CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

The modern jet-age world which is said to be a world of amazing achievements is also a horrible world of stress. In such a society, working women face a number of challenges and obstacles. So, women's mind becomes trapped by desires, multiple worries and countless fears, causing their thoughts to spin in a whirl-wind of speculative possible stressful scenario. She is consumed by fear and a sense of hopelessness, berates herself and believes that she is no longer able to make a significant contribution to life. Working women experience tremendous anxiety, tension, fear resulting from their family and work-place (institution) related problems. With the growing magnitude of obstacles encountered by women in their life, they are bound to live a monotonous life dominated by frustration and unhappiness.

Working women with an average life-span of less than a hundred years, fritter away their existence in useless whining over their miseries. When the feelings of stress persist over a period of time, then they enter the stage of crisis. They fell oppressed, and there is heightened pessimism and self doubting tendency dominates. When they are stressed, they are at risk for a wide variety of health problems. Moreover, they are bombarded with demands to adjust constantly to work and relationship pressures.
Research has shown how harmful emotional states can cause ‘stress’ and stress not only affect our body, but our mind as well. Women therefore, not only face the stresses that come with doing the share of child-bearing and general caring for the family, but also those that the modern workplace bring with it. This shows that the modern day working women experience stresses from several fronts at once. Stress occurs when the demands of a situation out-weight the body’s ability to cope. Stress is defined as the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. The demand can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of change, which requires the body to adopt.

The number of working women suffering from stress and stress-related illness is on the rise. In terms of the human body, stress in women can also be caused by hormonal changes, during pregnancy and menopause. Any prolonged stress can lead to many undesirable consequences like – fatigue, irritability, exhaustion, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure and heart disease amongst others. Existence is difficult for women, with much labour and very little relaxation and hence, they shrink themselves to a narrow cocoon of egoism instead of expanding to the cosmos.

Negative attitudes, negative reactions and responses bombard women every day. So they need to insulate themselves against these negatives and diligently seek the positive.
The need of the hour is to inquire deep into the roots of stress, prevalent among working women and help them to acquire knowledge of ‘stress management’, to cope with stress in their day to day life, to help them to understand their position better with their varied responsibilities. Stress Management is about understanding stress, recognizing its symptoms holistically and turning it into a positive force using a variety of tools, information and techniques. It will be very beneficial for the whole working-women community, to acquire skills simultaneously to cope with family and work related stress. Tension and frustration related to family and work have a profound influence on the health of working women. Prolonged stress and frustration can have a deleterious effect on women’s psyche and through her, on all those who are close to her. Much of the hostility, now-a-days is a result of their inability to handle stress. Stress is an unpleasant state of mind brought on by a situation which is difficult to sort out and in addition juggling time between her home and workplace.

Hence, this study will help women to know, how to prevent and lessen stress situations in their day to day living, and coping skills need to be urgently recovered and restored by them. Knowledge in this regard can help women to maintain both physical and mental well-being, to lead a sustainable life-style within a set of circumstances, conditioned by natural and other relevant factors because, for a purposeful living, the mind and the body needs to be strengthened.
1.1 THE CONCEPT OF STRESS:

The term “stress” is not only discussed in our everyday conversations but has become enough of a public issue to attract widespread media attention. Whether it be radio, television, newspapers or magazines, the issue of stress figures everywhere. Stress is probably the most common word today, used almost daily by millions of people all over the world. One of the problems related to stress and depression is that depressed people tend to isolate themselves and deprive themselves of caring precisely when they have the greatest need for it. For this reason, involvement in a loving, caring from a small group of supportive people can be especially important when we are depressed. Even when people feel that they are only mildly stressed or depressed, small group involvement can be critical not only to keep mild depression from growing deeper, but also to aid them in leading a stress-free life. When one’s depression worsens, at that point more concrete suicidal thoughts and plans emerge. Stress is influence by genes, life situations and the state of one’s general health. Basically, anything that blocks or depletes our available life-energy is an agent of stress. The menacing presence of a heavy heart, waves of anxiety or crabby irritability may describe the presence of stress, in one’s life.

Tremendous progress have been achieved in the fields of science and technology, commerce and medicine, bringing about assiduous changes in the social, economic and political systems causing depression and dispersion of
human energies at levels, causing people to be in a state of permanent stress. A compartmentalized approach to life, as against a holistic approach, has only added to human stress resulting in mental disorders and psychosomatic diseases, precluding human beings to bask in the bliss of stress-free life.

The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences of Hans Selye in 1936 (Source: “Overcome Stress” by Ashwani Bhardway, Pg: 1). It is a concept borrowed from the natural sciences. Derived from the Latin word ‘Stringers’, stress was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain or strong effort with reference to an object or person. Stress is defined as the non-specified response of the body to any demand made on it. The demand can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of a change which requires the body to adopt.

