

A Multi-Dimensional Study of Stress: Effects and Coping Strategy**By:****Miss Maliha Batool*****Mr. Kashif Sajjad*******PhD Research Scholar, Department of Economics, University of
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Abstract: Everyone in life faces stress in some form or other to some degree. Stress is primarily a natural response of human tendency that helps us to address the threats and challenges in our lives. This stress, up to some level, is okay, but extra stress results in severe consequences like suicide, murder etc. One can easily cope with this condition with proper treatment and regular care.

Keywords: Stress, urbanisation, economic growth, modernization etc.

Introduction:

In everyone's life, there is a common experience, i.e. stress. At everyone's personal level, words like migraine, anxiety, headaches, depression, feeling out of control, time pressures, being overworked, cannot sleep, panic attacks etc., are used in day-to-day life. In short, it is the most common human phenomenon applied to psychological and physiological pressure experienced by people. It has become a part of everyone's life, and with the advent of industrial growth, urbanization, science and technology, modernization, and automation, this experience has been increasing.

Definitions of stress

According to the **Australian Psychological Society**- Stress can be defined as a feeling of being overloaded, tense, wound-up tight and worried.

Skinner "a reaction of a particular individual to a stimulus event

Eliot "stress may be viewed as the body's response to any real or imagined event perceived as requiring some adaptive response and producing strain

Steinberg and Ritzmann, "stress can be defined as an underload or overload of matter, energy or information input to, or output from, a living system."

Roger "preoccupation with the negative emotion following the event."

Palmer "Stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioural response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over some time, leads to ill-health."

Many people consider stress as something that happens to an individual that may harm or provide encouragement; wholesome consider it as what happens to our body in response to events; stress within limits is productive, but if it goes beyond can be harmful. Mostly, stress is regarded as a negative experience for the individual, but stress at all times is not always harmful, but sometimes it helps motivate to get a task finished or perform well. Stress that can have a positive effect can be referred to as eustress. Eustress is very necessary for each person's life.

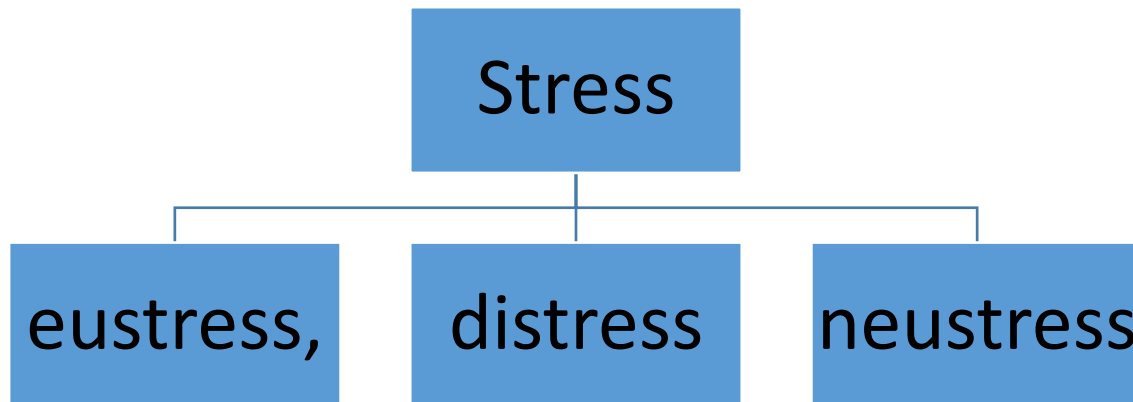
But stress taken in excess can be harmful as it interferes with the person's ability to get on with his normal life for too long. While talking with respect to behavioural outcomes of stress provokes depressive symptoms (Monroe and Simons 1991). In contrast, it may generate anxiety symptoms in some cases (Finlay-Jones and Brown 1981). Even if the degree of severity is not considered, stress mainly promotes huge physiological and behavioural disturbances which involve psychiatric disorders and immune system dysfunction ((Brown 1993, Herbert and Cohen 1993).

Depending upon the intensity of stress, we cannot assume that those who persons with less stress are anti-thesis to those taking more stress, but those taking major stress can be the person who takes minor stress in some problematic situations (Lazarus 1990; Ravindran et al. 1997)

The World Labor Report, produced by the U.N.'s International Organization, states, "Stress has become one of the most serious health issues of the 20th century and a worldwide epidemic. "

Characteristics of Stress

Stress is helpful in preparing the body to face danger. Take place inside the brain with the symptoms both physical and psychological. Stress for short-term stress can be helpful, but if it has long-term stress is linked to various ill health conditions. Stress does not affect physically but slows normal bodily functions like the digestive and immune systems. Certain body changes during stress are blood pressure and pulse rate rise, a heightened state of alertness prevents sleep immune activity decreases, the muscles become tense, breathing is faster, the digestive system slows down.



