

We are all living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where hardly any individual will be there who has not experienced stress or tension. While making efforts to cope up with all these challenges, problems, changing times and situations in life the individual experience stress. The factors that cause stress in our daily life are either accidental or man made. Stress has become an integral part of our daily life and has also become a primary cause of our physical, cognitive and behavioral health problems. When in stress the individual becomes mentally disturbed, experiences despair conflicts and pressure etc. If an individual is not capable to deal with the stressful situation then he will suffer from various kinds of physical or psychological disorder like depression, stupor, mania etc. He also suffers from problems likes heart ailments, diabetes, ulcer, brain damage, blood pressure etc. which are the result of stress.

In coming years if we people want to live harmoniously with stress then we will require strong mental health. Only psychologists and people associated with psychology will play an important role in this situation. If you want to live a mentally healthy life, we need to change out life style and habits. To fight against stress, an individual should give importance to balanced diet, time management, exercise, music, and the most important yoga and meditation. All these should become part of our daily life style.

### **Meaning - Nature, Model and Source of Stress.**

#### **1. Definition-Nature :**

Stress is purely a scientific word. As per engineering, it means “external force directed on physical object or substance” which gives rise to stress and the substance changes. In psychology, external stimulus tries to bring change. In an individuals physical-mental, internal-external situations, mental state that arise out of situation is called as stress. Biologist and medical science say that stress is physical, psychological or impulsive factor which makes an individual feel physical or mental stress. It is such situation of threat, frustration or conflict which has become burden for the physical and mental energy of the individual. Stress is an external event or stimulus which produces tension or strain. If we see different definition “Stress means disappointment, conflict or pressure which arises a challenging situation for the individual’s physical and mental energy.”

“Stress is the pattern of responses an organism makes to stimulus event or situation that disturb the equilibrium and exceeds person’s ability to cope.”

“Stress means extreme experience which are there for long time and are also challenging associated with impulsive behavioural and bodily changes”

Negative stress is a response that creates an imbalance in our physical mental activities. The development in science and technology has modernised and improved the quality of life but also resulted in many new problems which lead to stress. In other words stress has become integral part of our life.

Stressful situation gives rise to "fight or flight" reactionary processes in an individual which raise the level of cortisol of adrenals secretions in the body. Stress experienced for short time makes a person active and alert where as long term stress has adverse effect on the health of the individual. An individual can not control stress but can definitely choose how to react to it. Let us see the nature of stress...

**(I) There are three type of stress:**

Depression, conflict and pressure

**(II) Degree of stress is dependent on many factors :**

Whether the degree of stress is more or less will depend on the individual's capacity to meet with the challenging situations, make adjustment, it's characteristics and how much support he gets from the external environment.

**(III) Effect of stress is specific :**

In terms of stress it can be said that some of the reaction to stressful situation are general and some are specific. In any one situation, different people experience, difference degree of stress. In this way an individual can experience specific kind of stress. The effect of stress depend on factors like individual's, age, gender, profession, economic condition, interest, skill and other individual-social factors. Hence the effect of stress in a individual is specific and different at different time.

**(IV) Some times reason for stress are unknown :**

Many situations are worrisome and challenging because of which stress is experienced but the reason are known. We feel the stress but cannot know the reason for it.

Stress because of unknown reason can be due to suppressed feelings, anger, motivation, so on.

**(V) One has to price to face stress :**

Every individual in his life span has to face stress and also make adjustment with it. To learn, to deal with extreme stressful situation, individual has to compromise with strength, tools and time. To be competent enough to face stressful situation, one has to make lots of adjustment and sacrifices.

