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CHAPTER –I

INTRODUCTION

Every human being has some problems or other. The problems may be simple or complex, minor or major, routine or unexpected, temporary or permanent, short term or long term. Whenever a man is faced with any problem, he is likely to be under stress until the problem is solved. The amount of stress each person experiences for similar problems vary based on many factors among which personality factor plays a very important role.

In fact 'Stress' or psychological pressure is not new to man. Every man suffers throughout his entire life from a fatal disease –mortality or some other problems such as occupational, economical or social. In the past, man was ignorant about diseases and several miracles in nature. As a result he was under the psychological pressure. In order to lessen stress or psychological pressure he humbly submitted himself in the service of God and Nature. His submission to God was due to stress. Even today every man suffers from several social, political, and family problems. The life of woman is more stressful than that of man. In the past, she suffered from pregnancy stress, childcare stress, marriage stress, family stress and stress of several social restrictions. Now a days the causes of stress have been replaced and are largely educational and occupational stress.

In the late Nineteenth century women seeking education was an object of ridicule. However the great social reformers like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Karmveer Bhahurao Patil and others tried to brighten the life and career of women by providing educational facilities to them. Today, women are making their careers in each and every field. However she faces educational and occupational problems. In order to lessen educational problems of girls some educationalists have started the separate schools for girls. It is true that the girls get more freedom in girls' schools than the co-educational institutions. However they face the problem of tension or stress and there are very few research works on the stress faced by girl students at secondary level. Hence in the present research work the stress faced by girls studying in X standard was taken up for study.

The modern era is considered as the "Age of Stress". Selye (1956), the father of modern stress defined stress as "non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it". According to Pestonjee (1987) the stress has been used variedly for:

- 1 Stimulus (external force acting on the organism)
- 2 Response (changes in physiological functions)
- 3 Interaction (interaction between an external force and the resistance opposed to it) and
- 4 More comprehensive combinations of the above factors.

Feeling of stress depends on personal cognitive appraisal.



The same event may be perceived as less or more stressed by different persons. Many factors contribute to these differences in cognitive appraisal of stress. Personality of the individual is one such factor. Various studies are carried out to relate personality with stress. Stress is the general term applied to the pressure people feel in life. The presence of stress at work is almost inevitable in many jobs. For example, a survey by National Association of working women (Davis, 1989) reported that one third of the respondents perceived their jobs as very stressful and another 62 percent saw their work as somewhat stressful.

Stress is a factor that is present not only in adults but in boys and girls too. The stress that occurs in boys and girls of the same age may differ. For the purpose of this study only the stress among the girls in X standard was studied to limit the scope of the study.

Every human being as stated earlier is having some problem or other. The personal effectiveness of a person does not depend on how many problems and difficulty he faces, but how and in what way he reacts to the problems.

Stress is that condition which pressurizes man to the extent that he adjusts or he has to adjust. A person's mental health does not develop in the absence of stress. Mental health of every person develops fast when he successfully and satisfactorily reacts to the stressful situation.

According to J. C. Coleman (1976) “Stress is condition impinging on the organism which require adjustive reactions”.

According to C. N. Cofer and Apptey (1964) “ Stress is the state of the organism when he perceives that his well being is endangered and that he must elevate all of his energies to his protection.”

Warheit (1979) defines stress as “the altered state of an organism produced by agents in the Psychological, Social, Cultural or /and Physical environments.”

Thus stress refers to the widespread, generalized responses of the body to various environmental, physical or social situations. It is a force that effects our emotions and motives.

If we view stress from psychological point of view it appears to be full of cognitive and physiological reactions. In this form many a times stress appears to be like –anxiety, conflict, emotion, frustration and arousal.

In fact stress is quite different condition and is a type of mixed form of pressure, anxiety, conflict and frustration. A person feels restless and uneasy in a situation, which he fails to face. This mixed picture of tension and restlessness is called stress.