Broadly stress can be categorised into three types

Eustress: Eustress is mostly a good type stress and this type of stress arise in any situation or circumstance in which a person finds motivation in itself providing positive

boost to him e.g. meeting a sports player, actor that inspires a person to go in the field in which he can specialise, falling in love which provides pleasure and joy. Providing pleasure and joy is the reason it is not considered as a threat.

Neustress: Neustress is a neutral type of stress and describes sensory stimuli that have neither good nor bad consequential effect, e.g. if we live in J&K news of Tsunami/ flood in Kerela, we may fall in this category.

Distress: Distress is synonym of actual stress and is mostly considered as bad as its intensity can stay for an hour, hours, day, few days, months etc.



It can be of two types: chronic stress which is mostly prolonged, may not disappear easily and is unbearable e.g. when someone's father is severe drunkard. He quarrel with the family members it is difficult to end all relations with that person and in such circumstances it is to live with him too difficult to leave him alone in the streets, another example of chronic stress is when a husband commits domestic violence to his wife. She bears which is a commonly observed in India. The second type of stress is k/as acute stress disappears quickly and is quite intense, an example of acute stress is while driving if someone overtakes that might result in accident.

Signs

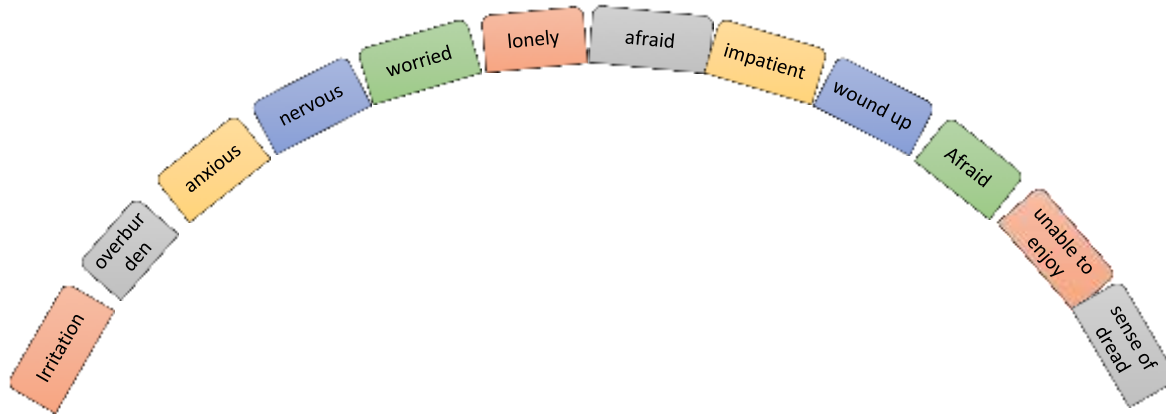


Figure 1: Signs

From the 1 figure we can say that persons with stress can be identified with signs of stress like: being irritable, over-burdened, impatient or wound, aggressive, neglected or lonely anxious, nervous or afraid, one's thoughts are racing and they can't switch off. Along with this person with stress is uninterested in life, a sense of dread, unable to enjoy yourself worried about their health, usually depressed, the person loses their sense of humour etc. Stress can take place from daily routine annoyances to unexpected calamities. In reaction to stressors, neurochemical, behavioural, and immunological changes occur that may serve in an adaptive capacity.