**(VI) Stress decreases the competence of an individual :**

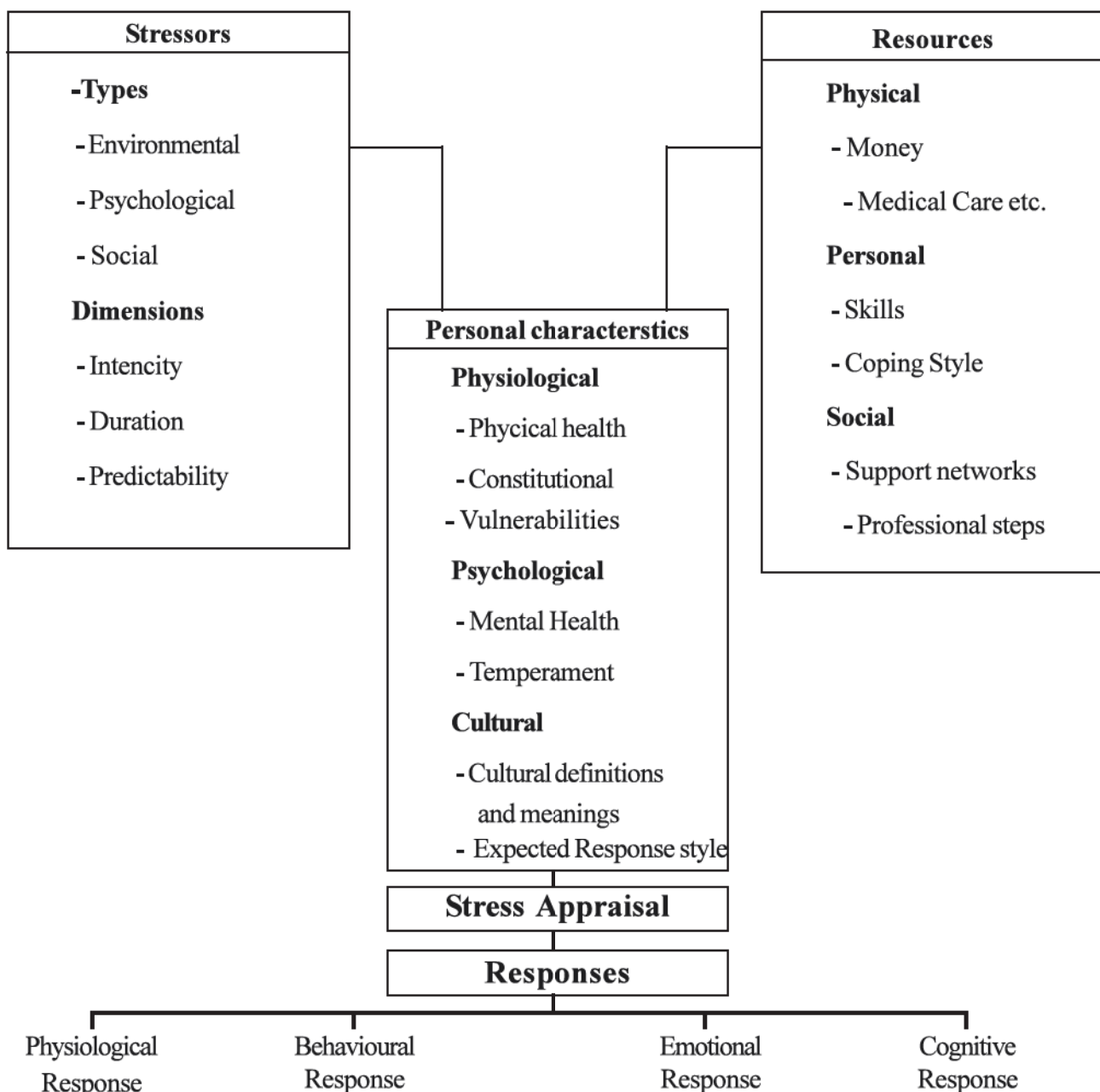
In extreme stressful condition, individual experiences problems in perception, cognition, thinking is obstructed, lack of understanding and so response also becomes stagnant and limited. In such situation, individual can not solve problem because of rigid behavior and also obstructions arise in behavior change. If the intensity of stress is high and for long time then it has negative effect on the capability or competency of the individual to deal with it.

**(VII) Stress can also have positive effect :**

Stress is always negative and has negative effect is also wrong because sometimes it can also have positive effect the individual to cope up with stressful situation, think of new ways, alternative resources, and find out new creative and constructive solutions.

**2. Table and model of Lazarus.**

In the decade 1950 to 1960, psychologists had a debate regarding what is more important behavior or cognitive appraisal. After that Richard Lazarus gave his views based on thoughts our feelings. He then tried to study the degree of stress on individual and concluded that, incidents or situation are not bad, but how the individual perceives it, interprets and makes an appraisal of it, whose effect is either positive or negative on stress.



**Figures-5.1: A Theoretical Model of stress process**

Figure 5.1 is a theoretical model of stress appraisal by Richard Lazarus. Richard Lazarus has classified these appraisals in three types.:

**(I) Nature of stressors (II) Characteristics of the individual (III) Resources available to face the stressful situation**

**(I) Nature of stress :** Different types of external and internal stimuli which give rise to stress are called stressors. They are classified into three groups and are as follows environmental stressors : Noise, Pollution, crowding etc... are called as environmental stressors. Psychological : Depressions guilt, remorse, conflict frustration, pressure etc... are called as psychological stressors. Social stressor: fights, loneliness, break in relationship etc are called as social stressors.

The effect of the stressors will depend on its intensity, duration and effectiveness. High intensity and long duration stressors, give rise to more stress and if the effectiveness of the stressor is less then the individual feels less stress. Predictability also plays an important role in stressful situation.



**(II) Characteristics of the individual** “ Stress also depend on the personal charactersties of individual and how he reacts to it, these can be physical, psychological and cultural.

Physical characteristics include physical health, constitution of the body, bodily capacity and internal weaknesses. A person suffering from sickness has got weak body constitution and capacity so he/she will experience more stress then a physically healthy individual.

Psychological characteristics include mental health temperamental and self concept A person who has got good and sound mental health is happy go lucky and has got high self concept and he/she will experience less stress.

Cultural characteristics include cultural definition and its meaning expected response style, people who behave according to the cultural standards experience less stress.

**(III) Resources available to face the stressful situation :**

The following are the individual to deal with stress.

**Physical resources** include money, medical care & attention, physical facilities etc...

**Personal resources** includes personal skills, expertise and coping style.

**Social resources** include social support, family, relation, help from community, professional help etc...

All the three resourses are easily available to the individual than he experience less stress.

