Donald, & Neikirk, 1975) and “quantitative” (Straus, 1973), is one where a relationship, usually corelational, is hypothesized between a stimulus and a response. This approach is essential static (cause and effect), with any consideration of process being limited to inferential explanations when the interaction fails to
materialize or is different from that predicted. This is where, according to Lazarus and Launier (1978), description has taken a back seat to simple cause – effect formulations. A definition like this, which focuses only on the interaction between two variables, means that attempts to explain the complexity of such a relationship are limited to “structural manipulations,” such as the influence of a third (moderator) variable, which again do not provide an explication of the stress process.

**Stress as Transaction:** This approach views stress as neither a stimulus nor a response but as a transaction or relationship between the person and the environment that taxes or exceeds the person’s resources. The transactional approach argues that focusing on stimuli and responses is not sufficient. While some situations are stressful for everyone (natural disaster, life threatening illness, getting stuck in traffic), there are those which are stressful for some people but not for others. Responses to stressful situations even physiological responses to painful stimuli can be powerfully influenced by psychological factors to understand stress. We need to know how the individual appraises a situation in terms of his or her particular (i) motives and needs and (ii) resources for coping from a transactional perspective. Stress reflects a relationship between a person and the environment that is appraised by a person as taking his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Cognitive appraisal is an evaluative process that determines why and to what extent a person views a situation as threatening. And coping refers to the behavioral and cognitive strategies used to manage the demands of the situation that are appraised as stressful and the emotions generated by it. Both the positive and negative events can produce stress. According to Selye (1976a) there are two types of
stress.

(i) Eustress : it refers to the positive stress.

(ii) Distress : it means the negative stress.

In most cases, a wedding would be eustress, while a funeral would be distress. Both types of stress tax the individual’s resources and adjustment, though distress typically has the potential to do more damage.

By the same analogy, it is possible that positive stress may have the capacity to minimize damage or even to do good to the individuals. Proponents of the cognitive view point consider the qualitative aspect of experience to be of very great importance. Although it is true that to cope with a crisis as negative as death of a dear one or as positive as a marriage celebration, psychological and physical energy is expended by the individual. At the molecular level in terms of certain biological processes, these responses are similar in both types of experiences. But the drastic difference between the natures of the two experiences cannot justifiably permit this learning together. This point has been described by Schachter (1959, 1964, 1972). He said that emotional states (stress) are mainly determined by cognitive factors. He argues that emotional states are characterized by a general arousal of the sympathetic nervous system and that from state to state this may differ slightly in its pattern. He maintains that we interpret and classify these states by clues from the situation, which brought them about, and also from our typical mode of perception. Physiological arousal occurs and is given its precise direction by our cognition of what brought it about. In many cases, when we encounter stressful events, whether we will experience positive or negative stress
depends on the assessment of the situation.

According to Lazarus (1966) stress cannot be objectively defined. He suggests that the way we perceive or appraise the environment determine whether stress is present or not. More specifically stress is experienced when a situation is appraised as exceeding the person’s adaptive resources.

Lazarus (1966) suggests “stress occurs when there are demands on the person which tax or exceed his adjustive resources”. Wolff (1969) described stress as an inherent characteristic of life. He also concluded to the individualistic nature of stress, giving considerable importance to the idea that different stressors would have different meanings for different individuals with his past experiences and his personal characteristics.

McLean (1979) concluded that stress is neither a stimulus, nor a response, nor an intervening variable but rather a collective term which deals with any demands that tax the system (physiological, psychological or social) and the responses of that system to the taxing demands.

According to French et al. (1974), stress is misfit between a person’s skill and abilities and the demands of his job. Here misfit refers to a person’s needs not being fulfilled by his job environment.

