Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION
Present day world is technologically and scientifically highly advanced and it is, indeed, true that no line can be drawn to set the limits of technological advancement. Such developments have made human life comfortable and pleasant but on the other hand, these have generated competitive struggle among people, especially, the youths in quest of attaining desired be-fitting vocational career. The later i.e., competitive struggle has generally been instrumental in giving rise to stress. Therefore, stress is an inevitable reality of life.

Modern hi-tech era demands that people must be fully equipped with skill, talent, capabilities and strategies to cope with contemporary challenges. In case of failure in coping with challenges, the stress is most likely to grow and subsequently, may become instrumental to lay negative stress on psycho-social make-up, adjustment and health. Keeping in view the increasing trend of technological development leading to generate a lot of competitions in quest of achieving the desired goal, the present study was endeavoured to see the influence of stress on psychological well-being, academic achievement and vocational decision-making undertaking the sample group of students from Kashmir valley who are constantly experiencing a lot of stress due to turmoil in Kashmir valley.

In fact, stress is a common phenomenon that persists with human beings and generally having detrimental effect on behaviour. Thus, it requires serious attention for identifying the cause of stress and finding intervention strategies to cope with these.
The word stress is derived from the Latin word “Stringere”, which means to draw tight. The concept has been borrowed from natural sciences. During 18th and 19th century stress denoted “force, pressure, load or strain”, exerted upon material objects that resisted these forces and attempts to maintain its original state. Thus, stress in engineering is known as “the ratio of the internal force brought into play when a substance is distorted to the area over which the force acts”. Pestonjee (1992) viewed from this angle, stress is a force, which acts on material, the consequences of which are termed “strain”. That is to say, Stress is the cause and strain the subsequent effect (Howard, 1994). This particular usage of the concept, primarily in physics and engineering, has influenced how stress effects individuals.

Hans Seyle for the first time introduced the concept of stress in life sciences in 1936. It is a concept borrowed from natural sciences. Seyle’s general adaptation syndrome (GAS) has been widely held as a comprehensive model to explain stress phenomenon. This three-stage model states that when an organism is confronted with a threat, the general physiological response occurs in three stages.

(a) Alarm reaction.

(b) Stage of resistance

(c) Stage of exhaustion

Alarm stage includes an initial “shock phase” in which resistance is lowered and a counter shock phase in which defense mechanism becomes
active. Alarm reaction is characterized by autonomous excitability; adrenal discharge; increased heart rate, muscle tone and blood content and gastrointestinal ulceration. Depending on the nature and intensity of the threat and the condition of the organism, the periods of resistance vary and severity of symptoms may differ from “mild invigoration” to disease of adaptation.

In the stage of resistance, maximum adaptation occurs. The bodily signs characteristics of the alarm reaction disappear. Resistance is increased to levels above normal. If the stress persists and the defensive reaction proves ineffective, the organism deteriorates to the next stage.

The Third and final stage of exhaustion is characterized by increasing decrease in the resistance level. Hence, adaptation energy is exhausted, signs of alarm reaction reappear, the resistance level begins to decline irreversibly and as a consequence to these the organism starts collapsing.

For stress has to stay with us and we with the stress. Seyle certified the statement by advocating “complete freedom from stress is death” realized that in order to escape “The heart ache and the thousand natural shocks, the flesh is heir to” death is the only solution. But we have to live, face, manage and even use stress to fight disease and attain a high quality of life.

Seyle was the first to white an article on stress in 1936 and thereafter, hundreds of books and thousands of articles appeared on this
subject. However, the meaning and definition of stress has not yet crystallized. The confusion in this regard is partly explainable in adapting the term stress from the field of science and engineering. One of the definitions formulated by physicists is "an applied force or system of force that tend to strain or deform a body". Strain is resultant deformation of body or object under stress. Seyle in 1956 for the first time used the term stress in biological context. He somewhat, inadvertently, applied it to bodily reactions. Rees (1976) has brought it out that Seyle himself admitted to have used “stress” somewhat non-conventionally; he should have called the bodily reactions “strain” so that the term would have been corroborated with its use in physical sciences. Seyle stipulated the term “stressors” for the biological causative factors. Thus Seyle’s use of “stressor” is equivalent to the use of “stress” in physical sciences. The term “pressure” or “tension” as used in the context of physical sciences has also been used synonymously or equivalently in biological sciences. For example, the physicists define “pressure as a force applied over a surface, measured as force per unit of areas.” The biological definition of “pressure” is a burden to weighty or distressing. Morse & First (1979) brings out the negative aspects of pressure on human psychology. Thus, biological pressure is deemed to be similar to biological stress.

For psychologists and sociologists stress is an unavoidable aspect of human life. It has been a perennial feature of man’s existence and one just cannot escape from it. We have always experienced stress and will continue
to experience it in the times to come. It has been said to be our most loyal companion in the journey of life. It is impossible not to negotiate stress because it is a part and parcel of our being. The winners, the losers and the spectators, all experience it. It can emanate from multiple situations vis-à-vis poor quality of life, poor health, deadly diseases like cancer, cardiovascular disorders, AIDS etc.

Generally speaking, theorists have opined that “it should be understood once and for all that stress is what happens to the man and not that which happens in him, it is a set of causes and not a set of symptoms”. However, stress is not a static but a dynamic condition. It is situation in which an individual encounters either an opportunity or a constraint or a demand with regard to his/her desires. In such a situation the result is always deemed to be very important & perceived to be highly uncertain.