An individual evaluates stress on the basis of his characteristics, resource and stressors and then decide how to react to it. Richard Lazarus has classified these evalvations into two types:

**(a) Primary appraisal :** At this stage the person makes an initial appraisal about the seriousness of the event. i.e. what is happening and whether this event is good? Is it relevant or irrelevant ? Is it stressful and threatening ? If it is stressful what would be its effects and how much? whether it deserves responses or not ? On the basis of these types of question an individual does primary appraisal of the situation.

**(b) Secondary Appraisal :** Once a decision to respond to the stressful situation is taken then the second stage of secondary appraisal comes into operation. In this stage the individual makes an evaluation of his personal and social resourses and alternatives available for dealing with stress-whether these resources are sufficient and useful to meet the stressful situations ? At the end the person implements the best alternative.

There are several other factors which influence these both types of appraisal like-

One such factors is the past experience of dealing with such stressful conditions. If one has handled similar situations in the past successfully, then the present situations seen less threatening. But if the person has no such past experiences it is possible that the present situation is perceived serious and threatening and that he would feel that I would not be able to cope with it hence he will experience severe stress.

If the person has confidence in his own competence and efficiency to deal with the situation an that he would be able to control howsoever threatening situation or its consequence then he would experience less amount of stress. Absence of such confidence will lead to severe stress.

The experience and outcome of different stressors may vary from individual to individual.

### **3. Sources of stress:**

Twentieth century was the age of tension but the present age is known as the age of stress. Studies in the medical science increasingly show that stress is the root cause of several physical ailments. Stress has become a repetitive problem. It is not easy to establish and maintain adjustments with various types of challenges in life-family, profession, social, political, physical geographical changes or challenges can lead to stress. Over and above these changes, the daily problems and ordinary events also can cause stress and strain. There are three sources of stress and they are as follows

(I) Traumatic events

(II) Recent life experiences

(III) Hassles, everyday problems

(I) Individual can accept minor changes in life but sudden traumatic events like fire, earthquake, being a hostage, tsunami, being a witness to a gory crime, war, terrorism, kidnapping etc have negative effect as stress in many people. There are long lasting effects of stress and the side effects of such events may occur even after a lapse of sometime also. For eg a victim of earthquake or fire has survived the traumatic event but often they relive the horror, feels depressed, report might mares, stop speaking due to shock and so on. These kinds of traumatic events are however rare but their negative effects are very intense and harmful

(II) Recent life experience bring change cumulate and contribute to stress. Events in family like death of a spouse, divorce, marriage, personal life events like change in residence change in food habits, personal injury, event at the work place like retirement, trouble with the boss, financial matters like mortgage of property, shortage of finances, unemployment, loss of finances and such other events and experiences in life contribute to stress in different degrees.

(III) These involve the happenings in everyday life for eg, preparing children for schools, helping them in their studies , care of family, attending to various emergencies etc are daily hassles for a housewife. Some working women have an additional burden of these daily hassles. Events like no alarm signal in the clock, reaching late to the examination centre, pencil not functioning properly, break down of light and fans in examination hall etc are all conditions which contribute to stress, Such hassles and struggles are usual but they make our life full of desperation and become stressor, which later cause stress and strain.

#### **Reactions to stress :**

There are three types of reactions to stress and they are as follows:

##### **(I) Bodily Reaction :**

When an individual or animal experience an external threat, he is in need of an amount of energy to give immediate reactions to meet the situation. At that moment the autonomic nervous system becomes active and operational to satisfy the needs of extra energy.

Walter Canon in 1920 has described the entire physiological mechanism which is involved in the process of meeting the threat of the situation. In this mechanism the neurons, the nervous system and the endocrine system become very active. Canon describes this reactionary process as “fight of flight”.

The origin of physiological reactions related to stress is in hypothalamus, which lies in brain. Hypothalamus is known as the centre of stress. Also in the time of arisis hypothalamus initiates actions along two pathways gland.

(1) Through autonomic nervous system. (2) Through activity of the pituitary gland.

Autonomic nervous system in divided into two parts (1) Sympathetic system and (2) Parasympathetic system.

The Sympathetic system through it's operation provides extra energy to the organism needed to meet the challenge. On the sympathetic system being active the respiratory processes become fast and deep there is increase of the heart beats, arteries get contracted hence there is rise in blood pressure. Moreover because of changes in the muscles of throat and nose, there is more flow of air to the lungs. There are changes in facial expression related to different emotions. The digestive system is arrested a little. The adrenal glands release a large amount of catecholamine. These changes are the indicators of stress. As a result there are physiological changes as seen alike in fight or flight response. The hypothalamus activates the pituitary gland, which then releases corticosteroid which provides energy.

The secretions from the pituitary gland stimulate the thyroid gland and the adrenal glands also the secretions of these glands produce several changes like release of more blood cells in the bone-hollow, production of more sugar in the pancreas, thickening of blood etc which are very necessary to make the body system more active.

## **2. Behavioral and cognitive reactions:**

The behavioral reactions of the person under stress depend on the intensity of stress.

