

**STRESS
AND
TIME MANAGEMENT**



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AND
TIME MANAGEMENT**

**School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, we experience stress and time related issues in various situations. In this Course, learners will learn how they can make adjustments and manage to cope with stress and time management more effectively. This course deals with understanding of stress and time management. To explore the causes and impacts of stress and poor time management, this course focuses on the workplace stress; distractions at workplace, that is waste of time; effects of poor time management on job performance; and effects of stress on health. In view of above, study highlights Time-wasters and Time-savers; and effective methods and approaches of stress and time management. In the end, Course focuses on the various stress and time management practices to achieve happiness and success in life.

To provide an overview of this Course, the course structure is divided into following three blocks:

First Block of this course is divided into two units, that is ‘Understanding Stress’ and ‘Understanding Time Management’, which will serve as a basis to rest of the units that will be covered in this Course.

Second Block has four units. Third Unit of this Course deals with models of stress, fourth Unit highlights the major causes of workplace stress, fifth unit explores the effects of poor time management on job performance, and sixth unit brings out the effects of stress on health, job performance and relationship.

Last, but not least, **Third Block** consists of four units. Among these units, seventh unit focuses on Time-wasters and Time-savers, eighth unit highlights major approaches and techniques of stress management, ninth unit depicts approaches and techniques of time management, and tenth unit examines and provides necessary information on how to achieve happiness and success through stress and time management.

BLOCK 1
UNDERSTANDING STRESS AND TIME
MANAGEMENT

UNIT 1 UNDERSTANDING STRESS*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Stress: Nature and Concept
 - 1.2.1 Approaches to Stress
 - 1.2.2 Types of Stress
- 1.3 Occupational Stress
- 1.4 Symptoms of Stress
- 1.5 Sources of Stress
- 1.6 Conclusion
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 References
- 1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the nature and concept of stress;
- Describe occupational or job stress; and
- Discuss the symptoms and sources of stress.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, we will discuss the causes and impacts of stress on the basis of selected case studies.

Sumina was eldest child in her family and was a bright student. She wanted to become a doctor when she grew up. However, her mother fell very sick and Samina had to leave her studies and take care of her ailing mother and three younger siblings. Subsequent to death of her mother, Samina was not same as before. She started falling sick often and doctors could find no physiological reasons for her sickness. She also lost interest in her studies and in fact did not even bother to appear for her examination.

Ravi was sure that he will be promoted to senior manager's post after this year's performance appraisal. He had worked very hard and felt that he deserved the promotion. However, as the news with regard to promotions in his department was announced, he was shocked to see that he was not promoted. Ravi felt very frustrated after this news as he felt that his work and sincerity were not appreciated by his superiors. He lost interest in his job and his productivity started declining. The frustration experienced by him also affected his family relationship and he started having fights with his spouse. This led to further frustration and anger and Ravi ended up having a psychological breakdown.

Above are two different examples of individuals, who experience stress in one way or other in their lives. A very negative and tragic life experience of losing a parent

* Contributed by Prof. Suhas Shetgovekar, Faculty of Psychology, SoSS, IGNOU; and adapted from BPCS-186, Managing Stress, Block-1, Unit-1.

led Samina to experiencing stress that affected her physiological well-being; and stress as a result of frustration experienced by Ravi led to become psychologically distressed and experiencing a psychological breakdown. The two examples also imply that there are various reasons why a person may experience stress and the symptoms of stress as displayed by the individuals also vary. Though, one thing can be stated clearly, that is if stress is not identified and managed in time or on regular basis it can have detrimental effects on the individual, his/ her functioning and productivity, which can also have a negative impact on the significant people in their lives like parents, spouse, children, friends and even colleagues. Stress has a negative impact on both psychological and physiological well-being of a person and thus, needs to be dealt with adequately using suitable intervention strategies. Though, before the techniques of stress management are discussed, it is important to understand the nature, symptoms and source of stress.

In the present Unit, we will make an attempt to discuss the concept of stress; and will also focus on the symptoms and sources of stress.

