THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter mainly explains the conceptual framework and theoretical approaches of the main variables included in the study namely stress personality characteristics, self efficacy and coping behaviour.

2.1 STRESS

Stress is a response to a situation that an individual perceives as challenging or threatening to the his well being (Quick and Quick, 1984)

Stress in the present day interpretation denotes an overall process rather than describing any specific component of the process (O’ Driscoll, et al., 2003). As all concepts mature in explanation and descriptions, so did stress. Its various theories highlight its importance as a growing, omnipotent subject. Further, the term stress been involves four main components (a) stimulus, (b) response (physiological changes), (c) interaction between the stimulus and the response and (d) extensive combinations of all the factors i.e. the stimulus, the response and their interaction.

External or internal events which can be a threat to the integrity of the individual, and can lead to the disorganization of personality. Stress can predict loss of ego strength and support. Stress can be directed by external i.e interpersonal or intra-psychic (between own impulses and ego) factors resulting in anxiety disorders. Stress experience is subjective and circumstance based. The feeling of stress is an act in which there is a reference, not a casual relation, to objects that is intended or intentionally present.

Hans Selye in 1936 developed the model named General adaptation syndrome which includes the main 3 stages. Selye mainly focused his research on chronic stress and chemical changes in the body during every stage. He described that an individual has a capacity to respond or perceive to a biological stressor to maintain and to restore
his internal homeostasis. The initial hormonal reaction to stress is fight or flight stress response.

The process of the body’s struggle to maintain balance was termed as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), General, because the symptoms are non specific. Adaptation, implies face the threatening situation. It is termed as syndrome Syndrome, because it is a cluster of symptoms and can be differentiated from other clusters. General Adaptation Syndrome model is the initial scientific formulation of how stress has an effect on the individual, it can be further differentiated into 3 stages Alarm Reaction: in the initial phase and individual faces the shock with which the individual resistance capacity lowered and further defence mechanisms get activated. the chemical change in this phase is because of adrenaline discharge, excitability in the body and various symptoms occur like muscle tone, gastrointestinal problems. Depending on the frequency of the stressor and the condition of the individual, the periods of resistance may differ and the symptoms may get prolonged or get weakened.

Stage of Resistance: the stages almost opposite to the initial phase. In this phase the individual becomes adapted to a specific threat and that can be improvement or disappearance of symptoms. If the stressful even persists; individuals body adapts by the continuous state of resistance and stays in the state of arousal. problems begin to manifest when one finds himself in the same state with no recovery. Further, this moves to the last stage.

Exhaustion Stage: Adaptability has finite limits and beyond that circumscribed limit exhaustion sets in, if stress persists. This depletes the capacity of the body and is referred to as burnout, adrenal fatigue, or dysfunction. Indefinite persistence of the stressor leads to irreversible chemical scars i.e permanent damage due to persistence of stressors over long period of time.

Selye’s model developed an extensive interpretation which postulated that one’s adaptation energy is finite and should not be destroyed by excessive straining.
However, the model can design accomplishment through eustress, without the harmful consequences of distress. Thus, the emphasis is not on abolishing stress but to master it (Selye, 1983).

The model was a pioneering effort in the field of stress research but Pestonjee (1987) discovered its subsequent drawbacks. The first major drawback was that the research was initially carried out on infrahuman subjects with major emphasis on physical and environmental stressors which human organisms are not always confronted with. Second drawback was that Selye’s work was dependent on presence of a non specific physiological response but not all stimulation gave rise to that response and so the General Adaptation Syndrome may not hold true. The third issue was that the major stressors in the lives of human beings were intrapsychic or social, interpersonal factors which were not given the due place in this approach. The most important drawback was that in case of infra human subjects the reactions were more direct, observable and perceptible hence could be easily assessed but it did not hold true for humans as their responses were mediated by social, cultural filters and learnings.

THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF STRESS

This model of stress was designed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and stress was defined as ‘A particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing.’