The amount of stress in a person depends upon the evaluation he does of himself for the ability to face and struggle with adverse situation. Stress is now called the disease of modern civilization. It affects the people of all ages and can be

both good and bad. The persons can be under pressure in tension, anxiety, conflict, or phobia etc. The amount of stress in a person depends upon the evaluation he does of himself for the ability to face and struggle with adverse situations. Another important factor of stress is the feeling of responsible in that man W. Porter, (1958). Another study by J. M. Weiss (1971) shows that stress is found in greater amount among the people lacking in the feeling of responsibility. Reactions regarding stress are found more in the feeling of responsibility. Reactions regarding stress are found more in the persons who are in a position to anticipate regarding the problem situation (A. N. Epstein 1962, Nomikos 1965)

NATURE OF STRESS

The nature of stress can be well understood by the figure given below.

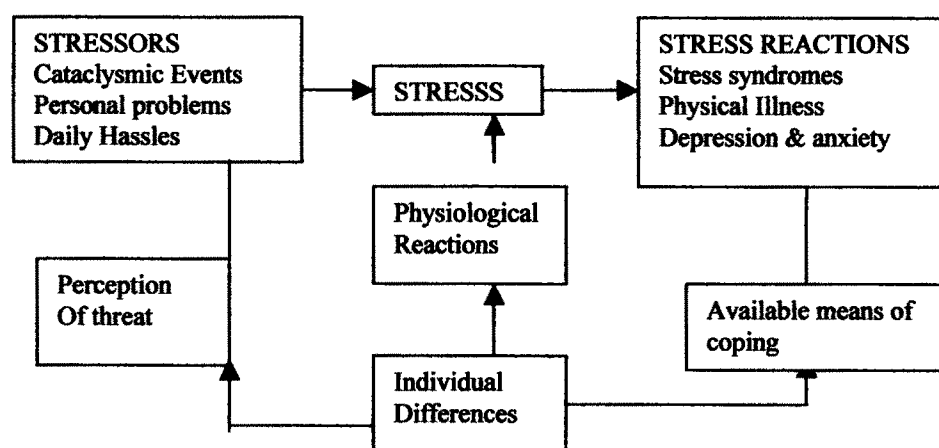


Fig.1 Nature of Stress

(Gregory Kimble 1988)

A number of conditions called stressor are the causes of stress, which is expressed in many different Physiological and behavioral reactions. The stressfulness of an individual of any stressor varies depending on how he or she perceives the situation and on the resource available for coping.

SOME SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

1. Irritability, hyper excitation or depression.
2. Impulsive behavior, emotional instability
3. Floating anxiety-fear without knowing what we afraid of
4. Tension and alertness
5. Fatigue, loss of joy of living
6. The overpowering urge to run or cry
7. Pounding heart
8. Dryness of mouth and throat
9. Frequent need to urinate
10. Diarrhea, indigestion, upset stomach, vomiting
11. Premenstrual tension, Missed menstrual cycles
12. Sweating
13. Loss of or excessive appetite
14. Increased smoking
15. Increased use of lethal drugs
16. Alcohol and drug addiction
17. Insomnia
18. Trembling nervous tics
19. Easily startled, by small sounds
20. Bruxism-grinding the teeth

21. Hyper motility, restless moving about
22. High pitched nervous laughter
23. Inability to concentrate
24. Feeling of unreality
25. Stuttering and other speech difficulties
26. Migraine headaches
27. Nightmares
28. Psychoses
29. Accident proneness

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT STRESS

According to Rita Agrawal 2001

MYTH 1.

Stress is always deleterious for the individual.

Stress is as much a product of evolution as any other biological mechanism. For human survival to be possible in a predominantly hostile environment, some mechanism was required to enable a quick response to physical dangers. A Cartwright and Cooper (1997) put it, "the body developed the ability to rev up for a short time" This mobilization of physical forces is none other than Cannon's fight or flight reactions. However, the problem today is that whereas primitive man had ample opportunities for sublimating the excess energy generated, modern man does mobilize the extra resources but has no way to cathart them. Neither fight nor flight is feasible in the physical sense of the word today.

Does this mean that this once needed mechanism has totally lost its relevance today? The mobilization of extra energy resources in the face of a actual stress or still has great adaptive value. Even today, it is this very mechanism through which we are able to perform at a breakneck pace and intensity much beyond our normal capacities.