**Effects of Stress:** Everyone experiences stressor events. What happens to people if they do not adapt to or cope well when these stressor events occur? There is no simple answer. Stress affects people in many different ways. Some may feel sad, anxious, helpless or angry. Their moods may swing wildly. They may develop a negative view of the world or a negative self-concept. They may withdraw from their family and friends. They may increase drinking and smoking. They may act aggressively or passively.
They may lose interest in food or sex. They may not be able to sleep. They may feel fatigued. They may experience rapid weight loss. They may suffer from headaches, back pain, constipation or diarrhea, menstrual irregularity or a variety of pains of unexplained origin. Any of these things can and will affect their family life.

**COPING: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS**

The word coping has two meanings in literature. The term has been used to denote the way of dealing with stress or the effort to master conditions of harm, threat or challenge when a routine or automatic response is not readily available (Lazarus, 1974). Coping is also related to the quality and intensity of emotional reaction. According to Lazarus and Launlier (1978), coping is the “efforts both action-oriented and intrapsychic to manage (i.e. to master, tolerate, reduce and minimize) environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them which exceeds a person’s resources”. McCrath (1976) believed that an array of covert and overt behavior patterns which can help prevent, alleviate or respond to stressful experiences is known as coping.

The responses that individuals employ to deal with psychological stress have been termed defenses or coping responses. Sometimes both terms have been used, the term defense has been used for responses with certain features and the term coping for responses with other features (Haan, 1969). The term defense has been used primarily with regard to a fairly narrow set of cognitive responses and is tried to psychodynamic theory. The term coping advantage of being applicable to wider array of responses and has not been linked to a particular theory.
Investigators have employed two different approaches to the study of coping. On the one hand some researchers (e.g., Byrne, 1964; Goldstein, 1973) have emphasized general coping traits, styles or dispositions. While on the other some investigators (e.g. Cohen & Lazarus, 1973; Katz et al., 1970; Wolf & Goodell, 1968) have preferred to study the active ongoing strategies in a particular stress situation.

**Coping Style and Strategies**

Individuals and organizations cannot remain in a continuous state of tension, if a deliberate and conscious strategy is not adopted to deal with stress. Some strategies are adopted; e.g. to leave the conflicts and stress to take care of themselves. This is also a strategy although the individual or the organization may not be aware of this. This is called avoidance coping strategy.

Coping can have an effect on three kinds of outcome – (i) psychological, (ii) social, (iii) physiological. From a psychological perspective, coping can have an effect on the psychological morale e.g. the way one feels about oneself and one’s life, emotional reaction e.g. level of depression or anxiety or the balance between positive trend and negative feelings, the incidence of psychiatric disorders and even performance.

Psychologists have identified two major ways in which people cope with experienced stress, this is called passive or avoidance approach. Another way the person may decide to face the realities of experienced stress and clarify the problem is through negotiation with other members. This is termed as active or functional approach. Although there are many ways to classify coping responses, most approaches distinguish between strategies that are active in nature and oriented toward confronting the
problem and strategies that entail an effort to reduce tension by avoiding dealing with the problem. Studies show that a respite from chronic job stressors can bring relief from strain (Eden, 1990; Lounsbury & Hooper, 1986; Westman & Eden, 1997).

Lazarus (1975) suggested two categories of coping i.e. “direct action” and “palliative modes”. Direct action deals with the behavior or action which is performed by the organism when it is in the face of a stressful situation. Palliative approach of coping refers to those thoughts or actions which purport to relieve the organism of any emotional impact of stress.

Pareek (1977) proposed two types of coping strategies which people use as the ways of dealing with stress. One way is that the person may decide to suffer, accept or deny the experienced stress or put the blame on somebody (self or others) for being in that stressful situation. These are passive or avoidance coping strategies and are termed as “dysfunctional” styles of coping. Another way is that the person faces the stress consciously and takes action to solve the problems themselves or with the help of other people. These are active approaches of coping and are termed as “functional” approaches of dealing with stressful situations. In general, dysfunctional modes of coping may be damaging when they prevent essential direct action but may be extremely useful in helping a person maintain a sense of well-being integration or hope under conditions otherwise likely to encourage psychological disintegration. There is no clear consensus as to which of the two major modes of coping (i.e. approach and avoidance) is desirable and more effective in dealing with perceived stress and promoting the individual’s mental health. There is no clear consensus as
to which of the two major modes of coping (i.e. approach and avoidance) is desirable and more effective in dealing with perceived stress and promoting. The individual’s mental health. Social scientists have approved approach coping strategies.