Lazarus epitomised the role of an individual’s psychological state in reacting and then dealing with stress. He based the model on three issues, a) the conditions that determine the actuate the perception of an event i.e the process of Primary Appraisal, b) the second issue was, how an individual transacts with the situation once it is perceived as being stressful, bringing in the process of secondary appraisal which determines the nature of coping to be adopted: emotion focussed or problem focussed, the choice of which type was dependent on the resource capital available to the
individual, energy or material resource, belief about control over environment, problem solving skills. c) The third agenda focuses on the outcome of stress. This referred to the pattern of reaction that defined the presence of stress ranging from sentimental experiences, physical manifestations, and amendments in adaptive functioning to bodily reactions. The nature of reaction would thus either be a combination of all these or some depending on the secondary appraisal and coping mode used. Hence, Lazarus and Folkman termed it as a transactional process.

PERSON – ENVIRONMENT (P-E) FIT MODEL

French et al., (1974) advocated the model and named it Person – Environment (P-E) Fit deals which characterised as to how an individual’s characteristics and those of his environment affected his well being. Stress occurs because of an imbalance between the individual and the environment (Edwards, 1998; Harrison, 1978). Thus, it is neither the person nor the situation alone which cause stress experiences and strains. The salient features of the model are as mentioned below.

Needs-Supplies fit and Abilities-Demands Fit

This specifies to the extent of commensuration between the needs of the person and the supplies granted by the environment to fulfil those. The second fit points out to the bridge between demands of the environment and the skill of the person to meet those demands. P-E fit refers to both the measure of fit between what the person envisages support from the environment and the extent to which the environment can provide for those needs; and the provisions demanded by the environment and the scale to which the person is able to cope with those demands. Both kinds of misfits act as aggravating stressors.

Objective Fit Vs Subjective Fit

The objective fit includes breadth of the person and the environment free of tilt of bias introduced by the person, while the subjective fit includes this inclining bent. This leads to an open minded Person and an objective environment as well as to an
unobjective person and biased environment. Paralleling between the objective and subjective Person is called the accuracy of self assessment. Correlations between the objective and subjective environment bring out contact with reality. Cognitive deformities produce divergence between the objective and subjective components of fit. It is this subjective fit which causes stress resulting in illness. A similar analysis is provided by Stokol (1979) using the three concepts of magnitude, duration, and rate of change of environmental demands.

**COR OR CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES THEORY**

Hobfoll and his colleagues (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll and Freedy, 1993; Hobfoll and Shirom, 1993) have constructed a general framework that applied to understanding the process of stress. COR theory is based on the precept that individuals strive to attain, possess and protect that they value. These valuables as well as the means to protect them are termed as resources. Hobb (1988, 1989) suggested four general categories of resources. Each of these resources aid coping efforts. The theory postulates that individuals have access to four categories of resources; objects (e.g. physical objects- a house, a car), conditions (e.g. a steady job etc valued by people or contingents which facilitate acquisition of or protection of value or object resources ), personal characteristics/ personal resources , skills or characteristics which an individual possesses like self efficacy , locus of control, hardiness ,self esteem ,sense of mastery ,energy resources that facilitate other resource attainment i.e. they are valued to the extent that they allow access to other resources and forms of energy.

Stress occurs when these resources are at a stake of loss or when people invest in these resources and fail to achieve subsequently adequate gain from them. Lee and Ashforth ,1996 explained that ‘stress can occur when valued resources are lost, are inadequate to meet the demands confronted by the person, or do not generate expected returns on investment, producing a downward spiral in energy loss for the individual.’ Chronic strain or stress can arrive when there is a significant and ongoing draining of
one’s resources to meet demands. COR theory also highlights the environmental factors that contribute to stress and development of burnout.