The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘stress’ as a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy. Stress occurs when the demands of a situation out weight the body’s ability to cope. Stress is a very complex phenomenon to describe, but we can simply say that – anything which gives mental and physical pressure is called stress. It refers to the responses elicited by physical or psychological events that an individual perceives to be harmful or emotionally threatening. Stress is that stimulus which imposes detectable strain that cannot be easily accommodated by the body and so presents itself as impaired health and behaviour. Stress is the main cause of the physiological
imbalance that pre-dispose working women to all of the archetypes of depression. Stress not only saps women of their energy but also destroys their joy of life. It adversely impacts their work and family life. Stress has lots of negative effects. Its growing magnitude can lead to poor self-esteem which is at the root of many of our problems. It can sabotage relationships and careers, it cause self-destructive patterns and hold one back from achieving their full potential. All forms of stress however produce a very well-documented physical reaction in the body. For most people, daily stress hassles are the most demanding to the body. The word ‘stress’ conjures up pictures of discomfort, pain, trials and tribulations or setbacks and problems. We should never underestimate the impact of the wear and tear of stress on our physical, mental and emotional health.

1.2 CAUSES OF STRESS:

Most working women had their own galaxy of stress symptoms and types of stress. When women lose every vestige of her courage, she is completely stuffed with remorse and self-pity, and she develops very frequently what is termed as stress. In such a depressed state, she is completely incapacitated, in capable of following through with any work. When women’s mental gymnastics lack vitality and they frequently fall, prey to dry mechanism, cold egoism, cynicism or isolated fatalism. Ironically, all the common stop-gap efforts that women engage in to put off the anxiety of
dealing with the existential dilemma actually lead to a life of greater stress with emotional upset, personal stagnation and chronic disease as the eventual outcome. It is very important to know the causes of stress, as it creates vast amounts of misery and suffering, making people emotionally crippled. It was essential to understand the root causes of stress, so that people become aware of the situation and the stress that was caused by it. This awareness is an important factor that would help people to lead a stress-free life. Due to stress, people withdraw from work and their relationships. It also leads to loss of energy and their motivation goes far beyond the bonds of normal burnout, leaving them incapable to connect emotionally with other people and their perceptions are distorted. So, it is necessary to know the root causes of stress, to help people to be relieved from stress and aid them to lead a healthy and happy life. Causes of stress –

i) **Physical or Environmental Causes**: The first and foremost cause of stress is any physical threat to our safety. Beyond that, other physical stressors may include noise, big crowd or cluttered surroundings. Just as we get different stress symptoms, so also our stress is triggered by different situations, and what is comfortable to one person can be terrifying to another.

ii) **Social Stressors**: One of the most common sources of stress is interaction with other people. This includes relationship problems,
conflict with co-workers, bosses and feuds with neighbours. Certain people can make one feel stressed just by being around. Our stress level is raised by people who are aggressive, critical, arrogant, loud, unreliable, negative or even boring.

iii) **Institutional Stressors:** Another cause of stress is due to rules and regulations of organizations or society at large. These include arbitrary restrictions, over working, bureaucratic red tape, deadlines, expectations of immediate response, endless meetings, chains of command, or pointless formalities.

iv) **Major Life Events:** There are changes in life circumstances that can have a stressful impact for months or years, depending on the situation. It also includes losing a job, death of a spouse, child or parent, moving to a new city, separation or divorce, being a victim of crime or accident.

v) **Daily Hassles:** For most people daily stress hassles are the most damaging to the body, and they produce a very well-documented physical reaction in the body. Daily hassles like rising prices, home maintenance, having too much to do, fear of crime, driving in rush-hour traffic, repetitive house chores, parenting problems and health issues causes stress.
vi) **Interpersonal factors:** Serious interpersonal or relationship problems may also lead to stress. Stress may result in withdrawal from fellowship and interaction with family members, conflict in their relationship with their spouse, friends and other people. One of the major problems of stress is that stressed people tend to isolate themselves and also deprived themselves of carrying, when they have the greatest need for it. For this reason, involvement in a loving, carrying and a small group of supportive people can be especially important when people are stressed. When replaceable cells are constantly stressed by excessive toxins, improper nutrition and over-work, they used the reproductive potential decades earlier then intended. Irreplaceable cells such as nerve fibres, which cannot further reproduced, simply cease functioning and die in the face of constant stress abuse.

Most of the causes of stress are domestic in origin and were increased by pressure at the work-place.

1.3 **OPERATIVE CAUSES OF STRESS:**

Operative causes of stress by Sri Venkatkrishnan ("Yoga For Stress-Management" by Sri Venkatkrishnan, Pg.44):
• OVERWORK RESULTING IN STRESS:

When a person works more than he can handle, Physical Stress is caused. The body limbs and organs get tired and fatigued; and decay sets in. Modern man seem to overwork and this sets their system in a system of constant stress.

A man's continuous stretching of his body and mind results in Insomnia and later on manifest all symptoms of a psychotic. He should learn how to relax and not overwork beyond the human system capacity. The human nerves have a limit to absorb heightened states of tension and need alternate states of relaxation.

• MALNUTRITION:

Nutrition also plays an important role in the functioning of the human body. The human system requires the right salts, energy giving calories and proteins for the upkeep of the body. Some depletion over a long period of time causes fatigue and even system failure.

• ENDOCRINAL IMBALANCES:

The balance of the endocrinal glands is very important as they secrete chemicals called hormones that are secreted by special ductless glands and
injected into the bloodstream. Any change in the balance is seen to have a serious repercussion on the mental and the physical state of the individual.

The endocrine system exists alongside the nervous system and acts as a messenger system to co-ordinate the various internal functions.

- **CONSTANT ABUSE OF THE BODY:**

  When the body is constantly abused in terms of excessive physical work or entertainment, alcohol, sex or drugs, they could lead to high stress in the long run.