However, it is in fact true that stress is not necessarily bad. Although in general psychological investigations, stress is always discussed in a negative context, yet its positive value cannot be lost sight of. Stress can offer a fresh opportunity or a new challenge in which situation a person can rise to the occasion and achieve positive results. Athletes and stage performers in clutch situation have given outstanding performances. Such persons to realize their potential to the maximum possible extent positively use the stress.

Stress is ultimately linked to constraints and demands. The constraints prevent a person from doing what he desires to do and the
demands compel him to go in for maximum effort to get what he is denied. People who are uncertain as to whether they will win or lose or about any outcome experience highest quantum of stress, whereas, those who are obvious to the outcome and do not deem winning or losing so important, experience lowest quantum of stress. There are three major consequences of stress which are given below:

1. Physiological symptoms.
2. Psychological symptoms.

Stress can lead to drastic physiological fluctuations in an individual health. It can create changes in metabolism and increase heart and breathing rates. It can lead to high blood pressure, induce severe headaches and invite fatal heart attacks and critical stomach ulcerations. Stress can lead to critical psychological changes as well. It can change our attitudes and dispositions. We can experience severe tensions and anxieties, become extremely irritable due to stress. It can also lead to boredom and procrastination. It can kill our potential for happiness and inversely effect our decision making powers.

Stress can drastically change our behavioral patterns e.g., a person in a responsible position in any organization or company may start absenting himself from his duties due to stressful conditions. It can lead to loss of productivity and minimization of turnover as well. Stress can lead to changes in our eating habits or lead to increased smoking or consumption of alcohol etc. stress may also lead to speech disorders or sleep disorders, etc.
Having described the nature and concept of the phenomenon of stress, it is pertinent to mention here that today's human life is full of stress. It may have both positive and negative effects on human behavior. Everyone knows about the negative effects of stress but its positive effects are very seldom realized by people, though, it is a matter of fact which is evident from empirical studies that moderate level of stress is pre-requisite for good performance. Hence, to cope with stress or maintaining it to the moderate level – the level which must be within tolerance limit, there is a need for re-styling and re-scheduling of our lives. The situations we are caught in the present circumstances, demands change both in our attitudes and capacities. People are required to be equipped with appropriate skills, talent and strategies with a view to cope with challenges. If anyone fails to cope with contemporary challenges, the amount of stress will indefinitely go on increasing and consequently the psycho-social make-up will be negatively changed and subsequently, people may develop the problems of adjustment which may later turn into health problem.

As a matter of fact, human condition is deeply characterized by the phenomenon of stress. It is a persisting feature of human life. It largely has detrimental influence on human personality and behaviour which might disturb intra-individual functioning and inter-individual relationships. The individual’s relationship with the environment is also a function of his life experience which are inherently qualified by stress. Therefore, it is all the more urgent, that we earnestly engage ourselves in identifying the causes of
stress, so that appropriate intervention strategies can be developed to cope with stress

Below, an effort will be made to stress light on the factors responsible for generating stress. though. in the present endeavor we are only concerned to see the influence of stress on the various dependent variables, viz., psychological well-being, academic achievement and vocational decision-making.

It is an almost impossible task to categorically schematize the types of human-personality as every individual is blessed with a unique personality. Friedman and Rosenberg (1974) have described human personality into two types viz., Type A and Type B with a view to explore the phenomenon of stress in human behaviour. The type B personality is relatively calm, somewhat unambitious, carefree and happy-go-lucky. People with this type of personality are less likely to experience high levels of stress. On the other hand people with type A personality are more likely to develop stress-related disorders. Their personal traits incline them to be involved in conditions or situations which ooze stress. These people are highly competitive and hard driving, they are generally ambitious and workaholic. They are result-oriented, target-oriented, performance-oriented and achievement-oriented. Usually they are perfectionists. They do things very rapidly. They talk, walk and eat rapidly and get things done quickly. In view of the same type A personality people are constantly under stress. They are more likely to develop heart diseases, hypertension etc.
Our personal responses too largely determine the level of our stress experience. There are people who, when challenged rise up to the occasion, fight back and devise strategies leading to astonishing accomplishments. On the other hand, there are others who simply surrender before the stressful conditions e.g., a person when attacked his professional performance, may take it as a personal attack and get upset and defensive, whereas another individual may perceive similar criticism as a challenge to improve his performance and consequently experience less stress. Thus our personal characteristics contribute a lot to our stress experiences. It has rightly been said that, "one person's stressor is another person's piece of cake". The reactions displayed by people can be a function of an individual's perception of threat as well as his or her capacity for coping with stress experiences. Our experience of stress may be deepened by multiple situational factors e.g., if we have a sick child at home or face a crisis at professional front, we tend to go through excruciating amounts of stress. Similarly an automobile accident may generate a deep experience of stress. If people face real or perceived harm to their bodily health or are taken as hostages or face assaults or encounter military combat etc. their experience of stress is greatly heightened. The victims of rape or torture are left with indelible scars on their psyche. Some professions where one is required to be constantly on the alert, where huge quanta of stress is likely to emanate or emerged. Thus, air-traffic controllers, astronauts, workers in nuclear reactors etc. have usually been seen to be experiencing lots of stress.
Jenis and Leventhol (1965) have concluded that in a stressful situation such as in impending major surgery, the experience of the severity of stress is deepened as the actual time for the event gets nearer and nearer.