Pareek (1983b) has proposed two types of coping strategies, which people generally use in order to manage stress. Dysfunctional strategies include role rejection, self-rejection, role partition, role examination, role fixation, role boundless, role prescription, role taking, role reduction, role visibility, role atrophy, and role shrinkage. Functional strategies include role integration, role negotiation, role transition, role linkage, role clarification, role making, role sliming, role development/enrichment, resource, generation and role linkage.

Cohen (1968) found that approach coping behavior is associated with increased distress and non-productivity worry; however, avoidance coping behavior can interfere with appropriate action when there is possibility of affecting the nature of threat. It was also noted that with illness, such as paralysis, there is no advantage of approach, whereas avoidance serves to reduce anxiety and depression.

Folkman et al. (1986) have suggested eight coping strategies based on factor analysis of an instrument: confrontive coping, distancing, self-control seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal.

Borrowing from Rosenzweig, Pareek has suggested two contrasting sets of strategies, which can be conceived as avoidance and approach. Avoidance mode is characterized by any one of the following: (a) aggression and blame (b) denying the presence of stress, or finding an explanation for
it. Such a behavior “helps” a person is not doing anything in relation to the stress. The expression “punitive” (borrowed from Rosenzweig) was used to denote avoidance responses. The approach mode is characterized by: (a) hope that things will improve (b) effort 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.

Pareek (1993) has proposed eight coping strategies and styles: “Impunitive (M)”. Intropunitive (I). Extrapunitive (E): Defensive (D), Impersistive (M). Intropersistive (I). Extrapersitve (e) and Interpersitve (n). These strategies and styles are based on an instrument known as “Role Pics” and can be categorized in to two types - dysfunctional and functional.

Coping strategies are aimed at reducing stress i.e., feeling of discomfort. Dewe. Guest and Williams (1979) define coping as an individual’s attempted response to reduce feeling of discomfort. Two general strategies of coping with stress are: direct action, whereby the person attempts to master the stressful transaction with the environment, and palliation, whereby the person attempts to reduce the disturbances when unable to manage the environment.

TEACHING AND STRESS

Teaching is a very rewarding profession. It is a job where you can get a feeling of helping people. However, it must be said that it also has its stressful elements to it. Inspection, assessments, reports, classroom management, etc. are all potentially stressful areas.

Stress in teachers is a much-talked phenomenon, however there is little consensus between different professional groups regarding its etiology, or how to tackle it. Based on a review of international research, it is
concluded that teacher’s stress is a real phenomenon and that high levels are reliably associated with a range of causal factors, including those intrinsic to teaching, individual vulnerability and systemic influences. Limitations with the current research base of teacher’s stress are identified; we have a reasonable understanding of the etiology of teacher’s stress, but little is known about the effects of reducing or mediating the impact of stressors. There are very few studies of effective intervention and none of them involving large samples or long-term follow up. There are serious problems in generalizing findings from stress management in other occupational sectors.

**JOB STRAIN**

Life in general is more or less stressful, and stress at work may eventually result in acute or chronic illness or in physical dysfunction. Exposure to occupational stress is one aspect, individual differences in coping with the stress as another. Stress at work resulting from increasing complexities at work and its divergent task demands has become a prominent feature of the modern organizations.