1.3.1 **OPERATIVE CAUSES OF MENTAL STRESS:**

- **MENTAL OVERWORK:**

  There is a time to work and time to relax. There are some people who just do not understand this and mentally keep on brooding on a subject hoping to find a solution. They get into a mental groove that they cannot get out later. This saps them of mental energy and keeps him on the edge. It is essential that human beings should indulge in relaxation therapies and overcome bouts of depression and strain due to mental overwork.
• DUALITIES OF LIFE:

Life is a set of dualities like pleasure and pain, profit and loss, richness and poverty etc. As life moves, one goes through ups and downs and if he is not prepared, either through Yoga or a philosophy, to handle these fluctuations in life, he will be in a terrible stressful time.

The fluctuations in life may be different for different people, but it is essential to go through the situation without getting affected. From birth to death one has to undergo the dualities that cause stress. The degree of stress depends on the situations and person's preparedness to handle the situation.

Moreover, the societal, religious and cultural setup indoctrinates with a preference towards one set of dualities as against the other, causing lot of stress in the process.

• COMPARTMENTALIZED APPROACH TO LIFE:

Modern life is very fast and people have to undergo a number of situations every day. In each of the situation the role is different and the demands are different. Every situation has different values and demands. So, people moves into the various situations with different roles and since the demands of the various situations are different, they act according to the demands of situations and not according to the own intrinsic nature. The
mismatch between the demands of the situations and the intrinsic nature causes a lot of stress.

- **PHYSICAL STRESS:**

  Stress affects all aspects of the entire personality of man. Physical stress causes fatigue and ageing. In the normal process when cells are destroyed, newer ones take its place. When the body is stressed continuously as in the case of man, the cells, over a period of time, lose their capacity to reproduce, causing fatigue and ageing.

- **MENTAL STRESS:**

  The mind is a storehouse of various experiences registered in our consciousness throughout our life. A stressed person also tends to spread stress and negativities around his environment destroying the delicate fabric of peace and harmony in the community.

  According to Dr. Hans Selye, when replaceable cells are constantly stressed by excessive toxins, improper nutrition and overwork, they use the reproductive potential decades earlier than intended. Irreplaceable cells such as nerve fibers, which cannot further reproduce, simply cease functioning and die in the face of constant stress abuse.
1.3.2(i) ACUTE STRESS:

Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension headaches, upset stomach, and other symptoms.

Because it is short-term, acute stress doesn’t have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- Emotional distress—some combination of anger or irritability, anxiety, and depression, the three stress emotions;

- Muscular problems including tension headache, back pain, jaw pain, and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems;

- Stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation, and irritable bowel syndrome;

- Transient over arousal leads to elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath, and chest pain.

Acute stress can crop up in anyone’s life, and it is highly treatable and manageable. Those who suffer from acute stress frequently their lives become
disordered and in chaos and stress. Acute stress also comes from ceaseless worry. The symptoms of acute stress are headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain and heart diseases.

1.3.2(ii) CHRONIC STRESS:

This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It wreaks havoc through long-term attrition. It's the stress of poverty, of dysfunctional families, of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a despised job or career. Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic, early childhood experiences that become internalized and remain forever painful and present. Some experiences profoundly affect personality.

1.3.2(iii) DISTRESS and EUSTRESS:

According to Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj (Source: “Overcome stress” by Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj, Pg.191-192), there are two kinds of stresses that were distinguished by Selye and Levi. **Eustress** is synonymous with healthy essential-stress produced for example by joy, any kind of positive impulse, sensible recreational activities, sports practiced as a hobby etc.

**Distress** is synonymous with morbidogenous stress that has to be controlled, eg. Continuous mental or physical strain of any kind – anger, frustration, states of tension, seemingly without hope.
Stress is the reaction to a demanding situation on the human psychology. Stresses can occur at two levels. (i) Physical stress like accidents, burns, major surgeries, major infection etc. which make demands on the entire physiology. (ii) Psychological stresses which can occur independently as a reaction to the physical stresses. Examples are – fear, anxiety, tension, worry, jealousy, hatred, anger, excitement, emotional conflicts etc. It may be a temporary stress, demanding only an immediate adaptation process. Or, it may be a long – standing one, leaving deep-seated subconscious impressions leading to prolonged tensions.

**DISTRESS**

- Stress Overload
- Stressors
- Vulnerability
- Weakness

**EUSTRESS**

- Growth enhancing reaction
- Stressors (Opportunities)
- Strength
- Resistance

**The two Stress reactions—Distress and Eustress**

*Fig.1.1*

(Source: “Overcome stress” by Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj, Pg.191-192)
1.3.3(A) JOB STRESS AND HEALTH:

According to Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj: Psychologically-demanding jobs that allow employees little control over the work process increase the risk of (Source: “Overcome stress” by Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj, Pg.191-192):

- Mood disturbances, such as irritation, short temper.
- Insomnia or disturbed sleep.
- Cardiovascular disease.
- Ulcers.
- Musculoskeletal disorders, especially of the back and upper extremity.
- Impaired immune function.
- Psychological disorders, such as depression and burnout.
- Cancer.
- Workplace injury.
- Suicide, in extreme conditions.