1.2 STRESS: NATURE AND CONCEPT

After reading the above examples you may have developed some idea about what is stress. Though, in the present section of this unit we will discuss about the concept and nature of stress so as to develop a better understanding about this term.

The term stress has been derived from 'stringere', that is a Latin word and means 'to draw tight' (Cox, 1978). It has, today, become a very commonly used term in every context whether school, workplace, day to day life and so on. We often come across people who say that they are stressed or experiencing stress in their lives. We ourselves often experience it. Stress as such is like salt and pepper and a life without stress would be without motivation, as stress often motivates us to work in certain direction. Thus, stress is not altogether negative and does have numerous advantages. Though, if goes beyond the optimal level of an individual where the individual finds it exceedingly difficult to cope with it then it, can have detrimental effects on the well-being (both psychological and physiological) and performance and productivity of an individual.

The origin of stress can mainly be traced to physical sciences (Schafer, 1998) and during 17th century it was exceedingly used to denote affiliations and hardships experienced by individuals, and during 18th century it came to be described mainly in terms of pressure, strain or force (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997). The initial conceptualisation of stress mainly focused on stress as an external stimulus. Though later, it came to be described as a response of an individual to certain disturbances. The study carried out by Cannon can be mentioned in this context, where he mainly studied the fight and flight reaction. The focus of the study by Cannon was on the effect that stress has on animal as well as individual. Cannon also observed physiological changes in the participants of his study and he termed these changes as displayed by individuals under stress.

Hans Selye (1974) described stress as a response of the body to certain demand, that is made on it, and he further stated that this response was non-specific. In 1946, Selye put forth three stages (General Adaptation Syndrome) that are experienced by an individual, when she/he (s/he) is in a situation that is stressful. The first stage was stated by him as that of 'alarm reaction' that is denoted by a decreased resistance, which is followed by a counter shock where the defence mechanisms of an individual are activated. In the second stage, that is 'resistance', where the adaptation is maximum and the equilibrium is restored. Though, if the stress is

still experienced and the defence mechanism is inactive then the individual will experience the third and last stage. The last stage is that of 'exhaustion' where there is a collapse of adaptive mechanisms (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997).

Baum et al. (1981) have defined stress as a "process in which environmental events or forces, called, stressors, threatens an organism's existence and wellbeing". While discussing the concept of stress, it is also important to understand the term stress or that can be described as situation, event, person or anything that leads to the stress response. Gerrig and Zimbardo (2005) defined stressor as a stimulus event that places a demand on an organism for some kind of adaptive response. At a given point of time an individual may have various stressors in his/ her life. It could be an upcoming official event, an impending report, examination and so on. Stressors can also be described as varied external and internal stimuli that may lead to stress. Stressors can be categorized into physical, psychological, environmental, social and as life events. Schafer (1998) defined stress as "arousal of mind and body in response to demands made on them".

Both the above definitions focus on the demand and an individual's response to the same. Thus, the onus here is on the response of the individual. Though the first definition focuses only on body the second definition brings in the important aspect that of mind, implying that stress is a response of both body as well as mind.

Yet another definition of stress was given by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They defined stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/ her resources and endangering his/ her wellbeing". This definition emphasises the relationship between person and the environment, though here the stress is presented in a negative light and as we just discussed earlier, stress is not always negative and may have its own advantages. Lazarus and Folkman put forth the transactional model of stress and coping that focuses on how an event is interpreted or appraised by an individual, which in turn will determine the stress experienced by an individual. This model, highlights that stress and coping with stress as being interrelated processes.

Truxillo et al. (2016) defined stress as "the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response". This definition has further elaborated the response as being physical, mental or emotional in nature.