Due to minute differences in the phenomenon of job stress, work stress, occupational stress and organizational stress, the experts use these terms interchangeably. Organizational stress arises out of organizational climate and structure; job stress is the result of physical working condition. On the other hand, occupational stress is used in a broader way, which refers to the intrinsic aspects of jobs, organizational structures and climate as well as the role facets in the organization. Literature survey on occupational stress reveals that a number of factors related to job, affect the behavior of employees and as a result the normal life is disturbed (Maclean, 1974; Brief,
Suhuler, Van & Sell, 1981). All the above highlighted factors either related to employees, environment or are born due to interaction of the factors related to employees and environment. A number of theories of human stress (Pervin, 1968) and performance (McGrath, 1976) are based on the pragmatic view that behavior is a function of characteristic of a persons and environment (Lewin, 1935; Murray, 1938). The researchers in the area of organizational psychology and management have used the term job stress to denote employees mental state aroused by job situation or a combination of job situation perceived as presenting excessive and divergent demands. Some stress researchers have emphasized the role of job situations in their definition of occupational stress. Caplan, Cobb, and French (1975) defined occupational stress as “any characteristics of job environment which poses a threat to the individual”. Cooper (1976) has expressed that “by occupational stress is meant negative environmental factors or stressor associated with a particular job”. But some other stress researchers have tried to define it in terms of interaction between worker and work environment. The stressfulness of a job situation or a factor is determined not only by the divergent or threatening demands of the situation but by how the individual perceives and evaluates it, which defines to his own capability and characteristics. The definition proposed by Margolis, Kores and Quinn (1974) falls in this category. They define stress as “a condition at work interacting with workers characteristics to disrupt his psychological or physiological homeostasis”.

Similarly Beehr and Newman (1978) described job stress as “a condition wherein job related factors interact with the workers to change his psychological conditions such that the person is forced to deviate from
normal functioning. Parasuraman and Alluto (1981) also reported that job
demands, constrains, and job related events or situations were not in
themselves stressful, but that they may be capable of producing
psychological stress and strain depending upon personal attributes and other
factors. Allen, Hitt and Grean (1982) have defined “occupational stress as
disruption in individual’s psychological and physiological homeostasis that
forces them to deviate from natural functioning interaction with their jobs
and work environment”. Consistent with recent conceptualization stress
denotes the psychological state experienced by an employees when faced
with demands constraints.

Occupational stress is that which derives specifically from
conditions in the workplace. These may either cause stress initially or
aggravate the stress already present from other sources. In today’s typical
workplace, stress is seen as becoming increasingly more common. People
appear to be working longer hours, taking on higher levels of responsibility
and exerting themselves ever more strenuously to meet rising expectations
about job performance. Competition is sharp. There is always someone else
ready to “step into one’s shoes” should one be found wanting.

The education industry is not immune from this general
phenomenon. For the last two decades at least, education staff in schools
have been feeling the effects of the overwhelming demands being
increasingly placed on them. Schools are being called upon to find the
remedies for many of society’s ills. They are often blamed for what goes
wrong even if they do not have complete control over the matter. They are
constantly called upon to incorporate new content and approaches into the
curriculum; to develop new educational programs and pedagogical practices.
Computer and information technology bring their own set of challenges. All these demands often have to be met in the face of cuts to education budgets and staffing schedules and calls for economies of every kind on all levels of school life. No wonder many employees working in schools claim they are working under stress.

Work plays a powerful role in people’s lives and exerts an important influence on their well-being. Since the 1960s, paid work has occupied an increasing proportion of most people’s lives. Although employment can be an exciting challenge for many individuals, it can also be a tremendous source of stress. Consequently, as work makes more and more demands on time and energy, individuals are increasingly exposed to both the positive and negative aspects of employment. The relationship between work and mental and physical health may also contribute to career adjustment as well as to the productivity and economic viability of companies. Three concepts are important for understanding this relationship:

(i) Stress is an interaction between individuals and any source of demand (stressor) within their environment.

(ii) A stressor is the object or event that the individual perceives to be disruptive. Stress results from the perception that the demands exceed one’s capacity to cope. The interpretation or appraisal of stress is considered an intermediate step in the relationship between a given stressor and the individual’s response to it.

(iii) Appraisals are determined by the values, goals, individual commitment as personal resources (e.g. income, family, self esteem etc.) and coping strategy that employees bring to the situation.
MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF JOB STRESS

Job stress is defined as a condition where job related factors interact with the worker to change his or her physiological or psychological condition. Job stress can be positive; for example an opportunity or negative demand. A promotion can be perceived as a positive stress and negative stress occurs when an individual realizes that a job is meaningless and cannot satisfy any important values.