In quest of looking at the process and the nature of stress theories propounded to explain stress are given below:

A. Biological theories of stress

i. Somatic-weakness theory

ii. Specific-reaction theory.

B. Psychological theories

i. Psycho-analytic theories

ii. Cognitive and behavioural theories

A. Biological theories of stress

These theories explain psychological disorders in terms of specific weakness or hyperactivity of an individual's organic system. As and when she or he responds to a stressful experience. The stress is explained as a response emanating from either the paucity or abundance requisite quantum of bio-chemical material.

The fundamental assumption of somatic-weakness theory is that weak bodily organs are pre-disposed to generate a specific kind of stress leading to a particular psycho-physiological disorder. A particular organ system may remain weak in view of several factors viz-a-viz genetic deficiency, undetected juvenile illness or diet imbalance deficiency etc.
These factors may cumulatively disrupt a particular organ system making it weak and vulnerable to stress e.g., severe ulcers might be generated owing to a weak digestive system, which ulcers in their turn may lead to serious stressful events and consequent psychological disorders.

According to specific-reaction theory, no hard and fast explanation can be categorically branded as the prime mover or shaker of stress. Different individuals respond to stress differently and every organic system has its own idiosyncratic way to cope up with ongoing situational pressures. This theory maintains that the body system that is the most responsive may most likely become the locus of a particular psycho-physiological disorder e.g. high blood-pressure may be more amenable to hypertension. Similarly genetic differences found among various individuals may also pre-dispose them in responding to stress differently. Respectable psychologists have opined that different people have their own particular pattern of automatic response to stress. Lacey (1967) discovered that one individual may respond to stressful experience with an increased heart-rate, whereas another person may respond with increased respiration and may not experience a change in the frequency of heart-beat.

B. Psychological theories

These theories explain the development of various psycho-physiological disorders in terms of such factors as: unconscious emotional states, personality traits, cognitive appraisal and specific styles of coping with stress.
Psychoanalytic theories explaining the development of stress undermine the role of conscious-emotional states specific to each disorder. According to Alexander (1950) various psycho-physiological disorders can be explained as a function of our unconscious emotional states e.g. he assumed that repression of longings is the root cause of stomach ulceration. The ulcer patients repress their longing for parental love in childhood. This repressed impulse leads to the over activity of the automatic nervous system to which the stomach responds with great sensitivity. This reaction leads to acute ulceration of stomach among the respective patients. Physiologically speaking the stomach is always engaged in preparing itself to receive the food. However, symbolically the patient has equated the food with parental love.

Alexander has further argued that repressed hostile impulses invariably lead to chronic emotional states. Such states, in turn, are responsible for hypertension, anxieties and worries and depression. "The damming up of such hostile impulses if continues might develop stronger defensive measures in order to keep pent-up aggression in check – because of the marked degree of their inhibition. These patients are less effective in their occupational activities and for that reason tend to fail in competition and ..... hostile feeling towards more successful, less inhibited, competitors are further intensified".

Alexander’s hypothesis of unexpressed anger or anger-in theory was formulated on his first hand observations of patients undergoing psycho-analysis.
Cognitive and behavioural theories explained stress as a function of cognitive and behavioural factors. The perceptions and experiences stimulate sympathetic system activity. However, psychological resentments and regrets are too embedded to be easily tossed out of one's system. They are not as readily escapable as are the perceived or real external threats. Nor can they be readily explained away or wished away, often they keep our sympathetic system aroused. Such an arousal keep the body in a continuous state of emergency. It is unbearable to sustain a balanced behavioural pattern for long in such circumstances. The necessary balancing of sympathetic and para-sympathetic action are so gets tougher by the day. More often than not, the equilibrium is lost and one is overtaken by distress. Such a bodily changes that can last longer than they were meant to. This further contributes to an imbalance between sympathetic and para-sympathetic activity going on in our system. Some psychologists have assumed that man's higher mental faculties for outcompete his physiological endowments. This is the inbuilt dichotomy operating in human's albeit, very subtly and silently. Moral, valuational or attitudinal changes may be experienced at very higher or deeper levels of consciousness and our bodies may not be attuned to such experiences easily and readily. Infact, it is pointed out that our bodies are not designed to cope up with the ongoing pressures of our higher mental faculties. They are not built to withstand the storms brought about by our mental capacities. Thus, life-experiences of human beings seem continuously to be exceeding their resources or capacities to cope with
them. Such a dichotomous state of affair is inherently germane to the fructification of chronic stresses and conducive to the development of psycho-physiological disorder. Therefore, most humans are prone to this or that kind of stress-related disorder.

After giving detailed description on stress, the ongoing description will be related to the various dependent variables as the present investigation was aimed at investigating the influence of stress on psychological well-being, academic-achievement and vocational decision-making. Therefore, we will take up each dependent variable one after the other in the same sequence.

The present study tries to bring out one of the crucial dimensions of human behavior vis-à-vis psychological well-being. The psychological investigations are deeply relevant to the study of man's subjective well being pertaining to people's feeling about their daily activities (Bradburn, 1969; Campbell, 1976; Warr, 1978). Anxiety, Depression, Dissatisfaction, Unhappiness and such other negative mental states etc., are characteristic example of such feelings. Although these mental states of psychological findings have only recently been studied by psychologists (Argule, 1987; Diener, 1984; Eyseck, 1990; Stacretal, 1991), yet they have come up with fruitful results.