Under the condition of low intensity stress the person indulges in the reactions like eating, aggression, sexual behaviors etc. It also motivates the individual in the direction of goal achievement and improves his performance.

Under the situation of long duration stress, it leads the individual to maladaptive behavior. As a result the person becomes irritated, impatient, weak and mild. If a person can handle and control high intensity stress then he will have no behavioral problems.

Sometimes the high intensity stress causes obstructions in behavior and it leads to repression also sometimes the person feels quite helpless and also becomes inactive.

The cognitive perception and interpretation of the stress situation sometime becomes damaging to the self respect and self interest of the person. Thus the person becomes overwhelmed and his cognitive functions are affected very badly the individual become more attentive to the threatening situation and his ability to meet the challenges is affected very badly. There are negative effects on the persons memory, creative thinking, judgment and decision making for eg. sailor stuck up in the storm with his boat remains indecisive, an individual going for a job interview because of stress commits errors in answering very easy questions and even the questions he knows very well.

## **3. Emotional reactions :**

There are several types of emotional reactions under stress. If the stress is perceived as an excitement and challenge which can be handled then the positive emotions like happiness, joy, exuberance are experienced.

But if stress is interpreted as a threatening situation it leads to insecurity and is uncontrollable then it has negative effects like fear, depression, anger etc. Such negative emotional reactions are an obstacle to our



effort to face the stress and strain. The stresses which people experience vary in terms of intensity, duration, complexity and predictability.

(I) Intensity – high or low

(II) Duration – short term or long term

(III) Complexity – less or more complex

(VI) Predictability – unexpected or expected

Usually more intense, prolonged, complex and unanticipated stress have negative consequences. Moreover persons experience of stress depend on his physiological structure health and strength. A person with poor physical health and weak constitution naturally will be more vulnerable to stress. The intensity of the persons experience of stress also depends on certain psychological factors like mental health, temperament, self-concept etc. The cultural context in which people live also determines the nature of reactions people would give under various stressful conditions. Resources like money, medical facilities, personal and social skills and the particular style of coping to deal with the stress etc play a very important role in the persons experience of stress. Thus all these factors determine the appraisal of a given stressful situation.

### **1.Frustration :**

There are several hindrances in the path of goal achievement but when the person because of these hindrances is not able to reach the goal then what he feels is called frustration.

Needs are the motivating force for activities. We are motivated by various biological, psychological, social needs. The efforts for satisfaction of these needs leads to the goals. For example the hunger or thirst need directs the efforts of the individual to the goal of getting food or water. But if there are obstacles or hindrances in satisfying the needs then the individual experiences frustration.

Reasons for frustration can be individualistic or environmental. For eg. An individual wants to become an actor or actress, wants to even become a singer but his looks and voice are on obstacles in his need satisfaction, then we can say that frustration is because of individual factors. There is a wide range of environmental and social obstacles which are sources of frustration.

Effect of frustration can be minor or major but it definitely is a serious threat to the well being and survival of the individual.

### **2. Conflict :**

When there are more than one goals or options before a person and he is not able to make a choice of only one there is mental conflict.

In conflict there is more than one option in front of the individual. He is supposed to select one out of many which is a difficult task. Such a conflict if continuous and constant leads to loss of emotional equilibrium.

#### **Basically there are three types of conflicts:**

##### **Approach-approach conflict:**

In such a type of conflict there are two alternatives before the individual and both are acceptable but the individual has to select only one out of them. For eg on a holiday either to go for a picnic with friends or to go for a movie with family are the two options from which the individual has to select one. He likes both of them, this is approach conflict.

### **Avoidance-Avoidance conflict:**

In such a situation there are more than one alternatives before the individual but both are unacceptable to him. But he has to select one as a lesser evil. He is in situation of dilemma a valley in front and a deep well behind. For eg either to do a job which is not liked or to remain unemployed, both the options are not acceptable but the individual has to however select any one out of the two.

### **Approach – Avoidance Conflict :**

In such a situation there is only one alternative before the individual. This alternative sometime looks attractive and acceptable, the next moment it looks repulsive and unacceptable. For eg. A proposal from a young man who has a desire to marry, but is not prepared to shoulder the responsibility associated with marriage. A person wants a luxurious bungalow but does not want to take up the responsibility needed for it. In this type of conflict, the individual for a moment want to accept it and the next moment wants to reject it.

### **3. Pressure :**

Real or imagined serious demands imposed on one person by another individual, group or situation which is difficult to cope and the thought give rise to a mental condition called pressure.

In today's competitive world every person struggles and works hard for long hours which leads to rise in pressure like frustration, pressure also have inner and outer sources. The central one being over ambitious and having difficult life goals.

In this world to achieve success an individual has to do hard work make maximum use of opportunities, optimize his gains, adapt to never realities and challenge etc which can lead to rise in pressure.

In our everyday life we also experience social pressure. Competitive achievement, pressure to focus on work complex and speedy changes, family and other relationships are all different types of social situations which can lead to pressure.