Some stress is therefore normal and necessary at work and outside it. But if stress is intense, continuous or repeated, if a person is unable to cope, or if support is lacking, stress then becomes a negative phenomenon, which can lead to physical illness and psychological disorders. In a work context, it often results in inadequate to situations and people and failure to perform at an optimal level.

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury (Cincinnati, 1999).


The study of Kahn et al. (1964) and a considerable good number of studies yielded an inverse relationship between job stress and job
satisfaction. In recent years a trend of assessing the moderating effect of these variables, on stress-strain relationship has been initiated by the researchers. Studies have been undertaken on other psychological variables such as locus of control (Keenan & McBain, 1979, Srivastava, 1985). Stress at work resulting from increased complexity of work and its divergent demands has become a prominent feature of the modern organizations extending impairing effects on employees physical as well as psychological well-being. Though a moderate degree of stress has been noted creating as well as promoting employee’s inclination toward the job, excessive and consistent job stress results in job dissatisfaction, tension, anxiety, depression, and in some cases, even serious mental and physical disabilities ranging all the way to coronary diseases. A good deal of research has been done to examine the relationship of occupational stress with job strains and mental as well as physical health.

Job stress has its roots in work environment, and its effects on job attitudes and behaviour and mental health of the employees. Studies have been made upon stress in the relationship of job stress and consequent strains. (Abdel-Halim, 1978; Beehr et al. 1976; Morris & Snyder, 1979; Mosshald et al., 1981 Srivastava. 1985, 1989).

**JOB STRESS IN TEACHERS**

Over the years stress at work has become the most prominent and pervading feature of modern organizations attracting the attention of many psychologists and management scientists. Teaching in schools has been particularly identified as a stressful occupation. Strains like disciplinary problems, students apathy, over crowded classrooms, involuntary transfers, excessive paperwork, inadequate salaries and lack of administrative support

One variable that has been often identified as a moderator of stress in research is social support (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Greenglass, 1993; Greenglass, Fiksenbaum & Burke, 1996; Marshall & Barnett, 1992; Sud & Prabha, 1987; Sud, 1998). While social support has been defined in various ways, generally it is proposed that having supporting relationships to rely on can help people in dealing with stressful situations. Those who lack such relationships are vulnerable to the effects of stress (Burke, Shearer & Deszca, 1984; Cummins, 1990; Dollard & Winefield, 1995; Greenglass et al., 1996; Leiter, 1988a, 1991; Richardson, Burke & Leiter, 1992).

Recently, variables such as personality traits, biographical details (age, gender, etc.) and teachers’ perception of these demands have been considered as important determinants of individual differences in teachers’ reaction to stressful situations (Fontana & Abouserier, 1993; Gray & Freeman, 1987; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1978).

Role stress, job tension, job satisfaction in relation to job level and length of service have been studied by Indian researchers (Kumar, 1986, Singh, 1990) among different occupational group.

The role of teachers is extremely demanding. They work under different management systems where the working conditions are not alike. Teacher’s personal variables, working conditions and effects on students achievement have been significant areas of investigation so far. However, the effects of the existing system on teachers’ psychological state is, by
and large, a neglected area where it is accepted that teachers are not working in stable working conditions of social demands and homogeneous classroom, which is responsible for teacher’s stress and burnout. The working conditions account for stress and burnout feeling in the life of teachers (Mishra & Panda, 1996).

Stress among teachers has become a topic of professional interest but studies relating to teacher’s stress have not been carried out on any large scale. Research comparing the stress level between teachers and other professional groups is also scanty.

In recent years, several studies have dealt with dual-role conflict of working women in India (Agrawal 1994; Sinha, 1987). Comparatively, only a few have researched on work-related stressors of women professionals (Ghadially & Kumar, 1989; Tharakan, 1992).

**SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH JOB STRAIN**

**Psychological symptoms:** They are emotional and cognitive problems that occur under conditions of job stress. Psychological symptoms of occupational stress include job dissatisfaction, disliking for the job, depression, anxiety, boredom, jurisdiction, isolation and resentment. Having these problems, the employee is less able to cope with job problem in ways that would improve his work conditions and enhance his mental outlook.

**Physical symptoms:** Although it is difficult to know how much these physical symptoms have been caused by a particular job stress versus other aspects of employee’s life, it has been established that consistent job stress links with certain physical symptoms and diseases. Among the common physical symptoms of occupational stress are cardiovascular disease,
headaches, gastrointestinal problems, allergies and skin diseases.

**Behavioural symptoms:** The behavioral symptoms of job stress can be classified in two categories. The first category of the symptoms belongs to the organization. The employee entered symptoms are avoidance of work, increase intake of alcohol and drugs overeating or undereating, aggression towards co-workers, family members and interpersonal problems in general. The organization related symptoms of job stress include absenteeism, leaving the job, accident proneness and decrease in work-efficiency.

**SOCIAL FAMILY ROLE STRESS**

Role refers to the position one occupies in a social system, as defined by the expectations, which the significant person has. An organization is a system of roles and its membership is a potential source of stress (Parcek, 1993).

The term “conditions” has the advantage of referring to role aspects that are either stressful (i.e., negative) or enhancing (i.e., positive). Role strain is now viewed as one of the many potential outcomes of the stressful job (family) conditions. Work family conflict is one such outcome.

Although work/family conditions are most often conceptualized as “causing” work-family conflict/enhancement, it is also possible that the relationship is bi-directional. In other words, work-family conflict/enhancement can “cause” as well as be “caused” by work/family conditions.

**Social Factors:** Social stress can be categorized into its sources (stressors), its mediator and its manifestations (strain). The occurrence of undesirable life events is assumed to produce stress (demand on personal resources) because they usually require life change and readjustment. Life events may create strains or intensify old problems. Similarly the social
stressors such as religion, caste, sex, type of profession, marital status, etc. produce severe stress among individuals. The manifestation of social stress can be viewed as the strain, whether it is the response of an individual or the social system.

Burke (1991) suggests that social stress can be understood by incorporating interruption theory as developed in research on stress into a model of identifying processes from identity theory. According to this perspective, social stress results from interruption of the feedback loop that maintains identity processes are broken identify loops, interference between identify systems over controlled identities. Each of these mechanisms is associated with conditions known to produce feelings of distress.

Ratner (1992) opinionated that the concept of social stress, as adopted from Selye’s work, is insufficient to explain psychological functioning. To be useful, social stress must include enduring social practices characteristic of particular social systems that violate socially generated as well as biological needs. Some of these stressful events are gender role, poverty and societal practices such as extreme competition, individualism, and materialism.

**Family Factors:** In recent years extra organizational stressors have been incorporated in the field of stress at work. The family stressors such as marital problems and illness of the family members affect the total quality of life. All of us who live in families have experienced the kind of stress that we share with others in our household tasks and responsibilities. The family stress can take many forms such as family violence (e.g. child abuse, spouse- abuse and elder abuse, interpersonal conflicts, child birth, education of children, moving to another place or area, etc.). Hill (1949) proposed ABC-X model to study the process of family stress. A family in a state of
extreme disorganization faces the state of crisis. Stress is a state of disturbed equilibrium or an upset in a steady state that can go on for long periods of time. A crisis is a state of acute disequilibrium so sharp and severe that the family can no longer perform its tasks and the individuals with in it may not be functioning many families live with high levels of stress and thrive on it, never reaching the crisis point.

The family that does go into crisis can be visualized like a roller coaster (Hill, 1949). There are three kinds of stress reactions expressed by the family. First, the family plunges down into an initial periods of disorganization, during which members find that the coping mechanisms they used in the past are not adequate to deal with the new event. Second, the family pulls itself together by coming up with some new coping methods, or with some new combination of old ones. Finally, the family reaches a new level of organization, which may be higher, lower, or at the same level as before the stressful event. Some families emerge stronger after a crisis, and others seem to show no effects at all.

