Discussion
Stress resiliency implies ability of individual to bounce back after being hit by a stressor (Goldstein, 1997). The major reason for significant differences in individual’s stress resiliency lies in their ability to perceive and react to the external stressors differently. Present findings have shown that learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness are the variables, which have significant positive impact over stress resiliency.

‘Deficiency focusing’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to learned optimism

Findings showed that the mean values on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency for individuals high on learned optimism were less (M=15.07) than the mean values for individuals low on learned optimism (M=24.56). The difference between the two groups was found to be statistically significant (F = 405.55, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 1.1. Results support the hypothesis that Individuals high on learned optimism would score low on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to those scoring low on learned optimism. Findings can be explained within the framework of conceptual implications of different explanatory styles. Explanatory style is the habitual way with which an individual explains setbacks or failures (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale 1978; Seligman et al. 1979). There are three relevant dimensions—stable /unstable -, global/specific, and internal/external. Individuals who were high on learned optimism offered explanations for failures—unstable - (it is temporary), specific (it is isolated to this one situation) and external (I'm not to blame) and were able to fight with the situations, recognize opportunities and take steps to goal accomplishment. In contrast, those who were low on learned optimism reflexively made stable - (the cause is going to last a long time), global
(it is going to undermine many areas of my life), and internal (it is my fault) explanations for failures and were more likely to give up and suffer. This is because they tend to focus on negatives at the expense of positives (Roseman 1984; Scherer et al. 2001). The tendency to focus on deficiency leads them to end up feeling discouraged and threatened and it further contributes to low stress resiliency.

Seligman (1998) described optimism as an attributional style that explains positive events in terms of personal, permanent, and pervasive causes and negative events in terms of external, temporary, and situation-specific ones. In particular relevance to positive organization behaviour is a realistic and, flexible (Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 2001) optimism, which can be learned and developed through recognized approaches. Such approaches are leniency for the past, appreciation for the present, and opportunity seeking for the future (Schneider, 2001; Luthans, Avey, et al., 2006). In the present study, individuals who scored high on learned optimism might have attributed cause of failures or setbacks to have external, temporary and situation specific factors and therefore might have overlooked the deficiency in order to avoid unnecessary degree of distress or discouragement. The use of an optimistic explanatory style makes the individual more inclined to view negative experiences as consequence of external, transient, and specific factors (Malinchoc, Offord, & Colligan, 1995). A pessimistic explanatory style does the opposite, thus undermining the favourable impact of successes and exacerbating the destructive potential of failures. Individuals scoring low on learned optimism focused on deficiencies because they were unable to see the hidden opportunities. They felt that if it is not done
once, it could never be done. They were unable to value the event in hand and moved ahead.

Evidence based on self-reported data suggested that higher optimism is related to smaller increases in stress and depressive symptoms after a major life event (Brissette et al., 2002). High optimism might reflect fewer adversities experienced over time (Burger & Palmer, 1992; Lightsey, 1997; Robinson-Whelen, Kim, MacCallum, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1997; Saudino, Pedersen, Lichtenstein, McClearn, & Plomin, 1997). Optimism has a recognized performance impact in work settings (Seligman, 1998; Luthans et al., 2005).

Findings can be attributed to the fact that learned optimism has emerged as one of the characteristics of resiliency, which addresses the relevance of “internal characteristics” in helping one to overcome and deal with negative life experiences. Individuals’ high on stress resiliency understand that negative events and situations are difficult and upsetting but ultimately surmountable. This positive attitude helps them to recover from almost anything. They possess a tendency to see problems as opportunities. In a study by Tompkins et. al. (2004), people and institutions in resilient systems were willing to take risk and to tolerate and learn from earlier management successes or failures. Researchers further added that resilient system focuses more on activities that lead to learning so that they maximize the impact of limited resources (Tompkins & Adger 2004; Anderies et al. 2006).

As demonstrated by Pearlin & Schooler (1982), individuals low on learned optimism showed lack of control over the task in hand whereas individuals high on learned optimism responded to the same situation in a way that clearly revealed their control and confidence in handling that task. Such people were
high on stress resiliency as their responses were such that they could control the meaning of the strainful experience after it occurred but before the emergence of stress. This coping entails lesser inclination towards deficiency focussing dimension of stress resiliency, making positive comparisons, which reduced the perceived severity of the stressful situation. Individuals were able to selectively ignore parts of the situation so as to concentrate on some less stressful aspect of the situation, and reduce the relative importance of the stress situation in relation to one’s overall work or life situation. Positive approach nurtured greater creativity. (Averill & Nunley 1992; Amabile et al. 2005).

Two-way interaction between learned optimism and emotional intelligence for the ‘deficiency focussing’ was found to be significant (F=18.81, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 1.2. As depicted in figure - 1, individuals who scored high on learned optimism also scored high on emotional intelligence. Their positive thinking and attitude helped them to focus on available resources and analyse ways to manage the situation in hand in an effective problem solving mode. They ignored the deficiencies and used their creativity and innovation to look for solutions. (Isen 2001, Lyubomirsky et al. 2005) Individuals who scored low on learned optimism were also low on emotional intelligence. Since their explanatory style was dysfunctional, they couldn’t have good understanding of self and others. They had the tendency of focusing on the shortcomings and deficiencies, which lead them to confused state of mind. They had lack of clarity of thought. Being optimistic, they followed the principle that failure was not inherent, so they attributed it to circumstances, which they changed with refocusing of efforts (Abraham,1999). Individuals low on learned optimism were engrossed in petty unimportant details, which were negative in nature and hence were also low on
understanding of self and others, scoring low on emotional intelligence and further scoring low on resiliency.

Similarly, two-way interaction between learned optimism and hardiness for the ‘deficiency focussing’ dimension of stress resiliency was also found to be significant \( F=28.17, \ p < 0.01 \) as shown in table - 1.2. Figure - 2 shows individuals scoring high on learned optimism also scored high on hardiness and consequently low on deficiency focusing dimension. Since these people had positive bent of mind, they had a sense of control over the whole situation and the positive frame of mind assisted them to face the challenges boldly. In contrast, individuals who were low on learned optimism and low on hardiness felt lack of control over situations and tasks. They were scared to take up challenges because of lack of confidence in their abilities to deal with work demands and low confidence in their coworkers (Olofsson, Bengtsson & Brink, 2003). Worrying about deficiencies, such individuals feared commitment and hence suffered in both personal life and at work.

Simple effects of learned optimism on each level of emotional intelligence for the ‘deficiency focussing’ dimension of stress resiliency were found to be significant. Individuals high on the two variables i.e. learned optimism and emotional intelligence have a positive approach to life and so they were able to give their best in times of pressure (Abraham,1999). This contributed to low score on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency and consequently to high stress resiliency.

Simple effects of learned optimism on each level of hardiness for ‘deficiency focussing’ dimension of stress resiliency were also found to be significant. Individuals who were high on learned optimism and hardiness
believed strongly in themselves and focussed on the positive aspect of situations performing well at work as well as in personal life (Peterson and Barrett, 1987; Bagget & Saale, 1996).