The notion of well-being historically speaking is rooted in the very project of human civilization. All great religions and philosophers have
formulated their respective versions of human well-being. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle has discussed it in his famous "Ethical Vicomachea". Christianity as a religion has been deeply concerned with the question of human happiness. Islam has also emphasized on well-being of human-beings in the present world and the world here-after. Those believing to the real Islamic spirit remain psychologically well-off. The other religions like Hinduism have been equally concerned with human happiness and well-being. "By their fruits shall ye know them" is not specifically characterizing any one religion but is applicable to all the great religions of the world. Almost all religions expound that righteous conduct guided by the principles of religious worldview, culminates into human well-being and signifies the true worthiness of life (Nishizawa, 1998).

Since time immemorial the Indian religious tradition has been pre-occupied on the attainment of liberation or Moksha from sufferings. Indians have invoked "Sarva Suhina Bhavantu" (Let all enjoy well-being) as a prayer to Gods. However, Indian religious tradition has laid emphasis on the negative aspect of well-being as emancipation from suffering, either from the consequences of events of actions or from the tensions of desire. Shrimad Bhagvat in its opening lines speaks of three kinds of sufferings.

The subsequent verse concentrates on psychogenic sufferings or Kheshas, which born, out of disordered (Sauri) personalities. Human beings in the course of their development get trapped into anxiety – producing
illusionary fixations or attachments. These fixations or attachments generate excruciating psychogenic sufferings. In view of the same, Gita defines well being as imanispotion from anxiety producing fixations and attachments. The philosophy of Vedanta emanating from Upanishads defines human well-being in terms of realization of self and God. It emphasizes on Gyan Marg (The path of realization). According to Vedanta man’s well-being depends upon his understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, concentrated on exploring ways and means to eliminate human sufferings. He propounded four noble truths viz-a-viz (a) there is suffering, (b) there is a cause of suffering, (c) suffering can be eliminated, and (d) there is a way to eliminate suffering. The way to eliminate suffering has been highlighted in the famous eight-fold path of Buddha which include : (1) right faith, (2) right resolve, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right living, (6) right effort, (7) right thought, and (8) right concentration.

He was initially moved by the physical sufferings such as – disease, old age and death, which inspired him to look for resources for human emancipation from suffering or what Murray (1938) had called the need for harm avoidance.

The Quranic view of human personality fixes responsibility for suffering on man himself. Man is so absorbed in worldly pleasures and pursuits that he forgets his spiritual moorings. Constantly, he falls pray to
dark suggestions of his own lower self and become devoid of higher purposes and values of life. Therefore, the Quranic strategy for elimination of suffering and attainment of well-being or “Fauzul-azeem” is to undergo regress self discipline and self control and be guided by values and norms outlined in the very text of the Quran. The Quranic ethics emphasizes on Sabr and Tawakul in order to graduate from Nafse-Amara(id) to Nafse-Mutmaina (super-ego).

It is very difficult to precisely bring out a neat definition of the concept of well-being. Our subjective feelings of satisfaction do also play a role in arriving at a definition of our concept of well-being. We use many words in our day to day life as well as academic discourse, as equivalent to well being e.g., “satisfaction”, “happiness”, “hope”, “optimism”, “positive mental health” and “quality of life”, etc., are deemed to be equivalent to the concept of well being. These equivalent constructs are involved in various types of studies such as cause effect studies and prediction-criterion studies and are further more involved in our search from common variance and clustering studies. It may further be pointed out that the terms such as happiness and satisfaction are mostly used as equivalent to well being in our multiple life situations such as “health”, “marriage”, “family work”, “financial situation”, “educational opportunity”, “self-esteem” and “trust in others”.

Satisfaction cannot be deemed to be equivalent to “restoration of homeostasis” and “drive reduction”. It is an overriding concept often
transcending the deemed equivalent construct. The term “satisfaction” was found by Cantril (1965) to be more suitable for describing an experience, which is special and specific to human beings and is loaded with unique value over tonnes. Grichling (1983) undertook an intensive analysis of happiness/satisfaction construct and provided significant insights with regards to the question of domain, scope and degree. He gave a restricted meaning to the term happiness and brought out its ambiguity as well. His analysis of domain, scope and degree of this construct was aimed at clarifying the meaning-concomitants.

The analysis of discussions pertaining to subjective well-being or psychological well-being is being carried out under the broad rubric of “quality of life”. Well-being is defined in terms of a harmonious correlation between one’s desires and goals. Such a correlation is deemed to be leading to satisfaction or happiness. Chekola (1975), Campbell (1976), and others define quality of life to be a composite measure of physical, mental and social well-being. Nevertheless, all the psychologists deem subjective well-being to be very important aspect of quality of life. Levi (1987) defined well-being to be a dynamic state of mind, qualified by a reasonable amount of harmony between the persons abilities, needs, expectations circumstantial demands and opportunities.

Okun and Stock, 1987 have brought out three main features of subjective well-being. They have been identified as:
a. It is based on subjective experience instead of objective conditions of life.

b. It has positive as well as negative effects.

c. It is a global experience as opposed to experience in particular domains such as "work".