It is interesting that the parameters of stress arising from social and family situations have not been adequately emphasized. This aspect in recent years has been ardently advocated and it is suggested that the insight into role stress could be developed by incorporating the influences within as well as outside the work (Bhagat, 1983).

Since the extra-organizational stressors range from changes in socio-technical system to the phenomena of social change (Ivancevich & Metteson, 1980) endeavor has been made to highlight significant extra organizational stressors.

Amongst the various extra-organisational sources of stress, the social and family stressors have been examined more closely because of
their great impact on personality development. Though the family may not itself be the source, it can be the unit within which stressors emerge, interact and exert a significant impact on people (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1987). A circular relationship exists between family and work. The job and family are interacting factors with which a person must cope on a regular basis.

Modern women are seeking newer and wider horizons. They have now started playing an important role in many walks of life (Gorwaney, 1977). Many women are demanding new options for career and household responsibilities. Women have to play a dual role as housewife and earner (Hamlatha & Suryanarayana, 1983).

Luthans (1987), advocates that job stress is not just limited to the things that happen inside the organization or during the working hours. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) identify extra organizational stressors such as societal/technological change, the family, relocation, economic and financial conditions etc. Long or short-term family crisis may act as significant stressor for the employees. Similarly, Devidson and Cooper (1981) highlighted the influence of organizational and extra-organisational factors on the individuals at work. Their multidimensional approach acknowledges that stress at work can also affect an individual in home and social environment and vice-versa. Marshall and Cooper (1979) have mentioned two problems regarding manager’s relationship with his family and work – time and spillover of stress from one to other. Dwelling on the theme, they have delineated four intrusions of work into homelife: carrying pending work to home, business travel, organizational social commitments, and exclusive job pursuits such as advancement in the job and accepting new assignments.

Role stress has been operationalized by Bhagat and
Chassie (1981) to reflect the often demanding and conflicting time allocation that working women must contend with in order to manage their various responsibilities at work and at home and to maintain the homeostatic balance in the family. Life in the work place can rely on the use of these strategies to maintain the balance but not without cost to the worker’s level of stress. Using the work place to deal with unresolved family conflicts can also produce stress. Workers who had great difficulties in dealing with family members can carry the transference reactions to their colleagues, supervisors, administrators and so on.

The  society as well as the family exerts more pressure on the men to spend more time at work, whereas women are expected to spend more time at home. If the women lean towards the career her family life suffers. If she prefers to concentrate more attention towards her family, then she stands to lose professionally. Thus, it is imperative to study how the social and family role stress influences the quality of life of working women.

Common belief is that married employed women are more stressed as they have a lot of roles to play and more social obligations than the single women (especially in Indian culture). Cooper and Payne (1990) viewed that non-work roles affect the job stresses and its correlated domains like job satisfaction. Greenhaus and Beutall (1982) suggest that pressure from work or family can heighten conflict between work and family roles. They identified three ways that role pressures can be incompatible (a) time spent in one role may have little time to devote to other roles, (b) strain within one role domain may “spill over” into another one, and (c) behavior appropriate to one role may be dysfunctional in another. Yet little empirical work has been done on a very significant non-work role. Thus married working women have to juggle between many roles wife, mother, home maker,
etc. on one side and wage earner, executive on the other. Single executives many not have to play so many roles and social obligations may be less.

The individual forms the interface between family and work. A person carries the day-to-day emotional experiences to work site and vice-versa. Any stressful situation at family may thus affect the performance at work. Similarly work stress can initiate irritating behavior pattern in individual leading to conflicts at home.

Family and work have reciprocal effect on each other (Rice et al., 1992). A non-stressful and supportive life within family can help the individuals in their attempts to exercise control over the stressful environment.

Work family conflict is a type of inter-role conflict in which the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are incompatible with role demands stemming from another domain (family or work) (Greenhaus & Beutell. 1985; Kahn. Wolfe. Quinn. Snoek & Rosenthal. 1964).

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