1.3.3(B) JOB CONDITIONS THAT LEAD TO STRESS:

- Heavy workload, infrequent rest breaks, long work hours and shift-work; hectic and routine tasks that have little inherent meaning and don’t utilize the employee’s skills.
- Little sense of control over the job performed.
• Lack of participation in decision-making, poor communication in the organization, and poor family-friendly policies.

• Poor interpersonal and lack of support from colleagues.

• Conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too much responsibility, too many hats to wear.

• Job insecurity and lack of opportunity for growth, advancement, or promotion.

• Poor environmental conditions such as crowding, noise, air pollution, or ergonomic problems.

1.3.4 Stress paradigm due to a compartmentalize approach to life, presented by Sri Venkatkrishnan (Source: “Yoga for stress management by Sri Venkatkrishnan, Pg.54-55).

![Stress paradigm diagram]

Fig. 1.2 Stress paradigm due to a compartmentalized approach to life.

(Source: “Overcome stress” by Dr. Ashwani Bhardwaj, Pg.191)
Compartmentalized approach to life: Modern life is very fast and the person has to undergo a number of situations every day. In each of the situation the role is different and the demands are different. The primary image that is the ego sets up a number of secondary images in the form of roles like a father, son, friend, boss, sub-ordinate, client, employer, employee, etc.

Every situation has different values and demands. The human moves into the various situations with different roles and since the demands of the various situations are different he or she acts according to the demands of situations and not according to the own intrinsic nature. The mismatch between the demands of the situations and the intrinsic nature causes a lot of stress. The interactions cause stress prior to interaction, wherein the person worries as to how he or she should interact, during interaction and after the interaction is over on the account of the outcome.

1.4 COPING SKILLS ADOPTED BY WORKING WOMEN:

For working women, the demand of relationship, lifestyles and workplace becomes too great and they work overtime just trying to cope. Present needs and demanding lifestyles have necessitated working women to adopt coping skills, to prevent and lessen stress situations in their day to day life.
Coping skills enable working women to handle stress more effectively, reduce the intensity of symptoms and help recover faster from exposure to stress. Coping with change is the most transformational of all stress management techniques.

Many working women take short courses or read books to learn techniques for stress management such as time-management skills, coping mechanisms, relaxation techniques and other strategies.

WAYS TO OVER-COME STRESS:

For relieving tension, working women even take drugs, alcohol, cigarettes etc. Tea, coffee, cold drinks are items which have become common at our homes and offices these days, are used as stress relievers.

- **Sleep** is the nature's way of overcoming stress, but this is certainly not complete, as stress lingers on even after the duration of sleep. This provides only temporary relaxation.

- **Alcohol** is used as a stress reliever in the immediate period. Care should be taken to keep check on the consumption, so that it does not damage the liver and other organs. Negative side effects can be expected if consumed in larger quantities.

- **Medical Drugs** can be useful for relieving stress but they can become addictive and dangerous over a period of time. This must be
done only under the guidance of a good medical practitioner, otherwise negative side effects can be expected.

- **Practice of Yoga** is a holistic solution to the problem of stress. It takes care of stress at all the dimensions and is free from any negative effects. If practiced properly it is not only capable of tackling the problem of stress but also takes a person to the state of super-consciousness and beyond, the state of self-actualization. Practice of Yoga can make working women a stronger person who fights to keep her head above the rising tide of pressure. No amount of health planning can help until women realize that the key to keeping fit is through the practice of Yoga. It can provide working women with a sense of ultimate goal in life, as it provides stability, support and direction in critical times and help women to hold on to a sense of purpose and meaning even in the midst of disturbing life events. Practice of Yoga provides the anchor which helps in the process of grieving, detaching and moving on in life. In other words, it enhances resilience and provides a positive influence which leads to higher states of mental health and it helps to keep their body strong and healthy. Yoga is the joining or combining of a healthy body with a pure mind. It helps one to relax and concentrate better. Thus, working women can utilize the regular practice of Yoga for developing and maintaining a healthy mind in a healthy body.
But these whipped up working women’s sympathetic nervous system unnecessarily, when taken in large quantities on a regular basis, so much so that a beverage becomes a stressor instead of a reliever.

1.5 CONCEPT OF STRESS-MANAGEMENT:

Stress management is understanding stress, recognizing its symptoms holistically turning it into a positive force using a variety of tools, information and techniques. It is not only essential for physical and mental reasons for women, but also on humanitarian and ethical considerations.

Stress management helps working women to adjust themselves to a sustainable life-style within a given set of circumstances, conditioned by natural and other relevant factors. If stress is not managed properly, it can cause a number of negative feelings such as rejection, depression which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke amongst others.

Stress Management is aimed at helping people to deal with the root cause of stress and about the appropriate coping skill to deal with stress. Effective stress management demands that women should use all the energy and arsenals at her command to fight the dreadful disease called stress.
1.6 **SKILL OF TIME MANAGEMENT** (Source: “Coping with Stress at work” by Jacqueline M Atkinson Ph.D, Pg.93):

* **Priorities**: Setting priorities is a skill, and it is worth learning, although it includes a list of things to do. From one's list of tasks – what must be done, what should be done and what you would like to be done – you can begin to sort out the major tasks from the minor ones, urgent and non-urgent, long-term goals from short-term goals.