The relation between well-being and quality of life is considerably obscured by confusion emanating from conflicting interrelations and definitions thereof. WHO defines quality of life to be comprised of multiple factors and conditions of life. It is deemed to be a combined effect of a cluster of factors determining health, happiness, occupation, comfortable environment, social and intellectual attainments, freedom of action, justice and freedom of expression. In comparison to quality of life, well-being is often regarded as a broader concept. Quality of life is included in the concept of well-being which, further more includes standards of living and level of living. Quality of life is often deemed equivalent to subjective well-being. Standard of life is defined in terms of income, occupation, housing, sanitation and nutrition, education, recreation and other services. Level of living is shown to be comprised of following components as health, food, consumption, education, occupation, working conditions, housing, social security, clothing, recreation, leisure and human rights. Psychologists have broadly assumed these objective characteristics to be influencing the overall human well-being.
The WHO in its 1966 report formulated a broader range of criteria for subjective quality of life. One of the most important criterion proposed by WHO was that each individual has the right to decide as to whether his/her life is worth while or not. Verma & Verma (1989) define general well-being as “the subjective feelings of contentment, happiness and satisfaction with life”. They, further more, regard one’s role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and absence of distress, dissatisfaction and worry etc., as other important component of general well-being. Their emphasis on subjective well-being stems from the consideration that the above mentioned aspects cannot be subjected to an objective evaluation. General well-being can be broadly subsumed under the concept of the mental health (Verma & Verma, 1988). They further more opined that mere absence of psychological ill-being/ill-health doesn’t necessarily mean presence of psychological well-being. Diener & Diener (1995) opined that psychological well-being is comprised of person’s evaluative reactions to his/her life. These responses can be both cognitive evaluations and emotional reactions. According to Nishizawa (1996) “happiness is generally interpreted to be having almost the same meaning as psychic well-being”. The psychic well-being is further indicated by a person’s cognitive appraisal of his/her life conditions in the past. It also encompasses the future prospectus of life i.e., hope. The integrative character of mental healthiness is deemed to be composed of certain set of stable traits of personality.
beliefs and values of psycho-behavioral resources connected with ones domestic and occupational conditions.

The "Subjective well-being" is generally deemed to be defining characteristic of a good life. In colloquial terms "Subjective well-being" is deemed to be synonymous with "happiness". For Diener (2000), subjective well-being refers to people’s evaluations that are both affective and cognitive. People experience abundant psychological well-being when they feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains and when they are satisfied with their lives. In our times, subjective well-being is increasingly defined in terms of people’s self-evaluations. Some of the psychologists such as Diener, Sapyta and Suh (1998) pointed out that subjective well-being cannot be deemed to be sufficient for the good life, although it seems to be increasingly a necessary condition for it.

The foregoing analysis brings out that we do not have need of precise and clearcut definitions of well-being and its related concepts. However, such disagreement on the appropriate definition could be ignored if we can agree on the items to be included in an operational instrument. It may be noted that we face numerous methodological issues in our study of the concept of psychological well-being. We can assess the negative aspect of well-being like anxiety, depression etc., through rating scales, self-reports, projective tests etc. We can also use some objective test of
personality like MMPI. However, the aspect of well-being like happiness, satisfaction etc., are not that amenable to psychometric tests. Methodically speaking, these aspects of well-being defy our efforts for measurement, even though attributes of positive mental health have been widely debated and applied in psychiatry (Maslow, 1973).

Warr (1978) had also taken wide-ranging analysis with regard to the measurement of psychological well-being. He applied tests with a view to measure anxiety about the specific features of everyday life. He also tried to examine various positive and negative aspects of well-being. Bredburn did also work out extensive studies on a large sample survey in USA with a view to illuminate the nature and scope of concept of well-being. In his findings he reported that positive and negative effects of well-being are not co-related. On the other hand, Bredburn found that positive and negative dimensions were related to quite a different set of variables. The positive effect was associated with higher level, social contact and more exposure to new experiences. Conversely, various indices of anxiety, fear of nervous breakdown, physical symptoms of illness etc., were found to be associated with negative affect. These findings of Bredburn have been broadly confirmed by several research studies carried out in USA and UK (Costa & Macrace, 1980; Bryant & Veroff, 1982). Warr in his investigations also pointed out that various facets of well-being were conceptually and statistically distinct although overlapping. Well-being according to Warr cannot be deemed to be equivalent to “happiness” although happiness is a
crucial component of well-being. Various other external factors such as sex, employment, position, age, education, work orientation etc., do strongly impact on different aspects of well-being e.g., Warr (1978) found that unemployment was intimately linked to lower levels of well-being and higher levels of anxiety. Similarly gainful employment was also linked to higher level of well-being. In his findings Warr found that unemployed people in comparison to their employed counterparts did report significantly lower levels of well-being and higher levels of anxiety. However, Warr also reported that only for high orientation groups did employment position showed a very intimate relationship with various aspects of well-being. Such a relationship wasn’t found to be obtaining in case of middle class groups.

Kozma and Stones (1978) undertook extensive review on the literature related to psychological well-being (1956-1977). In their findings they reported that psychologists have employed multidimensional approaches to the construct of ‘well-being’ in the western societies. They found that one of the major research issues faced by psychologists was the diversity in the very conceptualization of well-being. They also found that different experimental procedures were employed to bring out the relationship between well-being and several other related variables such as personality and health. Kozma and Stones, on their part pleaded for a narrow conceptualization of well-being e.g., they advocated well-being to be conceptualized in terms of current happiness. Campbell (1980) also reviewed various studies on the perceived quality of life. In his analysis, he
distinguished between three types of well-being; affect, strain and satisfaction. He advocated that all three types were intimately inter-linked to one another. However, he didn’t go in far further theoretical classification in this regard. He wisely kept them as separate dimensions rather than to combine them into an overall index.