‘Deficiency focusing’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to emotional intelligence

Lazarus (1999) said that stress and emotions are closely related. Present research studied emotional intelligence along the three dimensions of stress resiliency. It was found that individuals with high level of emotional intelligence scored low on deficiency focussing. The difference between the two groups i.e. individuals with high level of emotional intelligence and individuals with low level of emotional intelligence was found to be statistically significant ($F = 45.74$, $p < 0.01$) as shown in table - 1.1, supporting the major hypothesis. Salovey et al., (2004) noted that emotionally intelligent people were more likely to have a better understanding and recognition of their strengths. They focused their attention and energies to the projects or tasks, which were important and beneficial. Such understanding of self and emotions helped them score low on deficiency focusing. Having greater control over one’s own emotions helped the emotionally intelligent people to ignore deficiencies or weaknesses and focus on available openings. Emotional intelligence has been noted as a significant positive psychological construct (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2002; Salovey, Mayer, Caruso & Lopes, 2004). Parker et. al. (2001) found that emotionally intelligent individuals used healthy coping strategies i.e. they focussed on positive aspect of a situation. They don't feel sorry for the scarcity of resources, instead visualize their success and set goals to fulfil their aspirations, which is characteristic of a
stress resilient person. The difference in such characteristics of people makes them distinct and unique.

Taylor (2001) argued that emotionally intelligent person can cope better with life’s challenges and control their emotions more effectively, both of which contribute to good psychological and physical health. Focus on deficiencies at the expense of available avenues is maladaptive. Individuals, who were low on emotional intelligence, were unable to identify their own feelings, thoughts, physical states and needs associated with the same. They were unable to discriminate between accurate and inaccurate expressions of feelings. They were unable to prioritise their thinking and rather paid attention to sundry details causing obstacles (Mandler 1975). They were not open to unpleasant feelings and were unable to manage anger and aggression (Rubin 1999). The ability of emotionally intelligent people to perceive, assimilate, understand and manage emotions effectively resulted in low score on deficiency focusing. Matthews and Zeidner (2000) stated “adaptive coping might be conceptualised as emotional intelligence in action, supporting, mastering emotions, emotional growth, and both cognitive and emotional differentiation, allowing one to evolve in an ever-changing world”.

Deficiency focusing is not the attribute of a psychologically healthy mind. It is a negative aspect of thinking. Individuals high on emotional intelligence had more positive emotions. Isen and colleagues (1987) have demonstrated that positive emotions produce patterns of thought that are notably unusual (Isen, Johnson, Mertz, & Robinson, 1985), flexible and inclusive (Isen & Daubman, 1984), creative (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987), and receptive (Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1997). Isen and colleagues have shown that positive emotions produce
more creative and variable actions (Isen et al., 1987; Kahn & Isen, 1993). To produce such creativity one needs to have high emotional intelligence, so that thoughts are flexible enough, the focus is on growth and on avenues that are available for growth rather than deficiency focussing.

The two-way Interaction effect of emotional intelligence and hardiness for the deficiency focussing dimension of was found to be statistically significant (F=52.10, p < 0.01). As shown in figure 3, individuals high on emotional intelligence and high on hardiness subsequently scored low on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency. Emotionally intelligent individuals are high on self-awareness. They know what they want from themselves and have a clear understanding of needs and wants of others as well (Parrott, 2002; McCann et al., 2004). Their ability to empathise with others leads to positive outcomes (Miller & Koesten, 2008). They stayed committed to achieve desired goals. This helped them to take up challenges by generating full control over the situation. Individuals, who were low on emotional intelligence, were less aware about their own competencies. They felt that they didn’t have complete command over their own behaviour.

Simple effect of emotional intelligence was found significant for people who were low on learned optimism (F=61.61, p < 0.01) as shown in table 1.5. It was noted that individuals low on emotional intelligence were unable to use their energy in creative ways. The focus of their energy was to chalk out deficiencies and underline flaws. Lack of emotional intelligence led to unclear understanding of behaviour of self and others. Such misconceptions further intensified negative thought processes leading to deficiency focusing.
Simple effects of emotional intelligence on each level of hardiness were computed for deficiency focusing, and results were found to be significant for people who were high on hardiness (F=103.77, p <0.01). The same has been shown in table - 1.10. Individuals who were high on emotional intelligence and hardiness were high on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency.

Present findings implicate that in an organizational set up it is very important to have mastery on one’s emotions and emotional responses as it predicts the success of organization and well being of team members. High emotional intelligence assists cognitive thinking and helps individuals to smoothly adapt to changes and ignore deficiencies whereas low emotional intelligence directs the individuals to lack of self-awareness, lack of understanding and lack of management that cultivates the habit of deficiency focusing. Thus the adaptive nature of emotionally intelligent people nurtured resiliency. Their understanding helped them have control over their emotions and they were able to pro-act to a situation in a problem-solving mode avoiding the deficiency focusing behaviour resulting in high stress resiliency. The enhanced emotional and self-management skills helped the emotionally intelligent individuals to ignore deficiencies and move further in an action oriented way instead of drifting to the complaining mode. Emotionally intelligent individuals also had skill to transform negative emotions into positive, which gave them an edge over those who were low on emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent people, with their clarity of thought and better decision making skills choose not to focus on deficiencies at the expense of opportunities known or unknown. Such behaviours predispose them to perform well under pressure and contribute to stress resiliency.
‘Deficiency focusing’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to hardiness

Hardiness is the ability to deal effectively with stress. Mean value for individuals’ high on hardiness was less (M=18.69) than mean values for individuals’ who were low on hardiness (M=20.94). The difference between the two groups was found to be statistically significant (F = 22.67, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 1.1. This was in line with the hypothesis of present study that individuals with high level of hardiness would score low on deficiency focussing dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals who were low on hardiness. Results can be explained with the help of three components of hardiness that is commitment, control and challenge (Kobasa et al., 1982). Hardiness is conceptualised as commitment to life, viewing change as challenge, and having control over one’s life. Commitment reflects a dedication to oneself and to one’s work. Control is the extent to which an individual influences life events to ensure a particular outcome. Challenge refers to life events and one’s response to those events. Individuals who are hardy cope with various stressors, both personal (life cycle, family) and professional (occupational roles and relationships) better than those individuals who are not hardy (Simoni and Paterson, 1997).

Applying Kobasa’s construct of hardiness to war veterans in Israel, Waysman et al. (2001) concluded that individuals who viewed themselves as in charge of their fate (control), who were committed to meaningful goals and activities, and who viewed their stress as a surmountable - challenge were more likely in the long run to integrate the trauma into their lives. They didn’t focus on deficiencies and enjoyed a satisfactory level of adjustment. This resonates with hypothesis of present study that individuals high on hardiness would score low on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency.
According to Kenneth D. Allred and Timothy W. Smith (1989) high hardy individuals endorsed more positive self-statements than did low hardy persons in high stress condition. High hardy subjects reported more positive self-statements in the high stress condition than did high hardy subjects in the low stress condition. In contrast, low hardy subjects reported fewer positive thoughts in the high stress condition than in the low stress condition. Deficiency focusing is concentrating on negatives at the expense of positives.