* **Forward Planning**: An unplanned style of work is often responsible for work fatigue. It is always wiser to plan out a series of actions and take one thing at a time. How people spend their time should also be classified into task which are: (i) Active task is initiating, and those which are (ii) Reactive, which are a response to what is going on around them. The time-table should be slightly flexible to allow space for unexpected delays and women should learn how to prioritize and will have the confidence to complete task in time.

Active tasks are those which help people to gain their own objectives and those of the family and organization for which they work. There may be short or long-term goals, but should include their own personal development. Two important things must be established – how important the task is and how urgent it is. To a large extent, importance determines the length of time we spent on a task. It is important to
manage time properly and to short out how much time to be spent on responding and reacting to daily events. Urgent task are not necessarily important and should be dealt with straight away, in minimum time. If however we spent all our time reacting to trivial, urgent tasks, we will never have time for long-term, important tasks. So, setting priorities involves forward planning for both long-term goals and today’s goals. It helps to break long-term or complex goals down to a series of small, achievable tasks and incorporate these into our schedule.

1.7 MEANING OF YOGA:

Yoga is an ancient philosophy for both the young and the old, and it is very holistically beneficial for the young school children. The primary emphasis of Yoga is on general well-being.

Yoga is basically an Indian art and it is practiced for the enlightenment in mental aspect and for being physically fit. The word ‘Yoga’ is used in synonym with strength and flexibility and as physical fitness. It is a form of exercise that focuses on the core muscles and on co-ordination of breath. Yoga includes meditation, reflection and co-ordination of breath movement. Proper practice of Yoga in school, with a balanced diet with essential nutrients, keep women’s body hydrated and helps to keep their immunity system strong enough to fight against stress. Practice of Yoga helps to spread correct
vibrations in and around the working women and the entire vicinity becomes cheerful and ushers with positivity. Practice of Yoga in school helps working women to equip themselves academically, to lead themselves along new avenues and to cultivate values.

Stress and anxiety often tend to tamper with the women's metabolism and immunity, which leads to the occurrence of a lot of ailments, mostly affecting the skin, digestive functions, blood circulation and the hormones. Practicing Yoga regularly will definitely keep women healthy, fit and resistant against all forms of chronic diseases. Yoga helps the body and mind to be free from all the negative thoughts providing women complete rest and calmness. The breathing that is inhaling and exhaling part, while practicing Yoga exercise, opens the door toward healthy life. Yoga is a holistic health approach that helps women to be free from physical problem and to lead a stress-free life. A healthy body is necessary for women to enjoy a healthy life. Fitness is a worthy goal to pursue for a life full of vitality and youthfulness. Yoga helps women to attain physical and mental health.

The benefits of Yoga are many and it includes treating affected organs from the entire system, along with healing of the mind and soul.
1.8 CONCEPT OF YOGA:

Yoga is an ancient philosophy of life as well as a system of exercises that encourages the union of mind, body and spirit. It is a physical discipline and it uses the body, breathing and meditation techniques to develop self-awareness and mental clarity.

The goal of human life is to manifest the divinity within, by controlling nature internally and externally. This divinity can be developed by regular practice of yoga.

Yoga provides a common ground for healthy living when suffering persists despite everyone’s efforts. Millions throughout the globe have benefitted with these techniques and have experienced a calmness of mind and more important, happiness in life. Yoga teaches one to have positive thinking, have integrity and follow the path of spirituality.

*SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ENUNCIATES FOUR TYPES OF YOGA*
(Source: “Yoga For Stress-Management” by Sri Venkatkrishnan, Pg.56):

i) **KARMA YOGA:** This is the Yoga of action performed unselfishly for the welfare of others. Karma Yogi is one who works incessantly for the good of mankind without any motive. The path of a Karma Yogi is not to get away from the materialistic world but to live within and learn to
enjoy the supreme happiness derived from selfless work. The part of Karma Yoga is through selfless action and service.

(ii) **BHAKTI YOGA:** Bhakti Yoga is the yoga of love, purity and devotion. The methods and techniques of Bhakti Yoga are love and affection towards others without any discrimination. It warrants the elimination of emotions like hatred, jealousy, prejudice and enmity from one's mental make-up.

(iii) **JNANA YOGA:** Jnana Yoga is the yoga of knowledge and wisdom. It is reading of scriptures and good books with positive thoughts. It does not deal with ordinary knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic, but goes deeper into the knowledge of man, his life after death, the ultimate aim of man's life, the creation of the universe etc.

(iv) **RAJA YOGA:** Raja Yoga is the yoga of growth and development through mental discipline. It is a concept designed to help people have a blissful and enlightened life and achieve eventual liberation. In Sanskrit it literally means merging in one's own inner light (RAJAM = LIGHT, and YOGA = join or merge). This ancient discovery is based on the fact that heat and cold, pleasure and pain, loss and gain are all in our mind. Once we control our mind or take it beyond such feelings and emotions, we reach a state of mind unaffected by any external factors or events.
and this is what is called Raja Yoga. It is a complete system, also referred to as Ashtanga Yoga because of the eight (ashta) limbs (anga).

The eight Limbs (Ashta-anga) are:

1. Restraints (YAMAS): harmlessness, truthfulness, control of senses.

2. Discipline (NIYAMAS): cleanliness, purification of body, mind and nervous system, study of metaphysical principles, contemplation on God.