Symptoms can be presented in figure 2

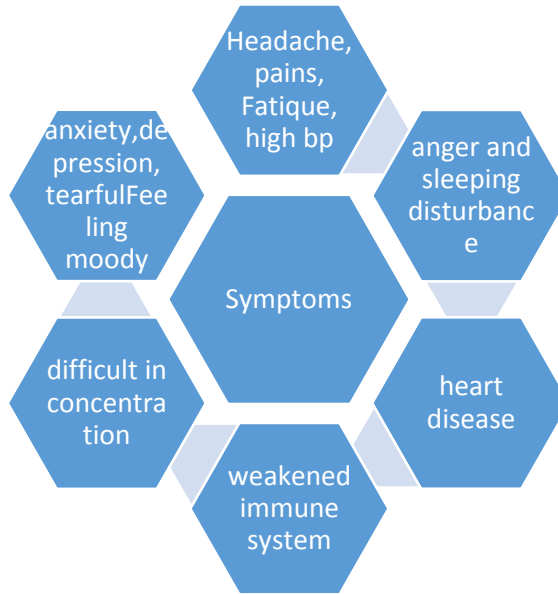
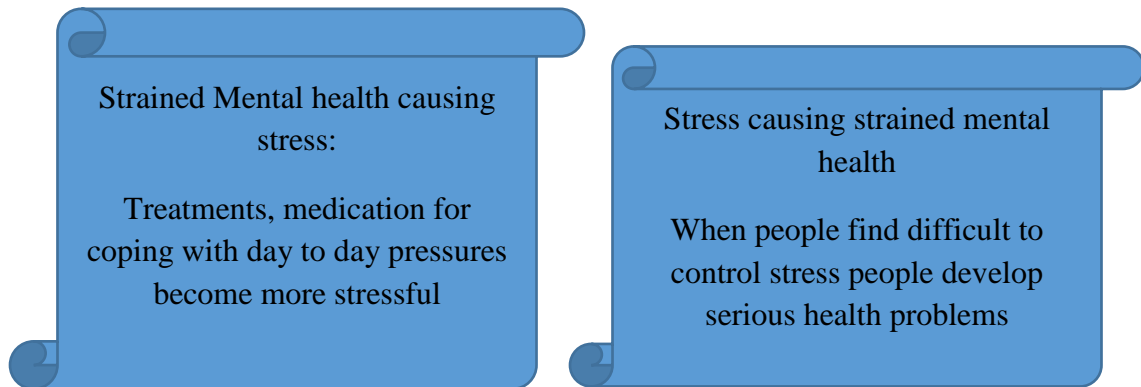


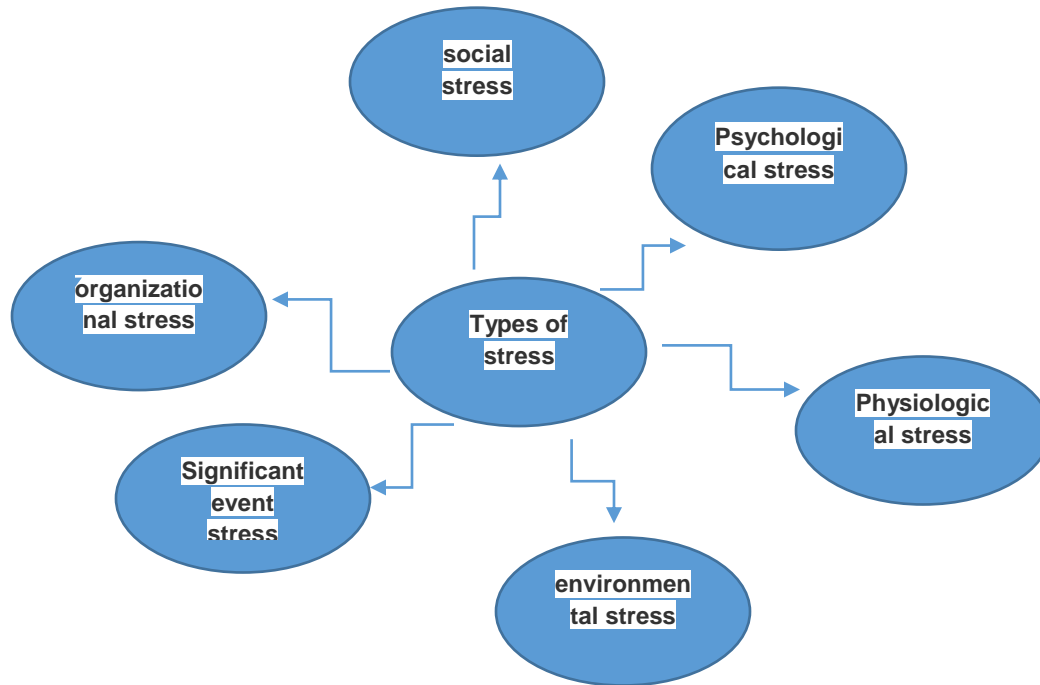
Figure 2: Symptoms

Two way relationship between mental health and stress



Causes of stress

Stress can arise due to any reason at any time, at some time it can be sudden or at some it can be influenced by some past event (Summers, 2001)



Social stress: It involves stress that stems from one's relationships with others and the social environment in general. Being a social being there are demands of the different social roles that we occupy like parent, spouse, caregiver, and employee, while performing same roles multiple stressors may arise. According to appraisal theory of emotion, stress mainly arises when a person evaluates a personally relevant situation and perceives that he or she does not have the resources to cope or handle the particular situation. It may involve some life events which can be defined as abrupt, some severe life changes that require an individual to adapt quickly (financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, sexual assault, sudden injury, deadlines, divorce, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, and co-parenting).