Hardy individuals managed their own life by goal setting, scheduling and paying attention to available encouraging resources instead of deficiencies whereas individuals low on hardiness had difficulty setting goals, scheduling and making other choices because of their deficiency focusing behaviour. Hardy individuals took life as an interesting and engaging challenge inspite of the upsetting situations and deficiencies. They had the courage to grow and develop rather than deny and avoid (Maddi, 2006). Individuals with high hardiness had the ability to invest themselves into their work lives, friendships, and family in a balanced and effective way. Such an attitude and skill helped them overlook the negative aspects and deficiencies and they moved ahead cohesively whereas, individuals low on hardiness could not change their focus of highlighting deficiencies and they suffered in their professional as well as personal life. Hence supporting the hypothesis that individuals’ high on hardiness would score less on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to those low on hardiness.

Simple effect of hardiness for individuals scoring low on learned optimism for deficiency focussing dimension of stress resiliency, was found to be statistically significant (F=50.69, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 1.8. Individuals who
were low on hardiness were also low on learned optimism consequently, focusing less on deficiencies. These people had an external locus of control. They felt things were out of their control and were engrossed in negative thinking and its vicious circle. Caught in this vicious circle, they found little room to look for available opportunities. This predisposed them to feel anxious and stressed in personal and professional endeavours.

Simple effect of hardiness for individuals scoring high on emotional intelligence for deficiency focussing dimension of stress resiliency, was found to be statistically significant (F= 76.93, p <0.01) as shown in table - 1.11. Individuals who were hardy were emotionally intelligent, had an attitude of challenging the adversities. They didn’t feel discouraged because of deficiencies instead were able to set goals and manage the situation, as complicated as it might sound. Setbacks never discouraged such individuals. They learned from their mistakes and took corrective steps for future instead of dwelling on negatives that had happened or could have happened.

Three-way interaction effect of learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness have been found to be significant for deficiency focusing as shown in figure – 4, supporting the hypothesis that Individuals who are high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness would be low on deficiency focusing dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness. Such individuals were optimistic and had sense of humour. They believed in developing competencies including learned optimism. They were dedicated to do things well, by maintaining calmness. They knew when to ignore the deficiencies and remain focused to the job in hand. Since they had an optimistic explanatory style, they
didn’t focus on the negative aspects or deficiencies, rather tried their best to exhaust all the possibilities to solve problems (Aspinwall, 2001). With their sense of direction, and purpose they were able to disregard shortcomings and deficiencies and remain focused. They took responsibility for their mental programming, their emotions, and their actions. They were emotionally intelligent and hence value-centered rather than reactive and defensive. Being emotionally intelligent, they understood that emotions were great sources of energy and motivation but were often poor guides for action. They preferred to use their values as guides. They might have realized that the quality of life depends on focus, energy and attention, which should not be wasted in unproductive activities such as deficiency focusing. They tried to align their thoughts and actions with their values and respect the shortcomings. Being high on hardiness, they knew how to remain committed and motivated inspite of adversity. They stayed committed to take action instead of getting demotivated by flaws. They didn’t judge themselves or others harshly when things went wrong. They focussed on what they wanted. They were able to tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty, and imperfection. Being high on hardiness, they looked at adversity as a challenge rather than as a threat (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984) They understood that no matter how the present situation turns out, they will learn and grow from it. This attitude helped them ignore the flaws and deficiencies. Even if there are difficulties, deficiencies and uncertainties, they believed that they had full control over the same. Individuals high on hardiness focused on opportunities. They were not afraid to take realistic risks as they felt full control and ignored deficiencies.

To sum, individuals who were low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness were prone to be stressed, and as a result focussed
more on deficiencies. Organizations can help such people by arranging workshops to build such competencies. Training programmes may be organized for these individuals so that deficiency focusing can be replaced by adaptive thinking. They have to be encouraged to move from stress to stress resiliency by having clear understanding of self and others.

‘Necessitating’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to learned optimism

Necessitating is a way of thinking about a situation in which individuals find a compulsion to act upon. Individuals place greater demands on themselves to meet requirements resulting in undue stress. Main effect of learned optimism for ‘necessitating’ dimension of stress resiliency was found significant (F = 489.07, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 2.1. Mean value for individuals’ high on learned optimism was less (M=17.57) than mean values for individuals who were low on learned optimism (M=30.21), supporting the hypothesis that individuals with high level of learned optimism would be low on the necessitating dimension of organization stress resiliency in comparison to individuals who were low on learned optimism. Individuals low on learned optimism perceived problems as ordeals too great to bear. They felt that they were trapped in demanding situation, which would make their life miserable. On the contrary, individuals high on learned optimism saw problems as challenges. They believed that they could influence and alter the situation in favourable way and remained optimistic about the outcomes of their efforts. In the organizations, their positive attitude helped them take up responsibilities (Wong & Davey, 2007). They gave their best and boldly faced day-to-day challenges contributing to organizational success.
Findings can be explained in the framework of perspective given by Schulman (1998) who demonstrated that individuals’ low on learned optimism had a narrow approach to life and were not ready to take chances. They always had something to worry about. In the work place, one or the other issue constantly bothered them because of their belief that nothing is ever quite right. They constantly feared about one aspect of the situation or the other. On the other hand, individuals high on learned optimism were receptive to novel ideas and were open-minded. They welcomed suggestions from everyone in the team. This attitude helped them perform much better at work place. By remaining open, they were at an advantage of getting something new, which made work easier, less time consuming and high in quality. Low learned optimism in individuals damaged their potential in many ways. They were wrapped in negativity and were unable to see the possible way out of a challenging situation. Whereas, those who were high on learned optimism could solve problems effectively. Their positive emotions helped them see number of cognitive elements available for consideration. They had a broader cognitive scope, so could focus their attention to hidden opportunities and were ready to move ahead to solve problems (Fredrickson, 2001). At work, such problem solving attitude helped them accomplish desired goals contributing to organization’s achievements, hence reason as to why individuals high on learned optimism were low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency.

In the organization, people execute same assignment differently. Their perception of same task in same scenario is different. Individuals low on learned optimism focus on negative thoughts at the expense of positive thoughts and perceive the assignment to be unnecessary demand. Their focus is on negative
aspects of situation such as insufficient information, time and resources, which results in feeling of stress. On the contrary, individuals high on learned optimism choose to focus on the positive thoughts and try to evaluate the assignment and look for best ways to complete in stipulated time. These individuals try their best to use the available resources to optimum level so as to successfully complete the task. Their focus on positive thoughts contributes to low score on necessitating dimension of organization stress resiliency.

Findings showed that negative thoughts were central phenomenon to individuals who were low on learned optimism. They complained of not getting whatever they desired. When work was allocated in the team, they would always feel that they were allocated the most difficult job. On the other hand, individuals high on learned optimism had the tendency to count their blessings. These individuals immediately expelled any negative thought that crossed their mind and were always excited to put their best foot forward at work. So they scored low on necessitating dimension of organization stress resiliency and were more resilient.