### **Techniques of coping with stress :**

Life without stress is not possible. The intensity and extensiveness of stress are so harmful for our health, that it disturbs and disintegrates whole existence of the person. Therefore we have to learn how to pacify or how to cope with the stress. To cope with or to avoid negative effects means to make attempts to satisfy the environmental demand. There are several techniques for dealing with stress. Every individual has his own unique style of dealing with stress. It is surprising that despite all the stresses one goes through high or low intensity, one generally does not succumb or show signs of breakdown. People to cope effectively with the stresses continually examine their environment both internal and external. He/She tries to search what opportunities or challenges or dangers may be present and learn new skills to adapt to the changes coming in life. In addition, there are several personality dimensions like optimism, detachment, hardiness and unchangeable trust for the goal etc which reduce and moderate the negative effect of stress.

Generally when a person is confronted with a new problem or demand initially he tries to define it, evaluate and understand how far it is harmful or beneficial. It is important that his evaluation of the problem is realistic. Then next, he thinks what to do about the problem. To arrive at a solution of this problem, he formulates new courses of action and identifies the best alternative. Sometimes it may happen that the person has no time or chance even to make an evaluation or think about the problems. At that time some of the coping actions emerge into operations automatically and spontaneously. Such reactions which are a part of the survival mechanism can be called as built-in-reactions. They come into action whenever there is a threat to survival. Whenever there is a necessity to maintain and restore equilibrium, some of those physiological and psychological changes come into operation. One such built in mechanism is crying which bring relief in pain and emotional



strain. Thus man adopts certain strategies or techniques for relieving stress. Some of which are natural and some are habitual, some are to be learned. Some techniques are personal, individual and social. While using social strategies or techniques the person needs the help of others.

**Coping reactions can be divided into three broad categories :**

- (1) Task oriented techniques.
- (2) Emotion oriented techniques.
- (3) Ego defensive techniques.

**(1) Task oriented techniques-** this technique directly deals with the stressor, demand. Here the adjustive mechanism may be through overt behavior or a psychological process. The objective of these reactions is to achieve realistic adjustment. Here the effects are based on objective assessment of the stress situations and on a deliberate, logical and constructive course of action. For example to make changes in one's self or change the surrounding or both. These task oriented techniques may be external eg improving the atmosphere for study or they may be internal and covert like changing one's attitudes. There are three forms in this technique:

(1) Dealing with the problem head long (remove the threat object, source of the problem, weaken the influence of the obstacle or destroy it.)

While dealing with the stress problem directly, the person at the outset has to make an appraisal of the damage making ability of the stressful situations. For eg. a student who has failed in the exam, will work hard again to pass.

(2) Withdrawing from the problem situation (withdraw from the threatening situation, compromise, discussion etc.)

To escape or withdraw from the situation is another alternative to handle the stress problem. When the person is unable to face the situation he wants to avoid the confrontations or withdraw from it. For eg a student who has failed in exam will either stop giving exam or will leave the studies.

(3) Some other mechanisms –(to resist the stress and tension to enhance one's fighting and resistance ability or to reduce the strength of the stressor)

When a person neither accept the technique of head long confrontation nor withdrawal he accepts the path of compromise for eg a student who has failed and cannot study will try his hands in music or sports.

**(2) Emotion oriented technique:** In this technique the person instead of bringing change in the stress situation makes efforts to bring change in his own thoughts and emotions. This emotion focused approach is more remedial than the problem solving approach. For here the emphasis is on relieving the emotional impact of stress, In this technique, self control and emotional regulation are more important For eg controlling anxiety, frustration anger and other emotional reactions or trying to change these emotions some people to relieve the tension may take alcohol or tranquilizer, which provide temporary relief. Many people, while in distress and desiring to get the threatening problem out of mind, go to a party or a movie or watch T.V. Many people whistle or laugh or overeat when they are anxious or engage in day dreaming when they feel helpless. Such emotion focused coping may not solve the problem, but helps people in managing the negative effects at least for a short period.

**(3) Ego defensive technique :** In this kind of coping of the person primarily tries to protect one self psychologically from emotional hurt and self devaluation. These mechanism are learned responses which tend to operate on habitual and unconscious levels. For example repressions, denial, rationalization, projection etc

are such ego defense mechanism which indulge in reality distortion and self deception. These mechanism unconsciously protect the person from internal mental anxiety and pain but leads to a distorted interpretation of the reality. Its over use may lead to maladaptation or maladjustment. The primary aim of these ego-defensive technique is to cushion failure, reduce anxiety, repair emotional hurt and thus maintain person's feelings of adequacy and worth and protect one's feeling of being useful.

### **Effects of stress:**

Earlier we have seen that stress is an inevitable part of human's life in this modern world. Majority of the people experience either major or minor stress which has adverse effect on their physical and mental health.

#### **1. Bodily Effects:**

There is a close relation between body and mind so when stress is prolonged it does have a negative effect on physical health and impairs the psychological functions as well heart rate increases respiratory, cardiovascular, adrenal secretions etc functions are heightened and also have negative effects. Stress also has negative effects on the ability to think and immune system of the individual. Canadian endocrinologist Hans Selye in 1956 studied the bodily reactions to stress and proposed a theory. In his book, he stated that how external stressors have negative effect on health of the individual according to this theory the style of reactions in bodily adjustment to some special stressors is general so it is called general adaptation syndrome (GAS). It is a three stage model theory.