3. Postures (ASANAS)

4. Control of breathing and life-currents (PRANAYAMA)

5. Turning the attention within (PRATYAHARA)

6. Concentration (DHARANA)

7. Meditation (DHYANA): prolonged periods of prefect concentration and contemplation.

8. Holy Trance (SAMADHI)

Yoga is a philosophy and practice that connects the body, breath and mind to energize and balance the whole person. This mind-body therapy involves physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayam) and meditation (yog) to improve overall well-being. Simple asanas stretches the
muscles, relaxes the whole body and neutralizes the tension. The meditative form of Yoga has a profound effect on the inner dimension of life, establishing deep calmness, emotional stability and boosts the confidence level.

1.9 BENEFITS OF YOGA ACCORDING TO ACHARYA BALAKRISHNA
(Source: “Yog in Synergy with Medical Science” by Acharya Balakrishna, Pg.150-156):

I. BENEFITS OF YOGA IN CURING DIFFERENT DISEASES:

A study titled “Psychosomatic effects of Yog – A Pioneering Study based on large scale survey” conducted by Acharya Balakrishna showed the following benefits of Yog in curing the following diseases:

A. OBESITY: Nowadays physical work has reduced to a great extent and eating habits are also poor. As a result overweight problem is increasing. Yog is very effective for reducing weight. After this survey the conclusion was drawn that Yoga is most effective for obesity in comparison with its efficacy for all other diseases. The survey proved that 95.43 percent of participants definitely gained from Yog.

B. HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE: Today a large section of the society is suffering from high blood pressure due to severe competition and hectic life
schedule. 96.23 percent of participants confirmed positive effect of Yog in controlling blood pressure. Yog is capable of curing blood pressure problem completely.

C. ARTHRITIS: Irregular eating habits, lack of nutritious food and irregular life style lead to arthritis. 92.80 percent confirmed total or partial gain from Yog. It has played a major role in curing arthritis.

D. DIABETES: Lack of physical exercise and eating high fat content food are some the reasons for diabetes. 94.99 percent of participants confirmed partial or total benefit from Yog. It has been able to control diabetes and its ill effects on body.

E. HEART DISEASE: Stress, hectic schedule and cosmopolitan life style are increasing the number of heart patients. 94.36 percent of participants who gave their feedback said that Yog has given partial or total benefit. Yog has played a major role in improving the health of heart patients.

F. ASTHMA: Pollution, unhealthy working conditions, lack of cleanliness results in asthma. 95.77 percent participants who gave their feedback said that Yog has given partial or total benefit. Yog is a blessing for all of them. We can say that Yog can prove to be the final death blow to Asthma rather than death bringing an end to Asthma.
G. KIDNEY PROBLEM: Modern eating habits, pollution, and lack of cleanliness is increasing the number of patients with kidney problems. 93.67 percent participants who gave their feedback said that Yog has given partial or total benefit. Yog has played a major role in improving the health of the patients of kidney problems.

H. SPONDYLITIS: Sitting in the same position for long hours, sedentary life style, lack of exercise is some of the problems that results in spondylitis. 94.91 percent of the participants who gave their feedback said that Yog has given partial or total benefit. This shows that Yog improves not only digestion and nervous related problems but also cures bone related diseases.

I. SKIN DISEASES: Pollution, cosmetics and lack of cleanliness result in skin diseases. 91.71 percent of participants who gave their feedback said that Yog has given partial or total benefit. Yog has played a major role in improving skin problems.

J. LIVER AND STOMACH DISEASES: Consumption of adulterated food, fast food culture, and unhygienic life style results in liver and stomach related diseases. 93.67 percent of the participants who gave their feedback confirmed that Yog has given partial or total benefit. Yog has played a major role in curing the liver and stomach related diseases and people experience it immediately after beginning the practice.
II. CHANGE IN MENTAL CONDITION WITH YOGA:

A. MENTAL STRESS: The survey revealed that Yog reduced stress level. Yog have proved to be a blessing for the people suffering from mental stress even in the present modern world.

B. POSITIVE ATTITUDE: When the person practices Yog, he associates with the God present in his soul, and becomes successful in reaching his goals. As a result a totally frustrated person can lead a purposeful and enthusiastic life. This survey shows that Yog increase positive thinking and our life becomes more objective and productive.

C. MEMORY: Yog improve concentration power. As a result the memory power increases.

D. HAPPINESS: Yog help us attain self-realization, it frees us from unknown fear and suffocation. It teaches us the art of living in the present. Yog increased the level of happiness.

1.10 A COMPLETE YOGA PROGRAM:

A complete yoga program involves Exercise (ASANAS), Breath Control (PRANAYAM), Sleep Control (YOGA NIDRA), and Mind Control (MEDITATION).
Practice of Yoga (Pranayam) and taking care of food, sleep and breathing can enable and empower oneself to plough through the vast sea of life.

1. **NUTRITION**: A well balanced diet with sufficient vitamins and minerals are essential to good mental and physical health. There is a crucial relationship between nutrition and emotional ups and downs. Well, food is an essential source of energy. There is a difference that we experience after eating a big and heavy meal as compared to eating a light meal or a salad.