LOADS OF INFORMATION MODELS

a) Stimulus overload/underload model

Suedfeld (1979) links stress to the parity of environmental experiences and as well as the structure of experiences. Thus, some events may be acutely aversive but not involve stimulating levels outside the optimal zone. Corollary is, events may be positive in nature, but their bulk makes them stressful. A U-shaped relationship is contemplated between stimulus load and stress, with stress being caused by both stimuli underload and overload.

Suedfeld identified factors that were considered important for the assessment of the optimal level of stimulus load. Whilst physiological arousal is crucial, personality variables locus of control, cognitive complexity and extraversion-introversion are important in the evaluative declaration of the optimum level of stimulation of the person. Other determinants are age and educational level. Antonovsky (1987) points out that the overload underload balance is determined more by perceived rather than real resources.

b) Optimal flow and mood model

Hamilton (1981) scripted this model along the lines of stimulus overload-under load model. It posits a similar type of U-shaped relationship between stress and stimulation though he also added the aspect of relationship between optimal information flow and mood. Positive moods he presumed were an outcome of optimal information; negative moods reflected a mismatch between the optimal level and the actually available stimulation. Negative moods affected behaviour negatively. Human beings are not totally susceptible to environmental stimulation. This susceptibility to is monitored by Attention Regulators (AR’s) which are voluntary mental (cognitive) mechanisms acting to optimize information flow, which either augment or reduce the information
available. One should use one’s ARs to self-regulate one’s experience. These mechanisms are voluntarily controlled by the individual and so is the optimal level of stimulation received.

**SYSTEMS MODEL OF STRESS**

The Systems Model of Stress proposed by Lumsden (1975), emphasises the ‘system’, which signifying an interrelated constellation of parts. The stress system is perceived of as an open system, which is uninterruptedly is interacting with the environment and its processes are dynamic and homeostatic in nature emphasising that it is more than a simple equilibrium model.

The coping process which may be affected due to stressors over time are divided into three levels which are interconnected and interrelated at each other. When the stressor impinges upon the individual the process of appraisal begins. Appraisal brings into play the second stage coping, which is based on the response repertoire of the appraisor. The individual copes by bringing about certain changes in his responsesthat may be either physiological, psychological, behavioural or interpersonal/societal and can be adaptive or maladaptive in nature. The maladaptive responses act as endogenous stressors in the future, while the adaptive response produces adequate coping. The process continues giving responses either till the body is restored to equilibrium or maladaptive responses may result in disintegration of the system completely (as in the case of coronary problems, psychosomatic disorders etc) (Agrawal, 2001). These processes function in a chain like circular fashion. Thus, stressor, appraisal and coping are related to each other in a cyclical fashion. Various mediating factors enter into the stressor- coping relationship. Some of these are age, sex, birth order, marital status, child rearing practices. Psychological factors such as degree of motivation, degree of hypersensitivity to the demands of everyday life and appraisal, degree of introversion-extraversion, strength of super ego, nature of self esteem and self image (Levine and Scotch, 1970).
All researchers therefore agree on the relational character of stress which is not related simply to either the person or the environment but is due to the inadequacy of the relation between individual resources on the one hand and environmental demands on the other. Further, the subjective meaning of the situation to the individual and his appraisal of the situation also influences the degree of stress. Agrawal, 2001 stressed that ‘the three variables which interact with each other to produce stress are Personality and experiences of the person, his activities and present aims, and the socio cultural conditions.’

2.2 PERSONALITY AND STRESS

Personality being the ground for subjectivity brings out the differences in characteristics and dispositions among people and moderates the effect of stress. Hogan (1991) referred to personality as ‘the relatively stable pattern of behaviours and consistent internal states that explain a person’s behavioural tendencies’. Personality has internal elements that we infer from the observable behaviours, are relatively stable and external display sets that are observable behaviours that we rely on to identify someone’s personality overtly.