The diversity of conceptualization stems from differences in cultural settings. Various cultures tend to perceive the affective aspects of everyday life in the light of their specific moorings. Accordingly the artifact of the questioning procedure or the specific item content pertaining to well-being or a host of related issues of personality in health are also formulated diversely. This field's situation does constitute a very powerful methodological challenge to psychological investigators e.g., the methodological dilemma may emanate from either trying to operationalize and conceptualize well-being narrowly in terms of current happiness as proposed by Kozma and Stones or adhering to the recommendations and formulations of Campbell who distinguished three types of well being vis-à-vis affect, strain and satisfaction.

Psychological investigators have been deeply involved in figuring out the nature of subjective well-being. In pursuance of the same they have devised various measuring scales of subjective well-being. The earlier investigators studying the facets of happiness were prone to relying on a single item instrument to measure each construct. For instance Andrews and
Withey (1976) provided the respondents with a seven-point scale. The scale ranged from asking the respondents as to whether they were delighted with their lives or experienced their lives to be terribly unhappy. They asked their respondents one single question, "How do you feel about your life as a whole?" and try to evaluate their subjective well-being on the basis of the responses supplied on their designed scale.

In recent times psychologists have developed more comprehensive instruments of subjective well-being. These instruments of SWB contain multiple items. Watson, Clerck & Tellegen (1988), developed what is called the positive and negative affective scale (PANAS). This scale was designed to measure both positive and negative affect and contains ten positive and ten negative affect items. Pavot & Diener (1993) devised satisfaction with life scale. In order to access satisfaction they asked such questions as "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "so far I have gotten the important things I want in life". It can be said without any doubt that the psychometric properties of these scales usually tend to be very strong. However such psychometric scales can be said to provide only one of the approaches to access SWB. While giving an outline of various psychometric scales aimed at the measuring of SWB, we also need to consider the Depression-Happiness scale (D-H scale) developed by McGreal and Josep 1993. This scale contains 25 items, 13 out of 25 items are reversely scored. Joseph and Levis (1998) have studied the bipolarity of the scale. They observed/defined well-being to be the opposite pole of
depression. The D-H Scale contains a mix of affective, cognitive and bodily state items which can be used to provide quick overall assessment of SWB. Psychological well-being questionnaire was developed by Bhogle & Prakash (1995). The questionnaire was formulated with the help of factor analysis. They took 70 items from different sources and tried to identify the following sources of co-relation among them.


There are some other instruments for measuring well-being but it will be out of context to give much more emphasis on the measurement aspects here. Hence, discussion on well-being is being wind-up here and now, the other dependent variable viz., academic achievement will be taken-up for description.

In this modern era of high competition, academic achievement is considered to be the hall-mark of success in future endeavours. The phenomenon of “achievement” refers to the out-come of the effort of a person in some sphere of activity. Concepts like attainment, accomplishment, and acquisition, in spite of having varying shades of meaning are often used as equivalent of achievement. In the Encyclopedia of Psychology (1972) Eysenck et al. have elaborated the term achievement as
"general term for the successful attainment of some goal requiring a certain effort". Others have contended to refer it as the degree of success attained in a task e.g. solving a test or problems. In the present context the term achievement refers to pupil’s achievement as a reference to the level of attainment and proficiency in a prescribed course of study following formal schooling during a prescribed period of time. It is the required knowledge of an individual student in a particular branch of study due to learning experiences gained by the students in a defined period and it is measured through examinations and tests, conducted by the examining bodies after the allotted period for learning is over.

In the words of Henry (1960), it is mandatory for the students to attain knowledge and to demonstrate it whenever an evaluation of his accomplishment is made. In fact, the student achievement has a bearing on his life. For example, it is used as a criterion for selections for admission to next higher education or for jobs. When evaluated a student’s achievement may be categorized as below normal, normal or above normal. Through, a pupil’s achievement in school may be of different types such as academic achievement; achievement in co-curricular activities like sports and cultural activities, the emphasis in the present study was on academic achievement. This type of achievement has been the primary concern for psychologists and educationists. This is reflected in the large number of tests developed and used by them for the assessment of student’s level of achievement in different subjects of study. It is customary to contrast an achievement test
with an aptitude test. One distinction often emphasized is based on the degree of uniformity of relevant and antecedent experience. Thus, achievement test measure the effect of relatively standardized sets of experiences (e.g. a course in Maths, Hindi or other school subjects) whereas aptitude test results reflect the cumulative influence of the multiplicity of the experiences in the daily living. In other words, aptitude tests measure the effects of learning under relatively uncontrolled and unknown conditions, while achievement tests measure the effects of learning under partially known and controlled conditions. Second distinction between aptitude and achievement tests is that aptitude tests are future-oriented i.e. they focus on the subsequent performance, whereas, achievement tests are past and present oriented. They assess the degree of learning after instruction. This means that aptitude tests are designed to reflect potential. They purport to indicate what a person could learn. Achievement tests on the other hand depict present proficiency and as such represent what a person has learned. Despite the above often-mentioned points of difference, achievement and aptitude tests have no clear-cut distinction. There are achievement tests that predict subsequent performance better than intelligence tests do (Bracht and Hopkins, 1970). In a similar manner aptitude tests also reflects developed ability. The primary difference between them is largely in the nature of the test content and its level of generality. In selecting the items for an achievement test an implicit assumption is that the person being tested has been directly exposed to the concepts needed i.e. the universe of content is defined specifically.
The term achievement is used to indicate the degree or level of success attained in some general or specified area. It represents the acquirement of knowledge or skill and may imply the ability to make appropriate use of such knowledge or skill in a variety of present and future situations. Achievement is an end product of learning whose level and performance are affected by various conditions existing at the time of learning and its use. Educators tend to use the term in relation to attain ability in the school subjects although, this is a restricted use of the term which may be applied to any endeavours in life.