All of us can remember coming to class and yawning first thing in the morning. Not that we were sleepy. Rather, the lecture was extremely boring and repetitive. The teacher failed to enthuse, or as the psychologist would put it, the teacher could not activate our cerebral apparatus into action. Yawning was the result of too little arousal, or no stress at all. Anyone associated with job fragmentation and assembly line work is aware of how performance tends to drop after a while, not because the individual is fatigued but because the individual is unable to concentrate. Why? The answer is because of boredom. Stress can be viewed as an arousal continuum ranging from extremely low arousal to extremely high arousal. Situations, which are characteristically low on arousal, are the ones, which produce complete boredom.

Boredom/monotony → low arousal → inability to concentrate → poor work, both in quality and quantity.

Boredom can be relieved in various ways such as attending a interesting lecture, changing one's job, enrichment or taking a coffee break. Immediately one's arousal level increases and there are improvements in performance. Suppose one is able to

increase one's arousal to even higher levels, will performance show a monotonic increase? The answer is an emphatic. 'No' Performance and arousal are related in an inverted U shaped curvilinear fashion, with maximum performance occurring at some moderate level of arousal.

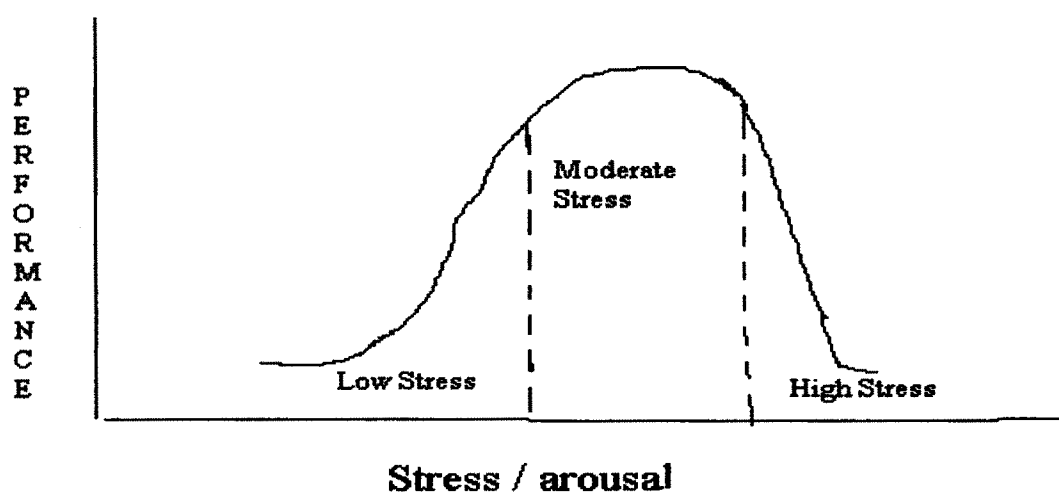


Fig. 2 Relationship between level of stress and arousal in the individual and performance parameters.

(Yerkes- Dodson Law, Broadhurst, 1959)

In other words, while stress is not always deleterious, too much stress is definitely harmful for the individual, physiologically, emotionally, or even in cognitive terms. At the same time, not being under stress at all is equally detrimental.

FACT 1

Too little or too much stress (i.e. hypostress or hyper stress) is bad. An optimal level of stress, varying from individual to individual is good and necessary.

MYTH 2.

Stress always results from unpleasant situations, experiences or events

We are all too familiar with distress, i.e. stress due to an unpleasant event such as the demise of a loved one, the loss of a job, divorce, or an accident. However, an extremely joyous event such as the birth of a child, marriage, passing an exam with flying colors or being selected for a much sought after job produces the same physiological reaction as distress. Such happy occasions, which all the same produce intense emotional reactions, lead to eustress. While distress generally produces unhappiness for the individual, in the sense that it causes uneasiness and discomfort, eustress leads to immense joy and happiness and is good for the individual. This is despite the fact that both distress and eustress depend on the same central physiological mechanism. Nevertheless to achieve eustress, some amount of initial distress may be necessary. The joy of the birth of child is experienced only after the distress suffered during pregnancy, the pain of the birth and labour process. Passing an exam. with flying colors is possible only if one has undergone lack of ease while working hard for the exam.