HANS EYSENCK’S BIOLOGICAL TRAIT THEORY OR THREE FACTOR MODEL

Eysenck’s theory was based on the assumption that individuals possess dispositions called traits which prompt them to respond in distinct ways. Traits are fundamental building blocks of personality. Human behaviour and personality are an organised hierarchy. The simplest level behaviour can come in terms of specific responses though some of these responses can be linked together to form general habits. At an even higher level various traits are linked to form secondary, higher order factors or super factors. Eysenck found that there were natural structures in personality and the technique of factor analysis allowed the detection of those and research yielded evidence for two basic dimensions that could subsume all other traits: extraversion–
introversion and neuroticism. The dimensions were extensions in the form of continuum ends.

The extraversion–introversion dimension described the range of expected behaviour. His assessment of extraverts was that they would be “outgoing, impulsive, and uninhibited, having many social contacts and frequently taking part in group activities, be sociable, would need to have people to talk to i.e. would require external stimulation constantly” (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1968.). An introvert would be “a quiet, retiring sort of person, introspective, fond of books rather than people; reserved and distant except to intimate friends”. Of course, most people would fall somewhere between these two extremes, but each individual differs. The second major dimension in Eysenck’s model is neuroticism. High scores on this dimension indicate a tendency to respond emotionally. We sometimes refer to people high in neuroticism as unstable or highly emotional as they have strong emotional reactions to even minor frustrations and the recovery from the effect takes too long. They are more easily excited, angered, and depressed than most of us. Those falling on the other end of the neuroticism dimension were less likely to fly off the handle and less prone to large swings in emotion.

Research findings later led Eysenck to add a third super trait: psychoticism. Eysenck (1982) said that people who scored high on this dimension were construed as “egocentric, aggressive, impersonal, cold, lacking in empathy, impulsive, lacking in concern for others, and generally unconcerned about the rights and welfare of other people”. These three higher-order factors’ are characterized by the fact that they are stable and independent of one another (Hampson, 1988). Eysenck said, individuals varied on the three dimensions based on their biological inclinations and how it predisposed an individual to respond in certain ways to environmental stimulation reflecting thereby that the behaviour output or responses were due to the biological substrate /tendencies interacting differently with the environmental forces and that individuals retained their positions on the three dimensions across time.
(Conley, 1984, 1985) and that there is a substantial heritable component in these individual differences on the three dimensions (Eaves et al., 1989; Loehlin, 1989).

**SIXTEEN PERSONALITY FACTOR THEORY (CATTELL, 1949)**

The basic structure for Cattell is the trait concept which assumes that behaviour follows some pattern and regularity over time and across situations. Cattell made distinctions between traits with a particular essence in mind. The first distinction was among ability traits, temperament traits and dynamic traits and the second between surface and source traits.

Ability traits reveal the skills and abilities that aid an individual to function effectively. Temperament traits refer to the emotional aspect and stylistic quality of behaviour. Dynamic traits amplify the striving, motivational life which clarify the goal importance for the individual. All these capture the major stable elements of personality.

The distinction between surface traits and source traits correlated to the level of observed behaviour. Surface traits expressed behaviour on superficial level and may appear to go together but do not necessarily have a common cause. A source trait on the other hand expressed association among behaviours that do vary together to form a unitary, independent dimension of personality. These source traits represent the building blocks of personality and Cattell used factor analysis to discover source traits and identified 16 such personality dimensions which could explain the organization of the personality of any individual. Cattell conceptualised that the uniqueness of personality was due to traits (McAdams, 1997) which were gathered by using different kinds of data. To account for the general nature as well as specificity of personality the distinction of common traits that were visible in all personalities and unique traits which were specific to an individual and could take the form of a peculiar interest were explained. These specific traits could also be called as personality dispositions. Although Cattell was concerned about consistency of behaviour and structure of
personality, he also focussed on process and motivation which earmarked differences in behaviour output. He emphasised that the course of action people take in specific situations and patterns of behaviour go together and form innate tendencies, called, ergs and environmentally determined motives called sentiments. Generally activities of individuals involve effort to satisfy motives and sentiments in the service of their biological goals, yet it is the state and role to be played by the individual that determines the variability in behaviour output. Cattell’s theory of personality suggests that behaviour expresses the individual’s traits that operate in a situation, the ergs and sentiments associated with the attitudes relevant to the situation and the state and role components that may vary from time to time or situation to situation.