##### **1. Security and stress :**

Our body reacts in three ways.

##### **(a) Alarm reaction stage :**

In this stage there is an experience of a stressor or the presence of noxious stimulus. The person prepares himself to resist the stressor. This state refers to bodily changes like increase in secretions of adrenal gland, release in hormones like epinephrine and non-epinephrine which provide extra energy to fight the stressful situation. Individual also experience muscular and joint ache, fever, fatigue, rise in blood sugar and blood pressure etc. In such situation, an individual will fight the stressor or run away from the situation

Majority of the people experiencing stress react in the same way.

##### **(b) Resistance stage :**

During this stage, the reserve bodily energies become ready to deal with the stressor and achieve suitable adaptation. At this stage there is constant pressure of the stressor yet the bodily changes which emerged in the first stage return to normality. During this stage there is resistance to that stressor but other relatively weak and mild stressors invite intense reaction. For eg a person suffering from cancer is trying to fight against the disease but in doing so become easy victim of mild problems like depression and frustration.

In this stage the individual is continuously trying to resist the stressor and so feels tired, worried, sleeplessness, memory loss is experienced and sometime also takes support of drugs to forget the stressful situations.

##### **(c) Exhaustion stage:**

This is the stage when the body's entire reserves are exhausted and the person is no longer in position to resist the stressor. As a result he becomes a victim to severe physical harm or even major illness. The main cause for this is that the pituitary and adrenal glands become unable to produce and secrete hormones for a pretty long period. Hence the organic physiological system cannot adapt for a pretty long period with the



chronic long time stressors. When this stage of exhaustion would set in and how much exhaustion the person would experience depend on the intensity of the stressor and personal characteristics.

## **(II) Psychophysical problems:**

If stress remains in the individual for long time it has negative effect on the health of the individual which result in psychophysical problems.

Reasons for psychophysical diseases are psychological but their effects can be seen on the physical body.

"Psychophysical diseases means those physical bodily problems because of psychological conditions".

In present times many people become victim of disorders like heart disease blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, ulcer brain stroke etc.

**(a) Heart related problems and blood pressure :** In normal situation, a healthy person's heart beat is 70 to 75 per minute and blood pressure will be 120/80. But in stress situation the blood gets thickened veins get contracted and there is problem in blood flow. The heart has to exert extra pressure to increase the blood supply to different organs of the body. According to one study it is said that 50% of chances in heart problems increase because of stress.

**(b) Asthma :** External as well as internal factors of the body are responsible for asthma. Stress is the internal factor responsible for asthma. As per one study, children who suffer from asthma have their root in emotional attachments and upbringing. If the family and parents are taught. In the similar way, if training for dealing with stress is given to the patients of asthma, then the attacks of asthma can be reduced. How to deal with stressful situations, we can reduce the effects of asthma and also be able to control it.

**(c) Diabetes :** Usually, type-2 diabetes is related to stress and it has negative effect on the health of the individual. Because of stress, the pancreas stop producing enough insulin and the glucose in the blood is not maintained. The body is unable to use the insulin that is produced. If stress is reduced or controlled then this type of diabetes can also be controlled.

**(d) Stomach ulcer:** When there is increase in the stress level, there is also increase in the level of acid in the digestive track and the individual cannot take proper diet. The walls of the stomach gets infected with ulcer. People who work on higher post who have lot of work pressure and stress, they usually suffer from such kind of ulcers.

**(e) Brain stroke :** A stroke occurs if the flow of oxygen rich blood to a portion of the brain is blocked. When the brain does not get the required oxygen, the brain cells are damaged, sudden bleeding in the brain can cause a stroke. The symptoms of brain stroke or even death are trouble with speaking and understanding, paralysis or numbness of the face, arm or leg, trouble with seeing in one or both eyes, headache, trouble with walking etc.

## **2. Psychological effects :**

Psychophysical effects of stress leads to psychological problems and it has negative effect on the mental condition of the individual. Depression effects on decision making process, creates obstacle in problem solving, problem in adjustment etc are the psychological problems an individual suffers from.

**(I) Depression :** Any person when experience stress for a long period of time, there is change in the functions of the internal organs of the body. This directly affects the feelings and emotions of the individual. When an individual is deprived from satisfying a desired need, he experiences frustration. Long lasting effects of frustration can lead to depression. The symptoms of depression are anxiety, disturbance in digestion,



disturbance in sleep, loss of interest and energy, weakness feelings of guilt, thinking about suicide, distraction etc. If the intensity or severity of stress increases than the symptoms like loss of pleasure and interest, keeping away from activities, loss or gain in weight, slow down behavior, exhaustion, inability to think clearly, feeling of worthlessness, frequent thought of death and suicide etc are common thoughts seen in an individual.