Eustress is good for the person

FACT 2

Stress can be due to both pleasant and unpleasant events. The goal should be to strike a balance between the equally destructive forces of hypo stress and hyper stress. At the same time, one should try to maximize eustress and minimize distress.

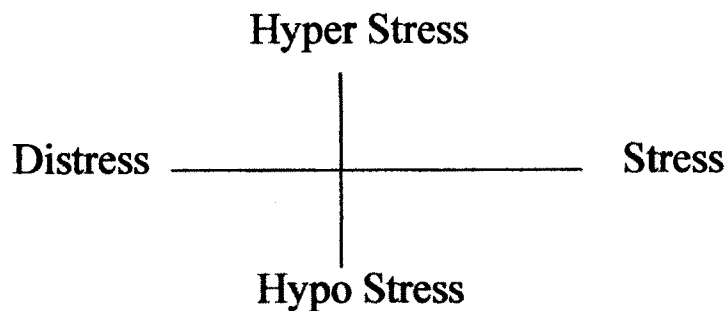
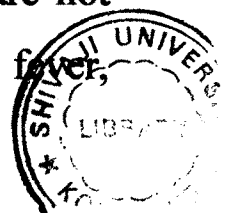


Fig.3 The four variants of stress

MYTH 3.

Events in themselves are either stressful or not so.

Take the case of a car race enthusiast yelling his lungs out, urging his bet to go faster and faster, despite being aware of the fact that it could be dangerous. For some, the very sight may produce symptoms, like churning of the stomach and uncomfortable thumping of the heart. Even watching the sport on television may be too stressful for them. As the motorcycle swerves wildly across the kerb, hardly able to maintain an even keel, those who are weak at heart may get goose pimples. On the other hand, such high-risk activities thrive only because there are numerous takers, people for whom the risks involved provide just the right amount of thrill. Such instances are not difficult to observe every day such as examination fever,



interview stress, stage fright. However, not everyone experiences them. Equally important is that the level of stress is not dependent on factors such as level of competence or the degree of preparation.

FACT 3

Stress is dependent on the individual's cognition of the events.

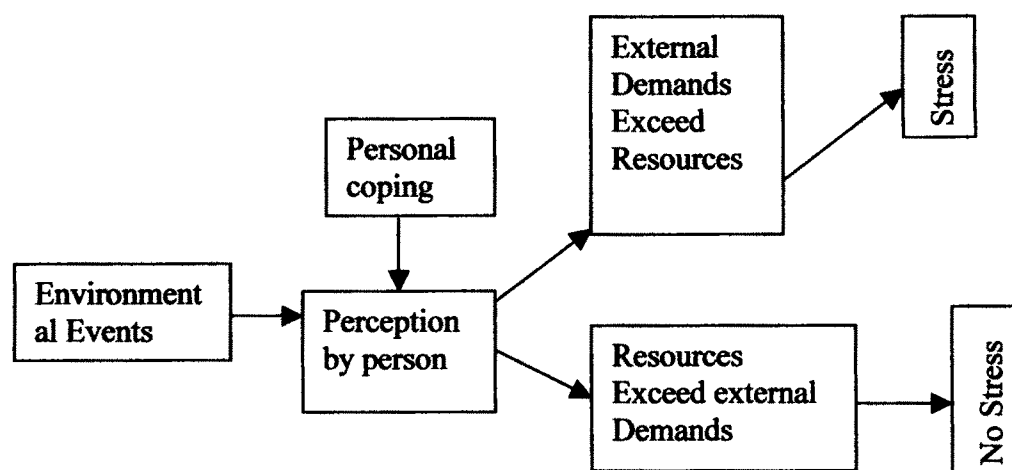


Fig.4 A diagrammatic representation of stress perception.

SCOPE OF STRESS

Each person experiences problems, both at work and at home, and it is these problems that are stress inducing. Every person also attempts at coping with these stressors according to personal and social dictats with the world moving the way it is such problems are bound to increase. Rapid urbanization and the consequent erosion of age-old social systems, globalisation, hi-tech gizmos, consumerism and materialism simply aggravate the daily hassles that are so inevitable. In the present global economy and uncertainties that can be stressful both at home

and at work. Despite the large body of research, the innumerable compendiums written on this very real phenomenon several issues remain.