**THE BIG FIVE MODEL—A MODERN THEORY OF PERSONALITY**

The Big Five emerged as a general model for describing the personality structure. The model stems from the work of Cattell, who emphasised the biological/genetic approach to describe the contribution to source traits. McCrae and Costa and Dye’(1991) gave the most comprehensive structure of personality and the hallmark of their research was that each of the dimensions namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, had six facets which were articulated to explain the structure thoroughly.

**Neuroticism**

The dimension places people along a continuum according to their emotional stability and personal adjustment. People who experience pangs of emotional distress, are maladjusted, have instable and wide swings score high on counts of neuroticism. Individuals high on neuroticism tend to become more upset over daily stressors than those low on this dimension (Gunthert et al., 1999; Lahey, 2009). Although there are many different kinds of negative emotions—sadness, anger, anxiety, guilt—that may have different causes and require different treatments, research consistently shows that people prone to one kind of negative emotional state often experience others also.
Individuals’ lows in neuroticism tend to be calm, well adjusted, and not prone to extreme emotional reactions. Neuroticism prompts unrealistic ideas and excessive cravings, anxiety, moodiness, and irritability (Pawlik-Kienlen, 2007).

The second personality dimension, **Extraversion**, places extreme extraverts at one end and extreme introverts at the other. Extraverts are very sociable people who also tend to be energetic, optimistic, friendly, and assertive. Introverts do not typically express these characteristics, but it would be incorrect to say that they are not social or without energy. As one team of researchers explained, “Introverts are reserved rather than unfriendly, independent rather than followers, even-paced rather than sluggish” (Costa & McCrae, 1992) in an interpersonal sense. The characteristics that make up the extravert dimension include an active imagination, a willingness to consider new ideas, display of positive emotions and seeking out stimulation in the company of others and among others is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world, gregariousness, warmth, assertiveness, activity and excitement seeking (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

**Openness to experience**

The concept was derived from Conan’s study (1974). McCrae & Costa, (1990) referred to it as “Receptiveness to new ideas, approaches, and experiences”. Digman, (1990) and John, (1990) found that it also involves the tendency to fantasize, sensitivity to art and beauty, awareness of one’s emotions, preference for novelty, intellectual curiosity and a tendency to be liberal in values (Barrick & Mount, 1991), more risk taking and more willingness to consider diverse opinions (George & Zhou, 2001; Lauriola & Levin, 2001). Openness to Experience is closely associated with divergent thinking and out of the box creations (McCrae, 1987). This dimension explains the depth and variable pattern in a individual’s style of imagination and urge for experiences. People higher in Openness are unconventional and independent thinkers. Those low on openness tend to prefer the familiar rather than seeking out something new. Given this description, it is not surprising that innovative scientists and
creative artists tend to be high in openness (Feist, 1998; Rubinstein & Strul, 2007). Some researchers refer to this dimension as Intellect, although it is certainly not the same as intelligence. The preservers having low openness to experience are traditional, consrcticted and prefer familiarity (Howard & Howard, 1995).

People who are high on the **Agreeableness** dimension are helpful, trusting, and sympathetic. Those on the other end tend to be antagonistic and sceptical. Agreeable people prefer cooperation over competition. In contrast, people low on Agreeableness like to fight for their interests and beliefs. Researchers find that people high on Agreeableness have more pleasant social interactions and fewer quarrelsome exchanges than those low on this dimension (Donnellan et al., 2004; Jensen-et al.,2001). They also are more willing to help those in need (Grazian et al.,2007). **Hence high scores are linked** to altruism, nurturance, care, emotional support, sociability, friendliness, considerateness, empathy, trust compliance & tender mindedness. The dimension also exudes tolerant and pro-social behaviour approach. Individuals not scoring high on this are overly competitive, hostile, indifferent, self centred and jealous (Howard and Howard 1995).