1.2.1 Approaches to Stress

Stress can also be understood in a better way with the help of the following four approaches (Nelson et al, 2012):

- i) **The Medical Approach/ The Homeostasis Approach:** Cannon initially termed stress as the emergency response and further elaborated that stress had its source in the fighting emotions (Nelson et al., 2012). As was discussed earlier, Cannon put forth the fight or flight response with regard to stress. According to Cannon stress was an outcome of an environmental demand that was external and that led to an imbalance in the natural steady state of an individual. He further stated that body encompasses natural defence mechanisms that play a role in maintaining the homeostasis or the natural steady state of an individual. Cannon was also interested in sympathetic nervous system that was significant in activation of an individual when in stressful situation.
- ii) **The Cognitive appraisal Approach:** This approach is with reference to the perspective put forth by Lazarus. Lazarus not only believed that stress was a result of an interaction between the individual and the environment, but he

also focused on the cognitive appraisal, that is carried out by an individual while determining whether a situation/ event is stressful or not. He further stated that individual difference exists in the way in which the cognitive appraisal is carried out. Thus, same situation may be seen as stressful by one individual, whereas, another individual may not appraise it as stressful.

- iii) **The Person-Environment Approach:** This approach was put forth by Robert Kahn, in which he highlights how stress is created as a result of confusing and conflicting expectations from an individual when (she/he) is in a social role. Kahn emphasised the social psychology of stress through this model (Nelson, 2012). In this model he also refers to the fit between individual and environment and he indicates that a good individual and environment fit is an outcome of consistency between the role expectations and the skills and abilities of an individual. Thus, when the role expectations are confusing or in conflict with the individual's skills and abilities, stress will result.
- iv) **The Psychoanalytic Approach:** The explanation of stress by Levinson is based on the psychoanalytic theory by Freud. According to Levinson, two main elements of personality, namely, ego ideal and self image interact with each other and lead to stress. Ego ideal can be described as expression of an individual's perfect self, whereas self image is the way an individual perceives himself/ herself (negatively or positively). Stress thus, is an outcome of the gap between the ego ideal and self image. Thus, this approach mainly focuses on how stress can result due to the unconscious personality factors in an individual.

1.2.2 Types of Stress

Stress can also be categorised into different types, as follows:

- i) **Eustress:** Stress can also be good stress, that is explained as 'Eustress'. Eustress can be defined as "good stress, caused by a positive response to a desired stressor, such as a wedding or a new job" (Truxillo et al., 2016).
- ii) **Neustress:** When stress is neither helpful nor harmful, it can be described as neustress (Schafer, 1998).
- iii) **Distress:** This is the third category as stress, that most people commonly relate stress with. Distress occurs when the arousal experienced by the individual is very high or very low (Schafer, 1998).

1.3 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

In the previous section, we discussed about the concept and nature of stress in general. However, now our focus will specifically be on occupational or job stress. Thus, it becomes inevitable that we also try to understand stress in this context. Understanding occupational or job stress is also relevant as stress can have a negative impact on the well-being, productivity and performance of an employee. Two significant concepts that need to be discussed while explaining occupational or job stress are job stressor and job strain. We discussed about stressors earlier, and job stressor is a related concept.

Job stressor can be defined as a condition or situation that requires an adaptive response on the part of an employee (Spector, 2012). And job strain can be described as "a negative reaction by an employee in a stressor, such as anger, anxiety or physical symptom such as a headache" (Spector, 2012).

Strain can be further categorised in to psychological reactions, physical reactions and behavioural reactions. The examples of psychological reactions are anger,

anxiety, frustration, and dissatisfaction. The examples of physical reactions include headache, pounding of heart, stomach upset and so on. The examples of behavioural reactions are substance use and abuse, accidents and accident proneness and so on.

Further, it can also be said that job stressors can lead to job strain, though the process as such is not automatic but also encompasses the perception and appraisal of the job stressors by the employee (Spector, 2012). Thus, as an employee comes across a job stressor, s/he first perceives, appraises it as threatening and as a result s/he may experience short-term or long-term strain. Short-term strain is a strain that takes place immediately, whereas, a long-term strain occurs when the threat is severe in nature and thus, has a long-term effect on the employee.

Yet another related concept that can be discussed here is that of job burnout. According to Spector (2012), burnout can be described as “a distressed psychological state that an employee might experience after being on the job for a period of time”. According to Pareek (1982) some of the factors that contribute to burnout include, the stress level and type of stress experienced by an employee, personality traits of the employee, the nature of the job and role that the employee needs to play, the non-work life and lifestyle of the employee, role style, coping strategies and also organisational climate (as cited in Pestonjee, 1999).