Old Age Stress

While old age stress due to long working hours may show a decrease, the incidence of post retirement stress may increase. With the VRS and other forms of downsizing on the rise on the other, the proportion of 'gray' population is increasing. Taking advantage of the golden handshake proffered by companies seems extremely attractive, until the day one is actually free work needs to be done in this area. Both individuals and organizations from which they retire can work together to devise suitable post-retirement plans.

STRESS AMONG WOMEN

Organizations are gradually realizing the worth of women employees, even women at the top of the hierarchy. The feminine way of management is gaining ground with training programmes attempting to teach male managers what appears to come naturally to women. However, does that mean that the proverbial glass ceiling has crashed and there will be lesser role erosion among women? One is not sure. Regarding stress on the home front, the twenty first century husband has been quick to realize the advantages of a double income instead of one. There is a definite change in the attitudes of men towards housework. Stress among women is likely to reduce with many

organizations offering flexi time options, carrier breaks, job sharing etc. The home office and e-commerce are two options that will go a long way in making life at home less stressful.

Though we are all aware of sexual harassment and the aftermath for the victims, many organizations are known to turn a deaf ear. The reasons for such a deaf ear syndrome are definitely worth investigating. On the basis of survey of five veteran EEDC attorneys, Pierce, Smolinsky and Rosen (1998) have identified three principal factors for organizational inaction of the problem of sexual harassment. These are inadequate organizational policies and processes for managing SH complaints, managerial reactions and rationalisations; and organizational features contributing to deafness.

It is not women alone who face harassment at work, men too face such occupational hazards. Cooper and Roberston (1999) have discussed and analysed the phenomenon of bullying in the workplace. Williams (1993) has addressed the problem of trauma in the workplace.

STRESS AMONG TEACHERS

As a Teacher, an individual has to perform many duties towards the school and in turn the students. The personality and the attitude of the teacher affect the students. A teacher cannot be either too strict or too lenient. The teacher has to answer the Headmaster and even the parents if there is any change in the performance or the behaviour of the students. Many a times

they have to deal with the wrong attitude of over protective parents.

The teacher may feel overburdened at times trying to complete the portion in the given schedule. While teaching she has to adjust with the varying levels of intelligence among the students. Teaching six periods a day and many a time seven periods a day is quite a tough job. This quantum of work makes him physically and mentally fully exhausted at the end of the school hours.

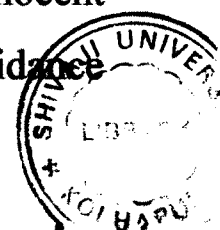
Depending on the strength of the class, the teacher has to speak accordingly. The more the strength of the class the louder he/she has to speak. This makes the job more tiring.

A part from teaching work, every teacher has to attend to the correction of notebooks and journals, filling record register, activities like games, co-curricular activities, etc. This means that a teacher is busy with the school routine almost every minute of the school.

Many such factors account for the different reasons of stress among teachers.

STRESS IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

The last few years have witnessed a considerable in stress levels among children and youth the world over. Increasing competition, over ambitious parents, rising unemployment, employment opportunities only for the very best, peer pressure and many other factors have led to stress even among innocent children, and the youth more so. With lack of proper guidance



and counselling services, young people are often at a loss about how to cope with frustration. It is these situations that drive many young adults into anti-social activities substance abuse. Help lines run by NGOs in India reveal that the maximum number of calls are received during the pre and post examination period. All the callers are teenagers on the verge of desperation having no one to guide them and with little social support. The students who are very anxious to achieve bright success in the examination cannot bear failure. They long for unsatisfied desire anxiously and ultimately become unhappy. They suffer from stress caused by hard work expected failure in the examination, competition, fast food and cocktails. They feel anxious for the expected failure in the examination, so they either learn their homes or intend to commit suicide. The root cause of such intentions is stress.

Television is one of the causes of stress instead of playing, studying and discussing their problems. The students are seen watching television. They spend much time in watching Kuch Kar Dikhana Hai and other such serials. These serials make the students dreaming. But when they face the real problem, they feel irritated, impatient and stressed.