As discussed above, there is a great relevance of academic achievement which is likely to be greatly influenced by stress level. Now, having highlighted academic achievement, the last dependent variable viz., vocational decision-making will also be taken for discussion that follows:

Vocational decision-making is one of the very crucial and important aspect of one’s life that determines one’s success in future endeavour. The present educational system in our Indian sub-continent provides an ample opportunity for deciding the professions by the youths of their own interest and choice. But, it is a matter of fact, that our information dissemination process is so inadequate that the young boys and girls are unaware about the right choice of professions in accordance with their skills, talents and abilities.

Human beings are born into the world as helpless, totally dependent individuals. The individual passes through various developmental stages and
ultimately become capable to plan his future and take decision independently. As a young person he has to choose courses of study and prepare for a future vocation. He has to face a hostile world specially when jobs are scarce, prices are rising inflation is rampant and the competition is intense. It is estimated that nearly one and a half crore educated people are unemployed.

Akhtar (1982) opines that “it should be realized that preparing and finally entering into an occupation is an arduous process which requires long term planning and sustained and sincere efforts”.

Different jobs require different type of training, aptitude intellectual development and personality characteristics. Choosing a job should not be left to chance. Vocational guidance is the process of assisting the individual in choosing an occupation, preparing for it and progressing in it. It helps the individual in making a decision and building a planned career for the future. It is a process of maximizing and utilizing the potentialities of an individual (Akhtar. 1982).

Different experts have argued that host of factors influence our choice of a job or vocation. These factors are themselves influenced by the prevailing social, economic, cultural and technological excigencies. Super and Bachrach (1957) advocated the culture and social system more or less directly influence one’s vocational choice. Lipsett (1962) too lends support to this thesis of social system. The role of culture cannot be undermined
culture exerts influence in moulding one’s personality by virtue of the ideas, conceptions and beliefs which are brought to bear on him through communal life.

Before India attained independence, the choice of a vocation was limited rather predetermined. Koyama (1931) rightly pointed out that in the Middle and Far East where highly formalized and institutionalized cultures prevailed, there was hardly any possibility of vocational preference. Luckily for us tremendous change have taken place on almost every front due to which new jobs and new professions have been created. Added to this were the weakening bond of caste system, change in family system joint to nuclear and political awakening not only impeded the highly formalized and institutionalized cultures but opened new avenues of employment for people.

But the process of decision-making is highly influenced by the group to which the individual belongs (Center, 1949; Sewell, Haller and Straus, 1957). Similarly, Hollingshed (1949), Lipsett, Bandix and Malm (1962) and many others argue that one’s vocational choice is a reflection of their experience in the class and family culture complexes.

Young (1961) states that man doesnot live in isolation. Religious beliefs, attitudes, personality and decision are directly influenced by one’s socio-cultural milieu. Drucker (1953) describes that environment not only
facilitates in making the decisions or goals for the individual but also
determines the ways and manners of attaining them.

Apart from the culture, family atmosphere plays an important role
in shaping the vocational-decision of the children (Switzer et al. 1962; Utton
1962; Grigg. 1959; Powell, 1960; Green and Parker, 1965; Friend and
Haggard, 1948; Ginzberg et al., 1951; Super, 1953).

It is amply clear that social system, culture and family atmosphere
commulatively influence our vocational preference. This contention is
further reinforced when we analyse the theoretical formulations of
vocational decision-making.

Roe (1956) propounded a theory based on the concept of close
relationship between an individual’s interests and needs, and the relationship
between the early life experiences and the development of these interests
and needs. Roe described needs on the lines of Maslow’s (1954) theory of
personality. She conceptualized the theory emphasizing parental attitudes
towards their children as the basis for entering a particular vocation. She
contends that the parents create a particular psychological climate by the
manner in which they satisfy or frustrate the early needs of the child. As a
result, a basic direction of attention is developed, either towards persons, or
towards non-persons. This in turn results in predictable patterns of specific
interests in the adults in terms of the field to which he/she will apply
him/herself. their vocation is one of these.
Roe’s hypothesis were not supported by Grigg (1959). Akhtar, Pestonjee and Khatoon (1971) obtained contradictory findings and failed to endorse Roe’s hypothesis. Similarly, Hagen (1960) found negligible differences between the occupations of Harvard graduates from different families. Switzer’s (1962) finding was also more akin to Hagen’s and was at variance with Roe’s contemplations.

Roe criticized Hagen’s (1960) finding on the ground that sample used by him consisted of 57% of the total sample group who came from a “overdemanding” atmosphere. The same happened in case of Grigg’s (1959) study who studied only women, while Roe’s hypothesis was basically meant for the men.

Brunkan (1965) assessed Roe’s theory more carefully but he found no systematic connection between early environment and orientation of occupational choice.

Critical evaluation done by others led Roe and Siegelman (1964) to modify her earlier theory. Roe’s first hypothesis that people with a high degree of human orientation are likely to be found in occupations demanding social interaction but he failed to support her second hypotheses.