   The right type of food in right amount is essential for the effective functioning of the body. Food is not an end in itself but a means of activating the subtlest layers of the mind in order to directly experience good health, divinity, spirituality and consciousness. The state of our general health is determined by the morsel of food at the end of our fork, and so diet plays a very pivotal role in one’s physical and mental health. Nutrition plays a very important role in the functioning of the human body. The human system requires the right amount of salts, energy giving calories for the upkeep of the body.

2. **BREATH**: The breath is vital to our existence. One can go on for more than a few minutes without breathing.
We can observe that the very breath pattern is connected to a specific mental pattern. The breath of anger is different from the breath of sadness, which is different from the breath of enthusiasm. Our breathing pattern change when we feel anxious, stressed or happy. Breathing involves a co-ordinate the functioning of the nervous and respiratory systems. It is referred to as an exercised in neuro-respiratory integration. A single breath calls for an intricate interplay of the brain, the nerves that extend throughout the body, the heart and the lungs. When we manage our breath, we regain control of our emotional responses. We learn to intentionally blow off steam, take a sigh of relief and breathe away stress by integrating mind and breath. Learning to regulate our breath is a major step in regulating our physiology: decreasing blood presser, slowing heart rate, altering nervous and circulatory pathways, lowering stress- hormone levels and orchestrating the creation and release of brain chemicals. These powerful techniques when used properly and on a regular basis help us to exert voluntary control over our mental and emotional states.

Therefore, to control the mind one simply has to breathe for calmness of mind. Breathing practices are done in a sitting position, including the bellows breath, alternate nostril breathing and diaphragmatic breathing.
Breathing mobilizes our vital energy and our essence. It defines us as living, organic beings. Reclaiming our vital breath is essential to undo stress. Though the balanced and efficient acts of inhaling and exhaling, we continuously nourish and purify the physiology. By increasing the oxygen flow to the brain, breathing techniques also increase blood flow and nourish brain tissues. Proper breathing techniques can be employed to address more unique imbalances in the physiology. In terms of stress and depression, breath stimulates the network of nerves in the abdominal cavity that regulate digestion and metabolism. Breathing helps to – (a) Co-ordinate functioning of the brain, (b) Improve thinking and concentration and (c) Induce mental clarity.

When the breath is irregular, the mind wonders, but when the breath is under control, the mind is also under control. Pranayam simply means the control of breath, and the practice of Pranayam helps one to produce subtle and spiritual thoughts in mind.

3. **SLEEP:** Sleep is form of rest which is even more important than nutrition. It is the foundation for liveliness. Sleep is an agent of vitality, and being deprived of it catches up with us immediately and is measure cause of stress. Deep physiological purification occurs at the cellular level while we sleep. Without a good night’s sleep, one does not feel at ease with oneself, one may feel irritable and dull. And when one
oversleeps, again there is a tendency to feel dull. There needs to be a balance of rest and activity. The golden rule here is – Work well to sleep well and sleep well to work well.

Sleep is necessary for all people. Although there are individual differences in how much sleep each one of us need, but most of us need at least seven to eight hours of sleep each night. Sleep deprivation makes the mind and the body vulnerable to mental and physical stress. Fatigue creates depression and stress, but deep rest through sleep is curative. So sleep is very important for the undoing of stress.

Sleep is not only important for normal wellbeing, but it is also very much necessary for relaxation. A disturbed night not only prevents the release of the day’s tension, but also causes sufficient tension in itself for the next day. So, sleep is very important for combating daily stress and strain, and being sleep-deprived impairs immunity. Sleep related problems like Insomnia are on the rise due to hectic stressful urban lifestyles.

Sleep releases the impact of stress from the day and allows for the integration and growth of the nervous system and with deeper rest come increased capacity to work.

4. **EXERCISE (asanas):** Yoga postures should be performed as exercises in mindfulness. The attention focused on the body (will) determine how
liberating the practice is for our consciousness. The ultimate healing power of Yoga lies in consciousness. Each pose brings into our awareness, a positive aspect of consciousness. Each asana has its own structural effect on the physical body. In general, standing poses increase strength and energy, whereas sitting poses provide stability in the spine and create flexibility in the legs. Forward bends affect the branch of the nervous system that triggers a relaxation response, creating a pleasant calming influence. Back bends, on the other hand, affect the branch of the nervous system that stimulates us. They also increase spinal extension and create strength in the back muscles.

Hence, a yoga session can provide a full tune-up for our physical body. Through a regular Yoga program we can incorporate beneficial qualities and subsequently carry them through to our everyday life.

Yoga exercises are a tool for experiencing a more settled state of mind through the development of self-awareness. By dissolving physical stress and calming the mind, yoga asanas are an essential preparatory step for meditation.

5. **MEDITATION**: The mind is an ocean and through meditation and yoga we are able to dive through its depths. The word ‘meditation’ comes from the Latin word ‘meditatio’ which originally indicated every type of physical or intellectual exercise. Meditation describes a state of
concentrated attention on some object of thought or awareness. It usually involves turning the attention inward to a single point of reference. As we meditate, we experience an increased degree of inner silence and calmness. Experiencing inner calmness will help us to become centered and this will carry us through challenges and obstacles.

The most effective and conscious way to relieve essential inner stress is through meditation. It is not an inner discourse or analysis that yields a rational package of theories, but it certainly does yield a personal cosmology, a meaningful philosophy of life based on direct inner experience that is validated by external experiences as well. Through meditation, one can develop concentration which is the focal point of all types of education. Meditation can help us to bring stability to the mind and restore us to an integrated state of well being. It can also help us to overcome pessimistic, dull and degraded ideas.