The parents and teachers are also responsible for the stressed situation of the students. Both parents and teachers expect from the student the highest rank in the examination. In order to secure more marks and achieve ranks they feel anxious. They cannot even enjoy enough sleep during the

examination period. As they are stressed, they commit very common mistakes and their stress again increases. They feel restless and ill at the time of examination. The parents want that their child should brighten the name of the family while the teachers desire the name of their school through students.

The expectation of both parents and teachers make the students stressed. They feel very anxious to fulfill the desire of their parents and teachers. They work hard to achieve the success. Here we find that the teachers and parents are mainly responsible for the stress or restlessness of the students. In order to lessen the very stressed situation of the students they should try to think of the capacity or ability and mind of the students. Here I would like to quote “We can’t choose the direction of the wind, but we can choose how we set the sail”.

The competition in the S. S. C. and H. S. C. examination has been increasing day to day. As a result the students are found in a complicated situation. The private tuitions, classes extra classes in the schools. The different test series and workbooks, expected question answer sets etc. have wavered the state of student’s mind. Besides these the teachers and parents encourage them to follow different ways and ideas. As a result the students cannot adjust with the prescribed syllabus. He feels stressed and suffers from restlessness and other diseases, he becomes confused. The stress affects his memory, sensitivity, decisiveness and sensibility. He becomes confused and suffers from restlessness.

Here we can conclude that the main reason of stress on the school children are the extravagant expectations, competitions, television, fast food, the fear of expected failure, unnecessary desire, lack of nutrition's diet, the lack of enough or proper sleep etc. The students become stereotyped, jealous, sensitive and restless due to the very stress. Here we can conclude that the stress affects career of the student .Too less stress makes the student lazy where as too much stress makes them anxious and restless, so there should be a balanced stress because it develops the career of the student. So stress is good as well as worst.

We know that psychological stresses are clearly simple facts of everyday living. In the course of developing from infant to child and adolescent to adult, the individual experiences a series of new stressors connected with the transitions from one stage of development to another. During these transitions individuals are likely to feel a discrepancy between the new demands placed on them and their assessment of their abilities to meet these demands.

A transition stress can occur at an early age. As the results of a study by Jerome Kagan (1983) has indicated great psychological changes take place in toddlers even the age 24 months. They are acquiring new cognitive competencies and rapidly mastering their language. With language their powers or thought improve. At the same time children are becoming sensitive to the evaluation of others. As they begin to acquire

the standards of their parents and teachers there is a surge toward autonomy and independence and they have a need for achievement.

Stress occurring at later stages when the life of an individual changes in important ways can be listed as –

- i.** Going off to school
- ii.** Experiencing the pubertal changes of adolescence
- iii.** Separation/Divorce of parents
- iv.** Examination stress
- v.** Death of a beloved one
- vi.** Conflicts among friends, parents, siblings, etc.
- vii.** Failure in examination
- viii.** Transfer of school
- ix.** Parents/Teachers expectations

EXAMINATION STRESS

The word Examination is sufficient to send shivers down the spine of most students. Most student dread examination and would do anything to escape it. Stress in general term can be referred to as “tension” “pressure” or “strain” and we see that during examinations students do use all the terms interchangeably, Some feel pressurized others feel tensed up and still others feel strained during the examination.

We can account many different factors to the stress felt by students during their examinations. The main being the fact of high expectations from parents and their teachers. This is the main cause of tension or stress among intelligent students.

Parents who think their child can do well in an examination expect the child to bring cent percent results. Even one percentage here or there matters a lot to them. Teachers also have high expectations from their students to bring a name and prestige to their school.

The fear of failure leads many students to obtain unfair means and unscrupulous ways to achieve a good result. This can be seen in today's situation where students, instead of being engrossed in their studies, are busy making cheats and finding "important questions" from different sources. Failure in examination can sometimes result in drastic measures like suicide by the students who fail in the examination as well as fails to meet the expectation of teachers and parents.

Today's examination system can also be said to be one of the major factors for this stress. Now a day only the students' memory capacity is seen to be measured without any importance being given to their actual level of intelligence. So the student who is able to read more study material and reproduce it comes out in flying colors. It in turn depresses other students who do have knowledge but are not able to display it in a period of mere three hours.