Burnout Stress Syndrome (BOSS) can also be discussed here that was observed by Paine (1982) and described as “the consequence of high levels of job stress, personal frustration, and inadequate coping skills, having major personal, organisational and social costs, and these costs are probably increasing” (as cited in Pestonjee, 1999). It can be seen from the above description of BOSS that burnout in a way a severe form of stress, and can have detrimental effects on personal and social life of an individual and may have a negative effect on the productivity and performance of the individual as well. It is thus an outcome of stress, with which the individual was not able to cope adequately and thus, has resulted in the individual experiencing, fatigue, irritation, lack of effectiveness and various health related issues and problems.

The three main components of burnout include emotional exhaustion including fatigue, depersonalisation including hostility towards others and lack of care or concern towards others and decrease in personal accomplishment including lower levels of motivation and ineffective performance (Spector, 2012).

Five stages of burnout can also be discussed (Pestonjee, 1999), which are described as follows:

- i) **Honeymoon Stage:** As an employee takes up a new job s/he is excited and enthusiastic about it. However, dysfunction may creep in when an individual's reserves of energy get depleted as s/he is coping with the challenges of the new environment that s/he finds herself/himself in and the strategies that an employee used to cope with the stress experienced failure or are not useful in the coping process.
- ii) **Full shortage Stage:** An employee will experience the feelings of loss, exhaustion and even confusion. S/he may also display lack of job satisfaction, sleep disturbances, ineffectiveness and fatigue. The employee may also engage in unhealthy coping strategies or escape activities.
- iii) **Chronic symptom Stage:** An employee, at this stage, may also display varied physiological symptoms that call for immediate attention. S/he may experience extreme physical fatigue. Even depression or may display some physical illness as well.

- iv) **Crisis Stage:** When the physiological symptoms and the feelings discussed in the previous stage continue, then the crisis stage begins. The employee here may develop pessimism, escape mentality and may also suffer from varied health related issues including sleep disturbance, ulcer, high blood pressure and so on.
- v) **Hitting the Wall Stage:** This is the last stage and here the employee may experience complete exhaustion, which can have grave impact on the productivity and performance of the employee.

Stress and Performance

Decreased performance, job dissatisfaction and even absenteeism can be related with stress (Miner, 1992). While discussing about relationship between stress and performance, the hypothesis related to the inverted- U can be discussed. The diagrammatic representation of Inverted- U is given in figure 1.1. As can be seen in the figure, as the stress increases the performance also increases, however at certain point where stress continues to increase, the performance is affected and goes down. Thus, it can be said that stress plays an important role in the performance, but as it goes beyond certain optimal level, the performance will get negatively affected.

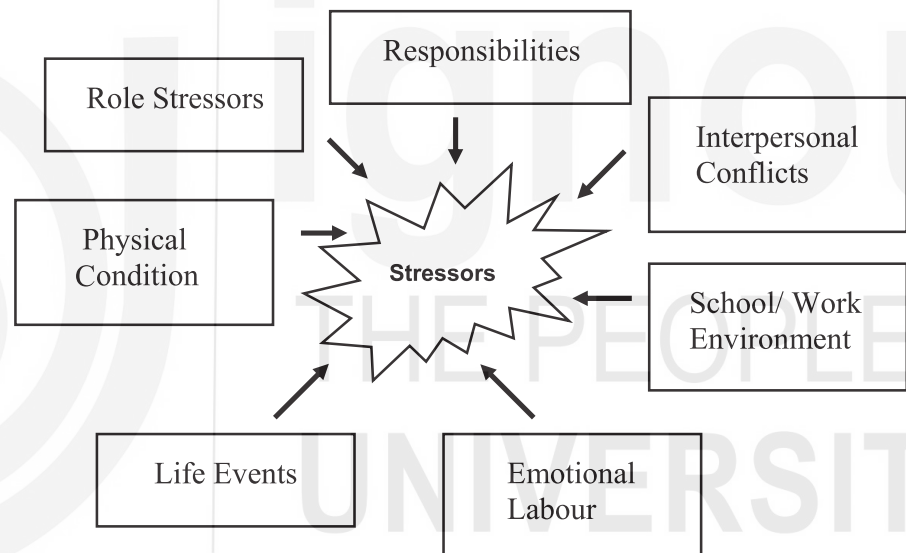


Figure 1.1: Showing various Stressors

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Explain the main approaches to stress.