Individuals low on optimism displayed lack of confidence. Their focus was on negative aspects of situations, which hindered their performance. This attitude resulted in lack of accomplishments, which further reinforced negative thoughts. Whereas individuals high on learned optimism were confident and believed that success will come their way. They realised the obstacles and were prepared to put in the effort to overcome them. They enjoyed work and believed that the outcomes would be good. They believed that whatever hard work they put in, would be adorned by best results. Such attitude helped them succeed in personal as well as professional life (Ben-Shahar 2011).
Stress exhaustion was highly debilitating for individuals low on learned optimism. They were frightened to experience demands, setbacks, worries, pressures and threats. They were constantly facing demands and were tired of the same, which resulted in desperation to move out of the situation, and eventually resulted in dysfunctional behaviour. These individuals were also at risk of taking hasty actions and decisions. They were unable to perform well and were unable to justify their role in the organization (Write & Cropanzano, 1998). In comparison, individuals high on learned optimism took sound decisions and stayed calm by foreseeing that their diligence would be paid. This resulted in low score on necessitating dimension contributing to stress resiliency.

Taylor and Brown (1988) concluded that positive illusions and realistic optimism were characteristic of normal human thought. These illusions appeared to promote other criteria of mental health, including the ability to care about others, the ability to be happy or contented, and the ability to engage in productive and creative work. Learned optimism endorses creative work, individuals who were high on learned optimism involved themselves in the task and could optimistically predict their success. They enthusiastically moved towards the desired goal without feeling stressed.

Results are in line with the research conducted by Smith (1983) and Fischer & Leitenberg (1986). Individuals who were high on learned optimism were able set goals, make commitments, cope up with adversity and pain, and were able to recover from trauma and/or stress (Fischer & Leitenberg, 1986; Smith, 1983) in contrast to those who scored low on learned optimism.

Harris & Guten (1979) and Weinstein (1980) examined the role of “optimistic bias” in adolescent and adult mental health and noted a strong
relationship between the possession of an optimistic outlook and self-reported happiness (Matlin & Gawron, 1979). People with high learned optimism were happier than those with low learned optimism.

Taking in account the learned helplessness theory, it was seen that individuals who scored low on learned optimism were those who continuously felt victimised whereas, in the same situation those who were high on optimism were concentrating on work in the regular way (Comer, Ronald, 2004; Myers & David, 2002). Strong interpersonal relationships were central to individuals with high level of learned optimism (Mark, 2009). This characteristic proved to have a stress buffering effect both at work and at personal level.

Two-way interaction between learned optimism and emotional intelligence ($F=31.23, p < 0.01$) for necessitating dimension of stress resiliency was found to be significant. As shown in figure - 5, individuals who scored high on learned optimism and emotional intelligence had the vitality and zest to perform. Being high on both learned optimism and emotional intelligence they realised that their efforts and actions would contribute significantly to alter the stress situation (Bar-On, 2006). On the contrary individuals low on learned optimism and low on emotional intelligence were found to be high on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency. They felt discouraged and trapped in a stress situation. They had a negative view and lack of understanding that made them feel burdened and exhausted leading to high stress.

Findings showed that the two-way interaction between learned optimism and hardiness was significant for necessitating dimension of stress resiliency ($F = 26.92, p < 0.01$) as shown in table - 2.2. Figure - 6 depicts that individuals who were high on learned optimism and high on hardiness were low on necessitating
and hence high on stress resiliency (Bonanno, 2004). These individuals had the passion to perform and even in highly stressful situation they were hopeful. They believed that their efforts would not go futile. They were confident and had learned mastery. These individuals stayed committed and were ready for challenging situations. Whereas the individuals who were low on learned optimism and low on hardiness were passive and dissatisfied with everything happening around them and perceived every task as a struggle, which ruined their energy ending up in a fiasco. They focussed on the pressures and demands of job and were unable to enjoy work. So they scored high on necessitating dimension and were less resilient (Bartone, & Hystad, 2010).

Table - 2.4 shows the simple effect of learned optimism on both levels of emotional intelligence. The simple effect was found to be significant. Individuals high on learned optimism and high on emotional intelligence were low on necessitating dimension whereas individuals low on learned optimism and low on emotional intelligence were high on necessitating dimension consequently leading to stress resiliency. These individuals had a positive bent of mind, which resulted in greater stress resiliency.

Simple effect of learned optimism on each level of hardiness was found to be significant as shown in table - 2.7. Individuals high on learned optimism and high on hardiness were low on necessitating dimension and individuals low on learned optimism and low on hardiness were high on necessitating dimension of organization stress resiliency. People high on learned optimism and hardiness performed the task with vigour and enthusiasm, whereas individuals low on learned optimism and low on hardiness were governed by unsuccessful past experiences and therefore, they negatively perceived the present situation
Their beliefs about what they can't do were rigid and they scored high on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency.

‘Necessitating’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to Emotional intelligence

Emotional and intellectual reasoning are integral of human success and survival (Bracket & Salovey, 2006). Emotionally intelligent individuals were found to be low on necessitating dimension and as a result high on stress resiliency, supporting the hypothesis that individuals with high level of emotional intelligence would be low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals low on emotional intelligence. The groups differed significantly (F = 44.07, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 3.1, considering the fact that emotional and intellectual reasoning contributes to good performance at work place, it is evident that individuals high on emotional intelligence scored low on necessitating. Emotionally intelligent individuals had positive emotional reactions, which were linked to several desirable outcomes such as increased productivity, job satisfaction and decreased turnover and stress. Conversely, lower emotional intelligence was linked to negative emotional reactions that were shown to predict a wide range of undesirable outcomes such as decreased productivity, increased turnover and tension contributing to stress (Bagozzi, 2003).

The results can be explained with the help of the four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence given by Mayer and Salovey (1997). According to the model, four factors of emotional intelligence are ability to a) perceive emotions, b) use emotion to facilitate thought, c) understand emotion and d) manage emotion. As discussed, necessitating is one way of thinking about a
situation or task. Individuals high on emotional intelligence were able to perceive emotions better than individuals low on emotional intelligence. Their perceptions about task difficulty were also different. Individuals high on emotional intelligence found the same task challenging and showed excitement to begin the same. Whereas individuals with low emotional intelligence perceived that the task was forced on them and believed it was very difficult to achieve the desired goal. These individuals believed that to achieve the goal they would have to exhaust all their available resources.

As per the second branch, individuals high on emotional intelligence were able to use emotion to facilitate thought which promoted thinking and cognitive activity. In contrast, individuals low on emotional intelligence, were caught in the cognitive trap because of lack of ability to use emotions in a facilitative way. Those who were low on emotional intelligence believed that they have no choice. They felt that they were just getting bullied by placing great demand on themselves. They were not able to use the cognitive ability to manage emotions and events. Facilitation involves capacity of emotions to assist thinking. Emotionally intelligent people were blessed with thought facilitation resulting in effective reasoning for the demands of work, in contrast to, those who were low on emotional intelligence and perceived the demand at work as a burden and felt helpless because of their irrational thinking.