Physiological Stress: It involve the situations and circumstances that affectour body and can result in physiological stressors e.g. illness, accidents, lack of exercise aging, growth of adolescence, menopause, giving birth, , poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.

Psychological stress involve the emotional and physiological reactions experienced by an individual to a situation which the demands goes beyond their coping resources

e.g. **Stressful** situations arise due to death of a loved one, marital problems, abuse, some health problems, family related problems like the partition related problems and financial crises.

Environmental Stress: Environmental factors like noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, crime, unsafe and substandard housing.

Significant event stress: Certain events like the death of mother, friend, insult at the public place etc. can result in stress.

Organisational Stress: Work overload, lack of control over work and lack of participation in decision making, long hours worked, and pressure, the effects of these on personal lives, poor social support, over restrictions in the management side etc.

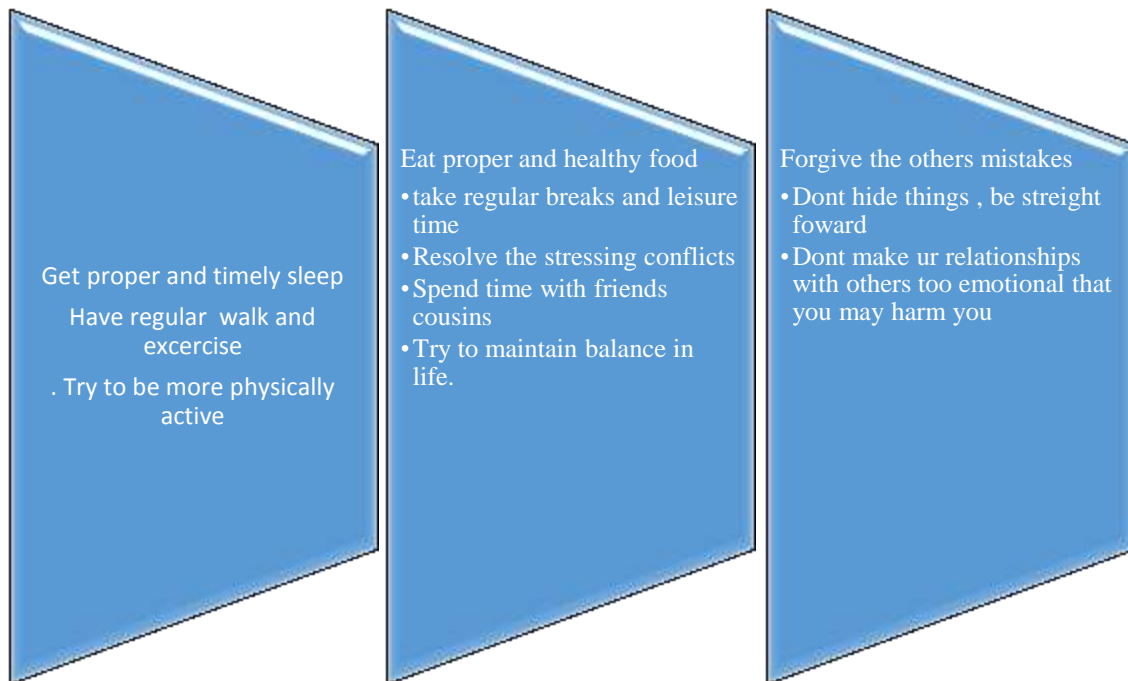
At present people in many businesses usually face stress as these work with longer working hours have been expecting more from their I.T. personnel without any commensurate increase in remuneration. These are not being able to take a vacation or having any cut short due to regular I.T. related problems that has been identified as a major problem relating to the retention of employees Stress in the present scenario in I.T. sector come to the workers via the sector's strategies, to the changes in external environment, role ambiguity, role conflict and work overload, I.T. personnel are often subject to increased user demands. More pressure comes from active or passive strategies like downsizing, re-structuring, or meeting the supply and demand gap for I.T. professionals. Similarly, boundary spanning is also contributing factor to role conflict and ambiguity among I.T. personnel, making environment stressful to the workers and the daily changing nature of work and uncertainties at the workplace which are inherent in the business environment, are mainly the primary determinants of stress among I.T. personnel—the inability to cope with the pressure in a job at the work place. (Bartol & Martin, 1982; Ivancevich et al. 1983; Guimaraes and Igarria, 1992; Li and Shani, 1991; McGee, 1996; Sethi et al. 1999; Moore, 2000). Similarly, Baroudi (1985) and Guimaraes and Igarria (1992) have reported that. According to Cartwright and Cooper (1996), Rees, 1997, Gartner, 2001).