Another thought provoking theory of vocational choice was propounded by Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelard and Herman (1951). They consider occupational choice as an irreversible process which occurs during a certain development period. During these periods the individual makes a
series of compromises between his desires and the possibilities of his achieving them. These periods are designated as fantasy, tentative and realistic. They inferred four characteristics for vocational choice of an individual during adolescence. These essential characteristics are reality testing, the development of a suitable time perspective, the ability to defer gratifications and the ability to accept and implement compromises in their vocational plans. When some of these characteristics fail to adequately develop, a deviant vocational plan emerges.

Another significant aspect of career development process is the child's ability to identify with some suitable model at appropriate time. In this respect similarities exist between Parson's (1909) trait and factor theory and Ginzberg's propositions. During fantasy period, children play games and identify themselves with certain adults whom they hold in high esteem. Ginzberg considers this fantasy period as unrealistic stage at the end of which the child develops interest which is designated as tentative period. During this period the adolescent takes decision tentatively and develops reality about himself and the job requirements. The adolescent searches a suitable job on the basis of his interest, capacity and values. Thus his choice pertains to the future, rather than the immediate gratification of present.

They further suggested that another important concept which occurs during career development process are two basic personality types: work-oriented and the pleasure-oriented. The former solve their problem of
vocational choice by making a compromise between his needs and reality, whereas the later does not postpone the gratifications for work and he is distracted from his vocational course. Ultimately, one group is usually passive or reactive. Thus, vocational approach is influenced by these two variables (active and passive). These two groups (active work-oriented and passive work-oriented) behave differently during the various periods of career development.

Ginzberg’s (1951) concept of vocational-decision was tested by O’Hara and Fiedman (1959). Both were interested in studying the relationship between aptitude, interest, social class and values in the Ginzberg’s model and the development of a vocational self-concept by using different tests and inventories. Their findings lend support to Ginzberg’s concept of vocational developmental process.

Osipow (1968) on the basis of his review, criticized Ginzberg’s theory of vocational development. He wonders how Ginzberg has propounded a comprehensive theory without using adequate sample, though adequate sample is necessary for generalizing the results. Moreover, he also emphasized that while giving a theory of vocational development, Ginzberg solely relied on interview data and thus his conceptualization may be dubious. Also Forer (1953) doubts the concept of “conscious” choice propagated by the development theory. Forer argues that usually vocational choice is an unconscious process.
Ginzberg in this theory advocated that compromise is an essential aspect of every choice. This contention was criticized by Super (1956). According to Super, vocational choice does not involve compromise but is based on synthesis process. He criticized Ginzberg’s conclusion that choice is a continuous process and thus differentiation between choice and adjustment is overlooked.

Having criticized Ginzberg, Super propounded his own theory in 1953. Super followed extensively Ginzberg’s concept of vocational choice as based on developmental stages. He introduced the concept of vocational maturity to denote the individual's degree of development from the time of his early fantasy choice in childhood to his decision about retirement from work and old age (Super, 1955). As the individual matures vocationally, he passes through a series of life stages, each of which corresponds some phase in the development of his self-concept (1957). Super concluded that the individual is more or less conscious of his vocational decision making depending upon the stages of his development. In this way, both Super and Ginzberg emphasized vocational choice as a process which proceeds through different stages of development.

Holland (1959) discussing the development of vocational choice emphasized that an individual selects an occupation in terms of his self knowledge and occupational knowledge which vary in quantity and quality from one environment to another. He lays emphasis on an individual’s life
history, defined as a ‘particular pattern of living’, akin to Adrelin sense of life style. The individual’s life history should be traced to the various interactions such as with the parents, peers, institutions etc., that he undertake during his development. Extensive data was drawn to study the personal orientation related to familial patterns, parental behaviour, beliefs, ambitions and goals about their children.

Holland (1962, 1966) empirically tested his theory and suggested modifications. Holland (1966) proposed six personal types and six corresponding occupational environments. Generally, these six personal types become style of life but no vocational orientation, only one facet being vocational. Holland (1966) himself pointed out several shortcomings of his theory like; testing procedure, data collection and the applicability of the theory of sex differences.

Schutz and Blocher (1961) studied certain assumptions of Holland’s (1959) theory and concluded, with some caution, the SVI BOL scores may be used to indicate the self-evaluation portion of the ‘level hierarchy’ in Holland’s theory. Stocklin (1964) investigated the correlation between S’s intelligence and self-evaluation and level of occupational choices. The result shows a systematic relationship between the predictions and the actual choices. Stocklin (1964) further reports that the accuracy of predicting the level of choice is considerably increased by adding self-evaluation to intellectual measures.
The findings of Stockin (1964) and Schutz and Blocher (1961) regarding different aspects of the 'level hierarchy' lend partial support to Holland's formulation. Also, Osipow, Asby, and Wall (1966) partially supported Holland's theory. They found that the subjects express occupational preferences consistent with their major personal orientations.

In addition to the above, it is pertinent to specify that vocational decision-making is one of the significant aspects of life which determine one's success in life but it can be said without any reservation that heightened stress is most likely to negatively influence vocational decision-making and it may happen that in such state of mind people may not fail to opt the vocations not be-fitting to their aptitude. Here, in the present investigation an influence of stress on vocational decision-making - one of the dependent variables, was investigated in three areas of vocations viz., self-expression oriented, people-oriented, extrinsic-reward oriented vocations.

At last, having given an exhaustive description of all the variables which have been the part of the present larger study, we are terminating the chapter by arguing that the present investigation will provide understanding with regard to the influence of stress on the various dependent variables in question.