It has been noted that some types of problem solving were facilitated by some emotions but not others (Palfai & Salovey, 1993; Isen, 2001 and Erez & Isen, 2002). Individuals with high emotional intelligence had a good understanding of themselves and others. Their understanding helped them to analyse the situation and problem in hand. They could well relate with the reason
why they were assigned tasks, which were not given to others. They understood their responsibility to take up the challenging role and exhibit best performance.

Emotion theories include a feeling component (Schwarz 1990). The feeling component that varies from person to person can be explained by considering that in the same situation, two individuals react differently because of their ability to manage their emotional reactions. Individuals who were high on emotional intelligence had the knack of dealing with people and situations when confronted with high pressures to carry forward certain task and take responsibility. These individuals felt that they were chosen to do so because they could best deal with the same, whereas, individuals who lacked emotional intelligence felt that the work pressure was an unreasonable demand put on them and they were not able to manage their reactions and this floated them to indulge in necessitating thinking and consequently, they drifted to stress demonstrating an absolute absence of stress resiliency.

Emotionally intelligent individuals were high on self-awareness and had the ability to understand their own moods, emotions and drives and also were acquainted with how they affected other people. These individuals were able to recognise their emotions and acted with confidence, they had trust over intuition and did not let their emotions get out of control. They honestly introspected and had complete understanding of their strength and development areas. Their emotional competence helped them perform outstandingly (Goleman, 1998). In an effort to perform better, they continuously worked on development areas, hence they scored low on the necessitating dimension of stress resiliency. In contrast, individuals with low levels of emotional intelligence had poor knowledge about their own moods and emotions. Their emotions were out of their control,
which ruined their interpersonal relations and reputation at work and in personal life. Unlike those with high emotional intelligence, who worked with greater task activity, persistence and enhanced cognitive function (Staw, Sutton & Pelled, 1994).

Empathy as described by Mead (1934) in social psychological terms, consists of “taking the role of the other” and experiencing as well as understanding persons’ emotions from their perspective as well as from ones’ own perspective. Sally (2011) emphasized that empathy is another important quality of emotionally intelligent people. They had the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs and viewpoints of others. These people were good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings were not obvious. As a result, these people were excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They did not judge too quickly, and worked in open and honest way. On the other hand individuals low on emotional intelligence were unable to describe their own need and desires. They did not understand what others felt. Lack of empathy made their interpersonal relationships poor. They were impatient listeners and jumped to faulty conclusions, hence they scored high on necessitating dimension contributing to low stress resiliency.

People with a high degree of emotional intelligence were usually motivated. Sudden changes in the environment or structure of work would never let them down. They were ready to defer immediate results for long-term success. These people were highly enthusiastic, productive and effective in whatever they did. On the contrary, individuals low on emotional intelligence felt shattered by sudden changes. They always felt discouraged to perform in the
given tasks, hence they proved to be weak performers and less productive in the organization and scored high on the necessitating dimension.

Findings can be explained within the framework of perspective given by Segal (2008). Segal demonstrated that emotionally intelligent individuals are masters at building and maintaining relationships, they can manage disputes and are excellent communicators and have strong social skills, and they can effectively manage teams at the workplace. This contributed to low necessitating and high stress resiliency. In contrast, individuals with low emotional intelligence had poor communication and social skills. They could neither communicate their own honest feelings nor were receptive to others. Individuals high on emotional intelligence were high on integrity. They would stand up for their beliefs and were ready to pursue goals beyond what is required of them. Their honesty was reflected in their commitment to task in hand and they would keep introspecting for betterment. Emotionally intelligent people were value oriented. They were able to confront unethical actions originated by others. In contrast, individuals low on emotional intelligence had no interest in values. They were dishonest to their own feelings. It was difficult for them to confront any kind of issue, hence they scored high on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency supporting the hypothesis that individual with high level of emotional intelligence would be low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals low on emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2002).

Two-way interaction between emotional intelligence and hardiness was found to be significant (F = 35.86, p < 0.01), for necessitating dimension of stress resiliency, as shown in table - 2.2. Graph in figure - 7 shows that individuals who were high on emotional intelligence and high on hardiness were
low on necessitating dimension. They took up challenges with vigour and enthusiasm and enjoyed what they did. The uncertainty of results never held them back. These individuals were exited about putting their creativity in action, hence high on stress resiliency (Kobasa & Puccetti 1983). Table - 2.5 shows the simple effects of emotional intelligence on each level of learned optimism. It was found to be significant for people who were low on learned optimism (F = 74.74, p < 0.01). Individuals who were low on emotional intelligence were also low on optimism as a result were high on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency. Simple effect of emotional intelligence on each level of hardiness was computed and result was found to be significant for individuals who were high on hardiness (F= 79.71, p <0.01). Summary for the same is given in table - 2.10. Individuals who were high on emotional intelligence were also high on hardiness consequently showing more resiliency.

‘Necessitating’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to Hardiness

The main effect of hardiness for necessitating dimension of stress resiliency was statistically significant (F = 37.07, p < 0.01) as shown in table - 2.1. The mean value for individuals high on hardiness was less (M=22.15) in comparison to individuals low on hardiness (M= 25.63). Findings support the hypothesis that individuals with high level of hardiness would be low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individual low on hardiness. Necessitating involves unidirectional thinking that one “has no choice,” and that the task “has to be” executed. As indicated previously, hardiness is comprised of three sub related concepts: control, commitment, and challenge
(Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994). Several Studies have suggested that the hardiness concept represents the level to which individuals perceive themselves as having an internal locus of control which has been demonstrated to be a critical component in the promotion of resilience (Werner & Smith, 1982; O’Grady & Metz, 1987; Cowen & Work, 1988; Luthar, 1991; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Stewart et al., 1997; Werner, 1997; Wright & Masten, 1997). Taking into account the control dimension, individuals high on hardiness felt a sense of control over the situation. They knew how to make choices with personal efforts and take the ownership by exercising complete control. They never felt frightened by circumstances instead took up their roles as challenges. Individuals who scored high on hardiness felt absence of powerlessness in contrast to those who scored low on hardiness. Individuals low on hardiness were surrounded with feelings of powerlessness, entrapment and restlessness. These individuals assumed that by confronting the stressful situation, all their resources would be depleted. This induced fear of ending up at a loss both professionally as well as personally. Individuals high on hardiness on the other hand believed that they had complete control over task in hand and that they could influence different situations in their life. They were confident that personal efforts could modify stressors so as to reduce them into a more manageable state (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984; Bigbee, 1985; Pollock, 1989; Wagnild & Young, 1991; Tartasky, 1993; Huang, 1995). Such sense of control helped the individuals high on hardiness people to survive the stressful situations. Research literature has consistently highlighted the importance of an internal locus of control in protecting individuals from stressors both at work and personal life (Garmezy, 1985; Mrazek & Mrazek, 1987; Cowen & Work, 1988; Werner, 1989; Masten et al., 1990; Luthar, 1991;
Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Brooks, 1994; Polk, 1997; Wright & Masten, 1997). Having internal locus of control helped the individuals high on hardiness to think about relevant possibilities to carry forward the job assigned and to move ahead with great dedication, belief and commitment. These individuals believed that a contingency exists between their actions and external events (Sullivan, 1993). Such thoughts governed their actions and assisted them to perform well under pressure. In the present study, individuals high on hardiness had a greater sense of control over the circumstances and they felt like masters of their actions and destiny, hence they scored low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency. The low score on necessitating echoed with high stress resiliency.