Meditation is a practice that brings great personal benefit in the form of better awareness, understanding, energy, health, and general well-being. It is very effective in helping to sort out confused and discordant feelings. In Meditation, the mind can withdraw itself from life's illusions and direct its thinking inwards, to find and to re-create the experience of true happiness. Meditation exercises are meant to take women deeper into themselves and their life and help them to live in

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this amazingly complex, wonderful and yet sometimes terrifying world. The mental ability to think positive is through the techniques of meditation. It is something women can do to support their life and growth, to increase their energy and to open the door to a source of energy that is constantly flowing.

**Yoga** promotes health and wellbeing through physical exercise. The regular practice of asanas and breathing exercises (pranayam) makes the body strong, supple and healthy. It has a profound effect on the circulation and on the functioning of the inner organs, glands and nerves, keeping all systems in radiant health and leading to greater energy, better concentration and a happier, more fulfilling life.

Practice of Yoga gives us compassionate understanding, optimism, mental and physical strength and above all assure us of our own inner strength and our capacities. The practice of Yoga is the foundation of both physical and mental health. Yoga is expounding certain techniques and methods practiced for integrated development of man’s entire being – physical, mental and emotional. It is a discipline that enables man to actualize his potential to the fullest extent through self-culture and self-education.

Yoga is not a mere means of exercise to shed those extra kilos. It is the perfect balance or co-ordination between the physical movements, breathing,
grace and cleansing that we are constantly striving to achieve. All these factors collectively make Yoga an indispensable tool for living a complete and holistic life at all levels. One of the important things women can do for their physical, emotional and spiritual health is to pay attention to their energy, learn to understand it, work with it, conserve it and use it effectively.

Yoga is a philosophy and practice that connects the body, breath and mind to energize and balance the whole person. This mind-body therapy involves physical postures, breathing exercises and meditation to improve overall well-being. It is not a ‘quick-fix’, but with regular practice it does offer improved health, physical fitness, discipline and clarity of mind.

1.11 EVOLUTION OF YOGA (According to Meghna Virk Bains)

In order to get a holistic view of any discipline, it is extremely important to trace back its origin and evolution. It is this very trip back in history that actually helps us rediscover the authentic nature of things as they existed in their nascent stage, and how with time they acquired their present form and flavor. To trace the historical background of yoga systematically, we shall classify it into four distinct time periods – Pre-classical, Classical, Post-classical and Modern.
Pre-Classical: The origin of this ancient art can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization in northern India over 5000 years ago. The word ‘yoga’ finds its reference in the oldest Indian literature, the *Rig Veda*, a collection of texts containing hymns and rituals followed by Brahmin priests. Yoga was slowly refined and developed by these priests, who documented their practices and beliefs in the Upanishads. The Upanishads preached the sacrifice of ego through self-knowledge, action and wisdom.

The Classical Period: This period saw the systematic presentation of yoga through the emergence of Patanjali’s *yogasutras*. Patanjali is considered to be the father of yoga and his *sutras* form the fundamental basis of all its styles. These *sutras* written sometime in the 2nd century organized yoga into an ‘eight-limbed path’. It comprised the steps and stages towards obtaining *Samadhi* or enlightenment.

Post-Classical Period: A few centuries after Patanjali, yoga-masters created a system of practices designed to rejuvenate body and prolong life. They rejected teachings of the ancient Vedas and embraced physical body as the means to achieve enlightenment. They developed ‘Tantric Yoga’. It was a set of radical techniques to cleanse the body and facilitate the mind to break through the fetters that keep us fastened to our physical existence. This exploration of physical-spiritual connection and body-centered practices led to the creation of ‘Hatha Yoga’.
Modern Period: In the late 1800s and early 1900s, yoga began its journey westwards. Hatha Yoga was strongly promoted in India with the lifelong work of T. Krishnamacharya. He travelled throughout the country demonstrating the yoga poses and opened the first Hatha Yoga School. The three disciples of Krishnamacharya, B.K.S. Iyengar, Desikachar and Pattabhi Jois, carried his legacy forward.

Since then many more western and Indian teachers have emerged, popularizing Hatha Yoga which now has many different schools or styles. All these styles emphasized upon the many different aspects of the practice revolving essentially around the main philosophy of yoga, that is, mind, body and spirit are all one. Thus no clear demarcation is possible between them.

1.12 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

In this study,

Working Women: Working women represent educated women engaged in different jobs out of home.

Management: Management is to have effective control of a situation and to cope with.

Stress: Stress is the human body’s way of responding to any kind of demand (Physical and mental) made upon it. Stress is a dynamic state in which
an individual is confronted with high demands from different sources. Stress refers to the responses elicited by physical or psychological events that an individual perceives to be harmful or emotionally threatening.

**Stress-management:** Effective and immediate relaxation and freedom from stress.

**Yoga:** Yoga is a holistic science. It is a conscious and systematic process for the complete physical, mental and emotional balance of man. It is a technique to strengthen and relax body muscle, purify the energy channels, and to calm down the mind.

**Profession:** Profession is a paid occupation or an employment with formal qualification.