**Conscientiousness**

It is the level of self control as well as desire for achievement, order and persistence (Costa et al., 1991). It has three facets to ponder upon-achievement orientation, dependability & orderliness. It is associated with responsibility and self discipline. Conscientiousness brings out dutifulness, order, competence, achievement striving and deliberative action and significantly alters performance (Howard and Howard ,1995). People on the high end of this dimension are organized, plan oriented, and determined. Those on the low end are apt to be careless, easily distracted from tasks, and undependable. People high on conscientiousness typically live longer than those low on this dimension (Kern and Friedman, 2008). Because the characteristics that define conscientiousness often show up in achievement or work situations, some
researchers have referred to this dimension as will to achieve or task oriented behaviour and are hence less prone to higher degree of stress.

2.3 SELF EFFICACY

Self efficacy is a cultivated human mark of thinking rather than a genetically inherited one. It begins in childhood and continues throughout the life span. Self efficacy is based on the tenets of social cognitive theory, which in turn, is built on three ideas. First, humans have powerful symbolizing capacities for cognitively creating models of their experiences. Second, by observing themselves in relation to these cognitive models, people then become skilled at self regulating their actions as they navigate the ongoing environmental events. Thus, cognitive reactions influence the surrounding environmental forces that, in turn, shape subsequent thoughts and actions. Third, people and their personalities are a result of these situation-specific reciprocal interactions of thoughts – environment-thoughts. The development of self-efficacy is throughout life as people acquire new skills, experiences, and understanding at various levels (Bandura, 1992). With these ideas a developing child uses symbolic thinking, with specific reference to understanding of cause and effect relationships, and learns self-efficacious, self referential thinking.

Bandura (1986) defined perceived self efficacy as ‘people’s judgments of their capacities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances.’ It is concerned not with the skills set has but with the judgments of what one can do with the skills one possesses. Those who have self efficacy will divert and sustain their attention, effort towards the contents of the situation, and when faced with obstacles, they individuals resist harder and persist longer. They are inclined to attribute failures to insufficient efforts (Lee and Bobko, 1994).

Bandura (1994) described the individuals having higher self efficacy as self monitoring, having higher sense of commitment and a higher sense of resilience in case of setbacks and one’s looking for goal accomplishment which is in contrast to
individuals who lack in self efficacy avoid taking up challenges, and sense that tasks and circumstances are beyond their capabilities, and always set their mind on personal failures and negative outcomes, and quickly lose confidence in their abilities. Individuals with lower self efficacy tend to change combat strategies frequently or, abandoning one’s goal which is not the case with individuals with higher self efficacy. Efficacy expectations differ in magnitude, universality, and strength.

Self efficacy is different from self esteem which is the pride in who one is as a human being, often boosted by the satisfaction of having accomplished a difficult task. Self esteem has a social aspect to it, to the extent that one experiences increased self esteem when one gains the respect of others. Self efficacy is much like the concept of expectancy. The major difference is that expectancy is concerned with a specific activity at a particular time, whereas self efficacy is concerned with the general feeling that a person is or is not capable in some domain of life.

In this social learning jist, expectations of personal efficacy are based on the following sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states.

Wood and Bandura (1989), suggested the four sources of self efficacy:

1. **Mastery Experiences**: events whose successful performance strengthens beliefs in one’s capabilities, whereas failures decrease those beliefs.
2. **Modeling**: individuals have a tendency to match their capabilities with those of others in terms of abilities and knowledge and if they succeed at a difficult task, the individual’s own self esteem can be strengthened. If the role model is weak then the individual’s self efficacy also becomes weak.
3. **Social Persuasion**: Individuals can be encouraged by others who express confidence in their competency to accomplish a difficult task.
4. **Psychological Responses**: when symptoms of stress and fatigue are experienced, individuals interpret them as an indication that the task will exceed their
capabilities, reducing their feelings of efficacy. Techniques that lessen the experience of fatique will aid the feeling of efficacy while completing a difficult task.