People high on hardiness confronted challenges and made effective decisions (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). Their self-acceptance and belief in their capabilities encouraged them to take up challenges and felt responsible for their feelings and never surrendered to difficult people or circumstances. These individuals yearned for fulfilment of their desires, wants and needs and were ready to meet all the challenges. In the organizations, such dynamism is very important. Individuals high on hardiness were always ready to take up more responsibilities and were highly motivated to achieve their goals. They got into the task wholeheartedly and contributed to the growth and productivity of organization. In contrast, individuals low on hardiness were not ready to take risk. These individuals were not only unaware of their potential but also were terrified to encounter challenging situations. These individuals had a low self-esteem and couldn’t perform well in the organizations. They were not ready to move out of the comfort zone and try new things. Their approach was not growth oriented, hence high hardy scored high on stress resiliency (Carr, 2000).
Individuals high on hardiness were committed to family, work, community, society, friends and themselves. This commitment provided them purpose of life, motivation to excel in task, and inspired them to progress to achieve results. In comparison, individuals low on hardiness were indulged in hopes and wishes and had lack of purpose. Instead of trying to work towards their goals, they exhibited wishful behaviour patterns and wasted time in unproductive activities. They showed an attitude of learned helplessness, initially they believed that whatever happened was beyond their control. These individuals felt wrecked by situations, demands and people. On the other hand, individuals who were high on hardiness believed in their cognitive ability and were able to judge the demands of situation without feeling victimised. These people believed that their action steps would make the situation better. Therefore, individuals high on hardiness scored low on necessitating and individuals low on hardiness scored high on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency.

Table - 2.8 illustrates simple effect of hardiness on each level of learned optimism, which was found significant for those who scored low on learned optimism (F = 63.58, p < 0.01). Individuals low on hardiness and low on learned optimism were high on necessitating dimension. Such people had negative frame of mind and perceived challenges as threat. Similarly, simple effect of hardiness on each level of emotional intelligence was computed and results were found to be significant for individuals who were high on emotional intelligence (F= 72.92, p <0.01). The details are shown in table - 2.11. Individuals scoring high on hardiness and emotional intelligence were low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency. They felt that they could fight with the challenges, stay committed and come out in flying colours. They had a positive view of situation
and understanding of capabilities and qualities needed for effective problem solving and decision-making, which resulted in low score on necessitating and high stress resiliency.

Three-way interaction effect of learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness was found significant for necessitating dimension. As shown in figure - 8, interaction supports the hypothesis that Individuals who were high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness would be low on necessitating dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness. Individuals high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness were aware about the situation and their own reactions and the behaviour of others involved in the condition. They knew the importance of correctly attributing the cause of the behaviour of other, their actions and characteristics of the situation. Being aware helped them manage their feelings and maintain control of situations. They liked to put their creativity into use and tried novel ideas to tackle problems instead of feeling obligated and pressurised to complete the task. They understood that life was full of challenges and it was better to confront the problems head on and remained committed, open, flexible and willing to adapt to changes. In contrast, individuals who were low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness felt that whatever they do would not affect the outcome. The demands of situations just couldn't be met.

To conclude, individuals who have a positive attitude towards life and work, who clearly understand their own needs and at the same time empathize with those around them, do not give up in times of adversity and stay committed to face challenges, do not get into necessitating thought patterns, contributing to
high stress resiliency. Individuals who lack these attributes can be helped to perform better in their roles in organizations. Appropriate training programs should be designed for them.

‘Skill Recognition’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to learned optimism

Skill recognition is the ability of individual to recognise his or her own skills. It is the belief that success can be achieved with the help of ones own competence and skills. In the present study, it was hypothesized that individuals with high level of learned optimism would be high on the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to those who were low on learned optimism. Findings support the hypothesis. Results can be explained with the help of the model of perceived competence. According to Fernandez-Castro et al., (2009) perceived competence is expectancy that one can effectively interact with the environment. Individuals high on learned optimism were high on perceived competence. They were able to visualize their abilities, and knew how to use them effectively to solve problems and take decisions. They believed that they could achieve success because of the skills they had and adequately judged their capabilities. On the contrary, individuals who were low on learned optimism had lack of perceived competence. They were unable to see their own competencies, which could have been used to solve problems. They attributed cause of success to external things. They were prejudiced in evaluating themselves. The negative evaluation of self contributed to low score on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency.

Individuals high on learned optimism were confident about their action planning and were capable of meeting challenges and confronting obstacles.
An optimistic outlook and focus on self-worth enhanced well-being, better coping with stress and more effective self-regulation (Taylor & Stanton, 2007) contributing to high scores on stress resiliency. On the other hand, individuals low on learned optimism had lack of confidence. They were low on self-worth. Their perception of their inability to plan and contribute to the task resulted in stress. Hence, they scored less on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency supporting the hypothesis that individuals with high level of learned optimism would be high on the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to those who were low on learned optimism.

Results can be explained in terms of factors advocated by Giltay et al., (2006) and Hulbert and Morrison (2006) that individuals high on learned optimism demonstrated a positive view about themselves and were able to appreciate their talent contributing to high self-esteem. They had a good opinion about themselves. They had high self-evaluation and had respect for themselves and others. They focussed on positive characteristics of the situation. They had the ability to recognise and appreciate the available resources. The positive frame of mind helped them feel capable enough for the tasks in hand and they could drive the projects with vigour and enthusiasm. These protective factors enhanced their psychological well-being. In contrast, Individuals low on learned optimism had a low self-esteem. They considered themselves worthless and gave preference to others’ desires. So they stumbled at every challenge and felt it was impossible to win over the challenging situations. Their continuous disapproval with self, lack of confidence fostered insecurities and unhappiness. They were caught in their cognitive trap. They were unable to identify their talent. When such individuals
were successful, they attributed the cause of their success to external elements. Fearing the undesirable consequences, they were scared to make independent action plans and take decisions. They were highly dependent and needed constant support to do their job. Because of the self-doubting tendency it was hard for them to realise their potential resulting in high stress and low resiliency. With constant focus on demerits, they scored low on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency.

Two-way interaction between learned optimism and emotional intelligence (F=25.55, p < 0.01) for skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency was found to be significant as shown in figure - 9. Individuals’ scoring high on learned optimism and high on emotional intelligence scored high on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency. They had a positive bent of mind and were self aware, their skilfulness in identifying the strengths and development areas assisted them to take corrective decisions at work. They valued their competence and hence were high on stress resiliency.

Similarly, two-way interaction between learned optimism and hardiness for the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency was also found to be significant (F=34.43, p < 0.01) as evident from figure - 10. Individuals high on learned optimism and hardiness were high on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency. They realised that their commitment and dedication could help them face all kinds of challenges. This promoted resiliency in such individuals.