A wide disparity between ambitions and internal capacity, physical handicaps, diseases, lack of self-discipline, influence of friend circle etc. can also many a times be the cause for this stress.



Various parental restrictions during examinations, the long list of do's and don'ts during examinations also do not lack behind in bring up this stress. The reasons for tension built up in each individual may be different but ultimately the consequences are the same. So some measures need to be taken up in which the level of stress felt by the students may be reduced. Yes the list of dos and don'ts during the examination needs to be their but along with it proper monitoring and regular studies by the students are also needed. All a healthy relationship with parents and teachers without any unnecessary high expectations from their part. Stress being an inseparable part of human life cannot be totally avoided but can definitely be reduced and well monitored.

RELATION OF STRESS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

The growth and the development of the child depends considerably on the teacher. No doubt, the child stays at school only for 5 to 6 hours and for the remaining part of the day in the custody of his parents. But the time spent in the school is more significant and plays a very important role in the upbringing of the child. It is therefore very essential that the teacher create a homely atmosphere at school.

The way a teacher teaches is reflected in the performance of the students. The teacher's expectation of good performance from particular students can act as a stressor; similarly it may in turn affect the students from whom the teacher does not have

any expectation. Every individual child needs recognition. The teacher should be able to pay individual attention to all. Otherwise it in turn may also affect the student-teacher relationship.

Prejudices and biases among the students and teachers affect the learning-teaching process. It is therefore essential for both of them to share a healthy relation.

SECTION –B

ABOUT THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A STUDY OF STRESS AMONG GIRLS STUDING IN X STANDARD IN ISLAMPUR CITY”

DEFINITION OF THE TERM

STRESS

Stress is condition impinging on the organism, which require adjustive reactions.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERM “STRESS”

Stress is what the “stress test for students” measures.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1. To determine the stress level of girls before preliminary examination.**
- 2. To determine the stress level of girls before Board examination.**
- 3. To determine the state anxiety level of girls before preliminary examination.**
- 4. To determine the state anxiety level of girls before Board examination.**
- 5. To compare the stress level of girls before the preliminary examination and before S.S.C. Board examination.**
- 6. To compare the state anxiety level of girls before the preliminary examination and before S.S.C. Board examination.**
- 7. To find relationship between stress level and academic performance of girls before preliminary examination.**

8. To find relationship between stress level and academic performance of girls before Board examination.
9. To find relationship between state anxiety level and academic performance before preliminary examination.
10. To find relationship between state anxiety level and academic performance before Board examination.
11. To suggest appropriate measures to the students to combat stress based on the results of the study.
12. To suggest appropriate measures to be taken by school authorities to create an environment to develop ideal stress for maximizing the performance of the students, based on the results of the study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- i. The results of the study will be useful as stress is intrinsic to the nature of life and life activities.
- ii. The results will be useful for student to bring about change in behaviour with reference to stress.
- iii. The results correlation between stress level and academic performance will be useful for further guidance.
- iv. The results correlation between state anxiety level and academic performance will be useful for further guidance.
- v. The results of the study will be useful to school teachers and parents to know about the stress level of their wards and enable them to prepare programmes for their development.
- vi. The results of the study will be further useful to educational institutions and government authorities



DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- i. The sample drawn from only Islampur city.
- ii. The study restricted to only two girls schools from Islampur City.
- iii. The sample limited to only X standard girls.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH REPORT

The investigation carried out and the outcome of this research is reported and presented in five chapters in this dissertation.

The CHAPTER-I deals with a background of the problem, definition of the problem, objectives, delimitations of the study.

The CHAPTER-II deals with the review of literature and research, which is directly and indirectly related to the present study.

The CHAPTER-III deals with the plan and procedure of the study. It contains method of research, data gathering tools, procedure and scoring of the tools used for the present study.

The CHAPTER-IV deals with hypotheses, formulae used for testing the hypotheses, analysis and interpretation of the collected data and results of the study.

The CHAPTER-V deals with the summary and conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Lastly, the References are given and Appendices are attached to complete the body of the dissertation.