Self efficacy mediates behaviour (Bandura ,1982). Brown and Inrogue ,1978, Schule ,1981 and Weinberg et al., 1979 found that ‘People with higher self efficacy persist in difficult tasks longer than the people with lower self efficacy and is an accurate predictor of performance (Bandura and Reese Adams ,1982). It is also an efficient predictor of emotions under stress (Bandura 1978). This quality not only emphasizes capability to perform a task but also refers to people’s judgment of one’s ability (Hoy, 2004) People high on perceived self efficacy combat situations better than those low on self efficacy.

2.4 COPEING

According to Lazarus and Folkman ‘coping is the cognitive and behavioural effort to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person’. Coping is made up of the responses that an individual utilizes to combat situations. It is frequently equated to adaptation.

Cohen and Lazarus, 1979 ‘Coping is defined as efforts, both action oriented and intra-psychic to manage (i.e. to master, tolerate, reduce, minimize) environmental and internal demands and resources ‘.

Coping effectiveness depends on the aspects of the stressful situation, which strategy is used and the individual’s cognitive appraisal of that situation. Billing and Moos (1981) distinguished between the three modes of coping i.e. active- cognitive, active- behavioural and avoidance. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) classified coping strategies in two categories- emotion focused coping and problem focused coping. Emotion focused coping is marked by the conscious regulation of emotions. It typically includes accepting responsibility, positive reappraisal, acceptance, denial and/ or cognitive and behavioural avoidance or distraction. In contrast, problem focused coping attempts to manage the stressful problems or situations. Problem focused coping
strategies are intended to get the person who is experiencing stress to change his or her behaviour or to develop a plan of action to deal with the stress and follow it. The problem focused strategies include active coping, direct problem solving and planning (Eisenberg et al., 1992, Folkman and Lazarus, 1988). In most stressful incidents, people employ both emotion and problem focused coping strategies but use emotion focused when the situation seems to be unchangeable and use problem focused more often in situations which they see as relatively modifiable and changeable situations.

This model emphasizes the liaison between the person and the environment, taking into expanse the characteristics of the person and the nature of the environmental event. Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) defined psychological stress defined as “a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/her resources and endangering his/her well being”

The transactional model approaches stress from a cognitive perspective and is termed as a subjective experience. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), distinguish three types of cognitive appraisals of a situation:

1. Primary appraisal
2. Secondary appraisal
3. Reappraisal

Primary appraisal dwells on the judgment of the encounter between the person and the environment, and whether it is designated as irrelevant, benign- positive or stressful. Stressful outcomes can take three forms: harm/loss, threat and challenge.

how can individual assesses the situation is the second aspect to be attended to it is labelled as being stressful, and the process of secondary appraisal begins, which determines the nature of coping to be adopted. Only two modes of coping are possible: Emotion focused coping mode and Problem focused coping. The choice depends on the resources available to the person. Certain personal constraints may, however, mitigate the use of these coping resources.
Reappraisal refers to a fresh appraisal based on new information input from the environment. A reappraisal is simply an appraisal that follows pursuit of the previous one and modifies it. Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) commented that reappraisals are the result of cognitive coping efforts; these are called defensive reappraisals and are characterized by an attempt to reinterpret the past more positively or to deal with present harm and threats by reviewing them in less damaging and/or threatening ways.

The description of the theoretical perspective on Stress, Personality characteristics, Self Efficacy and Coping behaviour clearly reveal that the stress experience is highly subjective, depending upon the individual’s resources, personality characteristics, perceptual capabilities and coping behaviour. Thus individual differences exist in stress experience and coping behaviour.