As described in table - 3.4, simple effect of learned optimism on each level of emotional intelligence was found to be significant. Individuals high on learned optimism and high on emotional intelligence scored high on skill recognition
dimension in comparison to individuals low on learned optimism and low on emotional intelligence.

Simple effect of learned optimism on each level of hardiness for skill recognition, as shown in table - 3.7, was found to be significant. Individuals who scored high on learned optimism and hardiness had the ability to recognize and value their skills contributing to organization stress resiliency. Whereas, individuals who were low on learned optimism and hardiness were low on skill recognition dimension of organization stress resiliency.

‘Skill Recognition’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to emotional intelligence

The main effect of emotional intelligence for skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency was found to be statistically significant (F = 39.59, p < 0.01) as depicted in table - 3.1. It was hypothesised that individuals with high level of emotional intelligence would be high on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to the individuals low on emotional intelligence. Being emotionally intelligent encompasses several qualities. Discussing the two important dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e. empathy and self-awareness can reason the current findings.

According to Oginska-Bulik, (2005) emotionally intelligent people are free from bias, so they logically and correctly attribute the cause of success or failure unlike those who are low on emotional intelligence and are biased in their attributions. People with low emotional intelligence would attribute the cause of success or failure as per their own convenience ignore reality and escape from the situation for a short while. Robbins and Hunsaker, (2009) have emphasised the importance of being socially aware in order to be a successful person. As
emotions regulate social interactions (Campos, Mumme, Kermoian, & Campos, 1994), so, emotionally intelligent people were more socially aware than individuals low on emotional intelligence. People low on emotional intelligence demonstrated more resentment in their social interaction (Staw, Sutton & pelled 1994). Hence, they scored low on skill recognition.

Explanation for present result comes from characteristics of emotionally intelligent individuals researched by Baras (2009). Emotionally intelligent individuals focussed on the problem and were able to use their own competence as well as competence of others. They were able to solve the problem effectively. This helped them succeed in challenging tasks and adverse situations. Their ability to understand and manage emotions governed their actions resulting in fruitful outcomes. According to Baras (2009) emotional intelligence conditioned people to be flexible, responsive to others, and strong in the core. In comparison, individuals low on emotional intelligence were unable to understand their own competencies. They had rigid and inflexible thinking so were unable to work without structure and hence unable to solve problems in a stressful situation, resulting in low score on skill recognition dimension.

Davis (2009) noted that emotionally intelligent people achieved better results at work, school, and personal life and were more successful and fulfilled. Growth orientation helped them focus on their competencies, talent and expertise resulting in high score on skill recognition dimension and further contributing to high stress resiliency. Growth orientation in emotionally intelligent people explains the findings as to why they scored higher on stress resiliency. Nikolaou & Tsaousis (2002) assumed that people scoring high in emotional intelligence were expected to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures.
These individuals effectively utilized their resources to cope with the demands of stressful situations, whereas individuals low on emotional intelligence couldn’t cope well with stress. They indulged in avoidance behaviour. These individuals shirked responsibility and tried to escape from demands of situation, hence scored low on skill recognition. Another explanation of findings comes from research by Mayer and his colleagues (2000) who proposed that individuals vary in their ability to process information of emotional nature and in their ability to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition. They then speculated that this ability was seen to manifest itself in certain adaptive behaviours (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). Such adaptive behaviours can reason the current findings that individuals high on emotional intelligence would be high on the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency.

Wang & Veugelers (2008) demonstrated that emotionally intelligent individuals were high on self-esteem. These individuals knew that they were adorned with skills that helped them to fight with challenging situation and come out of unpleasant circumstances. They believed in learning from successful past experiences as well as from their mistakes that resulted in unpleasant or undesirable outcomes in the past. Emotionally intelligent people not only had respect for themselves but also for others around them. This helped them score high on skill recognition dimension and contributed to high stress resiliency. On the other hand, people who were low on emotional intelligence had low self-esteem. They regarded themselves as good for nothing. They had a bad opinion about themselves and so were unable to see their hidden talent. Hence, they had low skill recognition and were low on stress resiliency. In the organizations, individuals with low self-esteem feel frustrated. They fear taking up
responsibilities and have poor decision making skills. This further lowers their self-esteem. Fear of making mistakes and looking unwise is one of the greatest obstacles to developing high self-esteem. Low self-esteem of low emotionally intelligent people could be the reason as to why they scored low on the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency.

Two-way interaction between emotional intelligence and hardiness for the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency was found to be significant (F=47.03, p < 0.01) as shown in figure - 11. Individuals who were emotionally intelligent and high on hardiness faced the unfavourable situations in a challenging way and with their efforts and accurate use of skills turned them into favourable and desirable outcomes. This ability endorsed stress resiliency. In contrast, individuals low on emotional intelligence and hardiness were unable to meet the demands of unfavourable situations. They felt that they did not have the competence to meet the objectives, hence scoring low on skill recognition dimension.

Table - 3.5 shows the simple effect of emotional intelligence on each level of learned optimism, which was found significant for people who were low on learned optimism (F = 64.38, p < 0.01). Individuals low on emotional intelligence were low on learned optimism as they did not possess the intellect to gauge their skills, so attributed failure in tasks to internal characteristics scoring low on low skill recognition contributing to stress.

Table - 3.10 shows the simple effect of emotional intelligence on each level of hardiness for skill recognition. It was found to be significant for people who were high on hardiness (F = 86.46, p <0.01). Individuals who were high on both emotional intelligence and hardiness realized their potential and strongly
believed in their mastery of skills which helped them score high on skill recognition contributing to high stress resiliency.

‘Skill Recognition’ dimension of stress resiliency in relation to hardiness

Research findings show that main effect of hardiness for skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency was statistically significant (F = 40.04, p < 0.01). As shown in table - 3.1, it is in line with the hypothesis that individuals who were high on hardiness would be high on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals who were low on hardiness. Results have several explanations.

Firstly, it’s very important to realize ones’ own contribution to the success of a task. Individuals, who were high on hardiness, had an internal locus of control. As a result, they considered themselves to be better judge of their potential and were ready to take challenges. In the present study it was noted that, individuals high on hardiness had the tendency to recognize the role of their own abilities in producing successes. They focused their attention upon internal sources and their own capabilities, talent and expertise. Hence, scored high on skill recognition dimension. Whereas, individuals low on hardiness focussed their attention upon external sources, help received from others, luck, or the easiness of the tasks - reasons that had little to do with their own competence. Hence, individuals high on hardiness were high on skill recognition.

Secondly, individuals high on hardiness were high on commitment. The second dimension of hardiness is reflected in the ability to feel actively involved with others and a belief in the truth, value, and importance of one’s self and one’s experience (Wagnild & Young, 1991; Tartasky, 1993 and Huang, 1995). Such beliefs facilitate high skill recognition. According to Bigbee (1985), commitment
was reflected in one’s capacity to become involved, rather than feeling estranged. Individuals low on hardiness felt trapped in situation. They were unable to solve the problems effectively because of their inability to estimate their own competence and be confident about it, hence scoring low on skill recognition.