Problems associated with stress

Pain of any kind, sleep problems, depression and anxiety, Heart disease, autoimmune diseases, digestive problems, thinking and memory problems, skin conditions, reproductive issues, eczema, weight problems, etc.

How to cope-up with Stress

*"People are disturbed not by a thing, but by their perception of a thing." ~
Epictetus*



At the individual level: If a person is aware that they get easily stressed. They should take steps like- talking to friends, remove the negative thinking people i.e. "stress carriers" from your peer group, get proper sleep, Eating healthy, well-balanced meals, exercising regularly, Avoid drugs and alcohol, sharing their problems, Take a break, watch comedy shows, If news events result in your stress take a break from watching or listening the

news, if you are spiritual being, pray; speak to God, to a higher power, and believe in your inner guide.

Exercise daily; a lot of studies show that maximal exercise does reduce the intensity of stress. High doses of exercise are beneficial for health and relieve the mental fatigue including stress. The most important aspect of exercise is reducing blood pressure and anxiety (Bartholomew, J. 2000; Rejeski et al., 1991; Hobson and Rejeski, 1993).

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over the another "..... William James

At family level: Intensity of Stress can be decreased by taking care of the person who is usually faces the same, use the words like "We are with you", "Don't take tension", "we can do it", "Together everything will be fine" etc. As parents *Talk*, listen, and encourage expression of your children, take care if children are behaving in any way out of the ordinary, avoid abuse, neglect, or other such behavior that make children feel that they are not cared, Is there any change in behaviour, take care if children sleeping more or less etc.

At the organisational level: The organisation knows that the work in the enterprise is possible if the workers, managers and the whole staff coordinate. The enterprise should take care of things that they should not be over burdened by work and if this happens the situation will worsen. So the organisation should take steps like providing leisure time, bonus, slack etc. so that the staff do not feel the burden.

Stress management

Suppose anyone experiences physical symptoms that is related to stress. In that case, it is important to take steps to manage that stress and there is urgent talk to your doctor to ensure one is doing well to safeguard their health. Creating a proper stress management plan is necessary to reap the benefits of being healthy. Effective stress management can

help reduce stress levels in one's life. It can make one healthier, happier and more productive so that one can get a suitable balanced life, relationships, relaxation, time for work, fun and reduce the intensity of pressure can successively to meet challenges in day to day. In simple words, a successful stress management can help remove or alter the source of stress, altering the way one looks at a stressful situation, reduces the impact that stress might have on one's body and can be helpful to make other learn the alternative ways of coping with stress.

It can be of three levels.

At Primary-level: In this type of stress management technique or intervention, stress is eliminated and reduced in intensity at the source of stress. The main motive is to prevent the stress level at work, in all the levels the focus is mostly at individual level then team and peer group and the organization.

At Secondary-level: It aims to develop stress resistance and helps develop people's adaptive capacity via education and training. This helps to reduce the intensity of stress by interventions i.e to response directed, here the role to group of workers, individual employees is recognized in case of response to signs of stress.

At Tertiary-level: It involves direct intervention like the rehabilitation of the stressed and distressed employees and is symptom directed.

Conclusion

From the above discussion we can say that stress although is a universal truth but this situation is not such that cannot be cured.

"Be the change you wish to see in the world. ".....Gandhiji

By taking steps at individual, family level and even at organisational level if steps are taken can relieve create such condition that create stress. Suppose stress is being felt as a student. In that case, student should practice some aspects like study as much, should learn more to study more effectively, should find ways to calm down, try to mimic test taking conditions, watch your diet, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, make sure you have plenty of time etc. As the social being, there is need of social support. One need to

call a friend, send an email. When anyone shares their feelings with another person, it helps a lot to relieve stress. This needs one important thing: the person one shares is the one whom one trusts and feels can validate and understand them.

Make connection to God by meditation: Meditation and mindful prayer help the mind and body to relax and focus. Mindfulness can help people see new perspectives, develop self-compassion and forgiveness. When practicing a form of mindfulness, people can release emotions that may have been causing the body physical stress. Much like exercise, research has shown that even meditating briefly can reap immediate benefits

At the organization level, steps should be taken to recognize the things that create the high costs of mismanaged stress at the workplace and how to achieve enhanced level of effectiveness and well-being among the workers. So, it means at both individual coping and organizational change can combat stress-related problems.

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