**(II) Effect on decision making process:** When the level of stress increases in an individual, then there is a negative effect on the capacity to take decisions to take balanced decision it is important to evaluate the situation in a realistic way, to have correct perception, to be able to take decisions from different point of views. One has to think in a calm way also. When an individual is under severe stress he cannot think logically and hence it affects his decision making process. In such situations he either avoids taking decisions or is dependent on others for making his decisions.

**(III) Obstacles in problem solving :** In stressful situations, an individual faces difficulty in solving his problems. To solve problem, one needs to think clearly, think positive and negative aspect, trials should be increased and errors should be decreased, an individual suffering from severe stress finds it difficult and so even a minor problem will become very serious for him. He/She cannot adequately evaluate the situation and hence cannot think or try properly to solve his own problem because of stress. Thus we can say that stress is an obstacle in problem solving.

**(IV) Problems in adjustment :** To be able to change as per need of the environment and situations is called adjustment. The individual tries directly or indirectly to make adjustment with the environment and situation but in doing so he experience severe stress which give rise to psychological problems like lack of energy, inability to work, capacity to think, confidence etc are affected in a negative way and he has problems in adjustment. Even minor changes in life cannot be tolerated by him. Because of his high emotional quotient he feels fear, anxiety, doubts etc and so cannot change himself. Hence he finds it difficult to make adjustment even in social life.

## **Mental health :**

### **1. Meaning and Nature:**

Mental health means a mentally sound or psychologically strong condition where there is absence of mental disorders. It was defined as the absence of physical illness.

"Mental health means such a psychological condition in which there is satisfactory adjustments in his emotional and behavioral practices".

As per positive psychology "Mental health is also related to an individual's capacity to enjoy life, ability to work and also be able to establish psychological stability".

According to WHO "Mental health is complete state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well being"

"Mental health means development of healthy personality which will scientifically try to fight the onset of any kind of psychological or mental disorder"

- **J. C. Coleman(1962)**

Nature of mental health which is acceptable in one society may not be acceptable in another society. An individual's adjustment is affected by social, bodily, mental and physical factors. It is first decided that which factors affect mental health and how much and then try to control it. Mental health is very closely related to social practices and social values. Every society has got established norms, values, behavior patterns, cultural practices etc. which are to be practiced by people living in the society.

Just as social situations and values change, in the same way mental health also keeps on changing. It is also possible that in deciding the nature of mental health, the social ethics of the society also play an important role. Hence if the social ethics change the nature of mental health or psychological health is also affected. For eg. in the old version of DSM there are certain characteristics which are included in the classification of psychological disorders but the some are not included in the latest version.

## **2. Measures to improve mental health:**

In present condition to maintain good physical and mental health is a challenge for the people. Usually people have knowledge about how to maintain physical fitness but they are not aware about measures to improve mental health. The following are the important measures.

**(I) Diet:** There are many proverbs which suggest that diet also decides the mental health of the individual for eg. “what you eat that you belch” you think as per what you eat” etc. Balanced and nutritious diet which full of minerals, proteins, which provide energy to the body should be consumed to reduce the risk of mental disorders. As per the body requirement one should consume food which should contain less calories, fat and sugar.

Different chemical changes take place in the body because of diet, sometimes there are less chemical changes and sometimes more but both the situation have negative effect on mental health. An individual should eat light, fresh and seasonal food and try to avoid junk food, oil food, packaged food etc.

**(II) Exercise:** Exercise is most important and effective way for promoting positive health. Exercise help in increasing the blood circulation in the body. Brain will get more oxygen and blood which will increase its capacity to function. Regular exercise can release that tension of the muscle and purify the blood. Increase in endorphine in blood makes an individual mentally energetic and active.

Every individual should daily do exercise for minimum 40 minutes or play any sports or games.

**(III) Yoga and Meditation:** In today's modern world majority of the people live in stress which has negative effect on their mental health. To maintain good mental health, India has given the world the gift of yoga and meditation. Every individual should learn to practice it. Maharishi Patanjali along with other sages has very systematically explained the importance of yoga to the whole world. On 21<sup>st</sup> June the whole world celebrates it as “World yoga day”

Yoga and meditation frees the mind of stress and strain and decreases the physical- mental problems of the individual. Regular practice of meditation leads to synchronization of brain waves and stable alpha brain rhythms. This makes perception accurate, Learning fast, sharp memory, balanced emotions and more mature behavior.

**(IV) Change in lifestyle :** Industrialization and urbanization has to increase in luxurious facilities which has changed the life style of the people. Vehicles, T.V. internet, mobiles etc. have changed the habits of the people and they have become more idle. This has caused adverse effect on mental health of the individual.

To improve physical- mental health, there is a need to change food habits life style, social relations, ability to work, exercise etc. In modern lifestyle people eat junk food, remain awake till late night and so cannot go for exercise in the morning. All this habits need to be changed and people should give time for rest, leisure time and entertainment

**(V) Relaxation activities:** Because of modern lifestyle, an individual can continuously remains in stress so negative effect is seen on the functioning of the body organs, hormones, physiological systems and psychological systems. To save one's self from such negative effects, individual should learn the technique of relaxation. Relaxation can be practiced by control over breathing. Different methods, Indian as well as western have been developed to control breathing process for relaxation. By practicing it, the different parts of the body, muscles, organs, thoughts etc feel relaxed and enegretic. Mind can have control over thoughts and experience peace.