Thirdly, from an existential point of view, commitment represents a fundamental sense of one’s worth, purpose, and accountability, which protects against weakness while under adversity (Bigbee, 1985; Pollock, 1989; Sullivan, 1993). Inversely, with lowered confidence in abilities, task demands were more likely to be experienced as excessive, and therefore became source of stress. Individuals scoring high on hardiness, however, found adverse situations as meaningful and interesting (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). In the present study, Individuals low on hardiness scored low on skill recognition, as they were not sure about their proficiency. They did not feel accountable and were low on self worth. They believed whatever good was happening was because of some external forces. Hence, individuals scoring high on hardiness scored high on skill recognition contributing to high stress resiliency.

Fourthly, hardy individuals focused more on competencies, skills and talent during adverse circumstances and took up the challenges with commitment, which explains as to why they scored high on the skill recognition. In Rutter’s (2001) view, “the promotion of resilience does not lie in an avoidance of stress, but rather in encountering stress at a time and in a way that allows self confidence and social competence to increase through mastery and appropriate responsibility”. Such individuals prove to be an asset to the organizations.

Lastly, as self-esteem is another aspect of good health, it immensely helped the Individuals high on hardiness to withstand stress. Their positive
evaluations did not change if they landed up as failure in certain task or situation. Self-esteem expressed an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicated the extent to which the hardy individuals believed in their capabilities. Wells and Marwell (1976) postulated that positive health practices were an outcome of self-esteem. Individuals with high self-esteem were more functional and self-accepting and therefore more likely to perform healthy behaviours. Jex et al., (2001) found a positive relationship between self-esteem and positive health practices in adults. Individuals high on hardiness were committed and felt internal power to influence tasks and situations. They took up challenges and used their competence and skill to give their best. These attributes contributed to higher score on skill recognition further contributing to high stress resiliency.

Table - 3.8 shows the summary of simple effect of hardiness on each level of learned optimism for skill recognition, which was found significant for those who scored low on learned optimism \((F = 74.37, p < 0.01)\). Hardiness and learned optimism together contributed to high skill recognition. Individuals low on hardiness were not ready to encounter challenges head on and had lack of ability to identify their own skills. Being low on optimism, it was hard for them to visualise success in future. These individuals were demotivated to move in the direction where challenges were involved, hence they scored low on skill recognition and felt more stressed. Similarly, as shown in table - 3.11, simple effect of hardiness on each level of emotional intelligence was computed and results were found to be significant for individuals who were high on emotional intelligence \((F = 86.93, p <0.01)\). Individuals high on hardiness and emotional intelligence focused on their abilities and could visualize their success much
before they achieved it. This motivated them to move in the desired direction and resulted in high stress resiliency.

Three-way interaction of learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness was found significant on the skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency as shown in figure - 12, supporting the hypothesis that individuals who were high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness would be high on skill recognition dimension of stress resiliency in comparison to individuals low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness. Individuals high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness scored more on skill recognition dimension because they had a positive view of the world, they knew that negativity exists but were confident that these can be worked on and at times ignored in order to move further in life. They had a positive self-concept and knew that they had the ability to capitalize on opportunities. These individuals were open-minded creative and flexible in dealing with problems. They enjoyed trying new things and facing more challenges so that they could put their creativity and innovation at work. Innovation is the key element in providing aggressive top-line growth, and for increasing bottom-line results in the organizations (Davila et al. 2006). Conversely, individuals who were low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness were entangled in stress because of their inability to confront challenges. They were unable to assess themselves correctly. They had an unclear vision and lack of focus in life. They were uncomfortable - with the dynamism of situations and felt they were at mercy of others.

Help can be extended to individuals who are low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness. These individuals are caught in vicious
circle of self-defeating cognitive patterns so it is highly recommended to make them identify their cognitions, design training programs so that they can have a positive view of the world. Self-help tips for enhancing self-concept and self-esteem can be highly useful for them.

Implications

A number of implications have emerged from the results of the present study. In the present day scenario, organizations are taking the responsibility for the psychological and physical welfare of their employees. Healthy individuals strongly influence success of teams, which eventually contribute towards attainment of organizational goals. The research findings discussed above have recommendations for the human resource department of organizations. As it is evident with this research, individuals who score high on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness were more resilient than those who were low on learned optimism, emotional intelligence and hardiness. Considering this observation, there are three major recommendations for organizations in the following areas.

Recruitment and selection: If a position in organization requires a high degree of persistence to overcome adversity, selecting individuals with a higher degree of optimism will be fruitful. Improving the person-environment fit by selecting more optimists for the positions, selecting individuals with high emotional intelligence for big teams, appointing individuals high on hardiness for roles that need a dedicated, enthusiastic and committed staff. This will not only lead to financial benefits, by increasing productivity, but will also reduce the needless human suffering that comes from having individuals in environments where they are less likely to thrive and be successful. Learned optimism,
emotional intelligence and hardiness testing should certainly not be the sole basis for a hiring decision, but should be used in conjunction with other valid assessments, such as measures of job related abilities, professional knowledge, experience etc.

**Training and development:** An analysis of training need is essential requirement for individuals who are low on optimism, low on emotional intelligence or low on hardiness. The purpose of training need analysis is to determine whether there is a gap between and what is required for effective performance and present level of performance. It is necessary to determine whether resources required are available or not. After the identification of training needs, appropriate training programmes should be introduced. Training must be imparted so that employees can be further groomed on their development areas. Enhancing employees’ internal resources by inculcating learned optimism, getting awareness of emotions of oneself and others and being able to manage them effectively will contribute to better results at the workplace. Being high on the three components of hardiness i.e. commitment, challenge and control will have a stress buffering effect and contribute to promotion of stress resiliency. These individuals can learn optimism through training programs designed to teach them how to cope with and overcome adversity. They can be given feedback on their emotional intelligence so that they are able to develop on this ability. Tips of self-help can be useful for managers continuously facing challenging and stressful situations. Hardiness training programs focusing on commitment, control and challenge must be introduced. With the help of hardiness training and its focus on learned cognitive, behavioral and interpersonal skills enables the individuals to
face stress as a challenge. Focus on opportunities contributes to success of individuals in their respective fields and eventually to success of the organization.

**Strategic fitment:** To unleash vast human potential the organizations need to strategically identify attributes needed for particular jobs or tasks and identify and develop such talent by including strategic fitment in the organization chart. For this exercise, skills and behavioural competencies required for different positions in the organizations will have to be identified. For fresh recruitments, these behavioural competencies should also be kept in mind apart from knowledge and experience of the field. Individuals who are already in the organizations can be assessed on these parameters and development areas can be identified. Eventually relevant training programs can be introduced.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

- As in the present scenario, many female managers are contributing to success of the organizations, so gender differences may be studied further to explore the differences between attributes of female managers and male managers.

- The use of 360 degree feedback for performance measurement of managers may be used by future researchers in order to determine the relationship between performance and variables of present study.

- Researchers may take up influence of Job satisfaction on stress resiliency. Such research may contribute to address problems of turnover and absenteeism.

- Researchers may be taken up with individuals in the age group of 40 and above in managerial role so that findings can be generalized better.

- Researchers may study effect of training on the managers.