**(VI) Positive orientation :** People with positive orientation are very hopeful. The meaning of positive attitude is that even the most difficult situation is perceived in a positive creative way and then behave accordingly. For example. People with positive attitude will look at half filled glass of water and say it is half full, whereas people with negative outlook will say it is half empty. In the same way we can evaluate the different situations of life. Normally, an individual sees what he thinks and his experiences are also based on that positive thought in mind makes a person more optimistic.

Positive orientation toward life makes an individual stress free, improvement in physical-mental health, decrease in depression, heart problems, increase in blood circulation, increase in immunity and as a result he become capable to fight the challenging situations. One should have more positive thoughts, should laugh even in stressful situation, practice a healthy lifestyle and try to raise the confidence level with optimism.

**(VII) Music:** "Music is food for mind." Music can bring change in the brain waves and cells. Listening to music bring change in the brain waves which remain for long time even after the music stops. Hence one can become free from stress. Music deeply affects our body and mind it helps in increasing our concentration and also activates our thinking. Light- music has a soothing effect on the brain waves. Music also affects autonomic nervous system. Music can increase positive thinking and make a person feel more mentally stable and creative. So in patients suffering from cancer, depression, insomnia etc music has a very positive effect.

**(VIII) Time management:** Every individual in one day gets 24 hours. His mental health will depend on how effectively he uses this time. People who lack time management live a very chaotic life. They cannot distribute time for work, food, rest and hence continuously experience stress. This has a negative effect on their interpersonal relationship also.

People who can do proper time management, fulfill are their duties on time, can rest, have entertainment and also be able to maintain healthy interpersonal relationship.



## Exercise

### Section-A

**Choose the correct option from the given alternative and rewrite the answer :**

- (1) If a person wants to live a mentally healthy life, in what aspect he should bring a change ?  
(a) Work style                      (b) experience style      (c) life style      (d) thinking style
- (2) Which is India's invaluable gift to mankind ?  
(a) Meditation and yoga   (b) Music and dance      (c) Acting      (d) Exercise
- (3) In which type of stressful situation an individual experience limitation in perception ?  
(a) Mild                      (b) Moderate                      (c) Severe      (d) None of the above
- (4) Who has given his views regarding thoughts and feelings?  
(a) Richard Lazarus      (b) Hans selye                      (c) Coleman      (d) Serason
- (5) Which type of tool is medical care ?  
(a) Physical                      (b) Individual                      (c) Social      (d) Available tools
- (6) Into how many types is sources of stress divided ?  
(a) One                      (b) Two                      (c) Three      (d) Four
- (7) Who has given the model of physiological responses ?  
(a) Hans selye                      (b) Lazarus                      (c) Coleman      (d) Canon
- (8) When did Walter Canon give the model for bodily reaction ?  
(a) 1920                      (b) 1919                      (c) 1910      (d) 1905
- (9) Which is a natural internal reaction?  
(a) Laugh                      (b) Cry                      (c) Run      (d) Walk
- (10) Who invented about the effects of stress and when?  
(a) Hans Selye -1956      (b) Hans selye – 1958      (c) Lazarus -1956      (d) Lazarus -1918

### Section-B

**Answer the following in one or two sentences :**

- (1) Explain the word “Stress”
- (2) What is individual’s reaction in stressful situations ?
- (3) In what content has Richard Lazarus given his views ?
- (4) What are stressors?

- (5) What are social tools?
- (6) Into which two stages appraisal is classified by Richard Lazarus ?
- (7) What is the source of bodily reactions to deal with stress?
- (8) How does an individual behave in minor stress situations?
- (9) What are psychophysical disorders?
- (10) What is the meaning of mental health?

### **Section-C**

**Answer the following in about 30 words :**

- (1) Define “Stress”.
- (2) State the four points of nature of stress.
- (3) What are the physiological characteristics of stress ?
- (4) State the sources of stress.
- (5) State the function of sympathetic nervous system.
- (6) Define “Frustration”
- (7) What is pressure ?
- (8) State the techniques of coping with stress.
- (9) Define mental health according to WHO.
- (10) Write any four measures to improve mental health

### **Section-D**

**Answer the following in about 50 words :**

- (1) Explain the stages of stress evaluation given by Lazarus.
- (2) Explain nature of stressors
- (3) Explain hassles daily problems and Sources of stress
- (4) Explain bodily reactions as a response to stress.
- (5) Explain behavioural and cognitive reactions to stress.
- (6) Explain emotional reactions to stress.
- (7) Explain security system and stress by Hans Selye.
- (8) Explain diabetes as a psycho physiological disorder.
- (9) Explain the nature of mental health
- (10) Explain the meaning of positive orientation.

### **Section-E**

**Answer the following in about 80 words :**

- (1) Explain in detail types of stress.
- (2) Explain the techniques of coping with stress.
- (3) Explain psychophysical disorders.
- (4) Explain the psychological effects of stress.
- (5) Explain the measures to improve mental health