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- 2) What are the five stages of burnout?

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1.4 SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Stress can have an impact on various aspects of life that include behaviour, cognition, emotions as well as physical health. Though stress will have different effects on different individuals, and each individual will react to stress in a different way. There are certain symptoms that can be related with stress, which are discussed as follows:

- i) **Behavioural Symptoms:** The behavioural symptoms of stress include deterioration in performance effectiveness, indulgence in substance use, prone to accidents, nervous mannerism, poor time management, displaying checking rituals, changes in appetite, procrastination, eating faster, even talking or walking faster, impaired speech and so on.
- ii) **Cognitive Symptoms:** The cognitive symptoms related to stress include constantly worrying, experiencing racing thoughts, lack of organisation in thinking, forgetting, not able to focus, lack of judgement or poor judgement and also pessimism.
- iii) **Emotional Symptoms:** The emotional symptoms include displaying frustration, getting irritated or agitated easily, feelings of worthlessness, feeling lonely and even depressed.
- iv) **Physical Symptoms:** The physical symptoms of stress include low levels of energy, stomach upset, headaches and migraines, pain and aches, chest pain, rapid heartbeats, lack of sleep, dryness in mouth, experiencing tension in muscles, frequent infections and so on.

Thus, the symptoms of stress can be categorised into the above main four categories, which are depicted in table 1.1, but it is to be remembered that individual differences do exist in the symptoms displayed by different individuals.

Table 1.1: Symptoms of Stress

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	EMOTIONAL	BEHAVIOURAL
- Rapid Pulse - Pounding Heart - Increased Perspiration - Tensing of arm and leg muscles - Shortness of breath - Gritting of teeth - Headaches - Indigestion - Numbness - Dry mouth - Pain - Cold sweat - Abdominal cramps	- Feeling upset - Inability to concentrate - Irritability - Loss of self confidence - Worry - Difficulty in making decisions - Racing thoughts - Absent- mindedness	- Anxiety - Depression - Anger - Guilt - Jealousy - Shame - Impatient - Suicidal feelings	- Deterioration in performance effectiveness - Smoking or use of alcohol or other 'recreational' drugs - Accident Proneness - Nervous Mannerism (foot tapping, nail biting etc.) - Increased or decreased eating/ Anorexia - Increased or decreased sleeping/ sleep disruption - Phobias - Eating/ walking/ talking faster - Poor time management - Impaired speech - Checking rituals

1.5 SOURCES OF STRESS

As we have developed a clear idea about the concept and nature of stress, we will now move on to the sources of stress.

As such the sources of stress can be categorised into three main sources, namely, Frustration, Conflict of motives and Pressure (Coleman, 1970). Frustration can be described as occurring when a goal oriented behaviour of an individual is thwarted. As stated by Mangal (1984) “a wide range of environmental obstacles, both physical and social and the internal factors in the form of personal limitations, biological conditions and psychological barriers may lead to frustration of our needs, motives and efforts”. For example, Ravi expected his promotion, however, when he did not receive the same he is likely to have experienced frustration.

The next source is conflict of motives that can cause stress as an individual has to choose between alternatives and decision-making in this regard can lead to stress in an individual. Conflict of motives can be of four different types- approach conflict, avoidance conflict, approach avoidance conflict and double approach avoidance conflict.

- i) **Approach-approach Conflict:** In this type of conflict, an individual has to choose between two goals that are positive and similar. For example, an individual may have to choose between two similar job opportunities.
- ii) **Avoidance-avoidance Conflict:** The next type of conflict of motives is avoidance - avoidance conflict. Here again, there are two goals that are similar but as opposed to approach- approach conflict, the goals here are negative. For example, an individual may have to take decision whether s/he wants to remain unemployed or take up a mediocre job that s/he is not interested in.
- iii) **Approach-avoidance Conflict:** Here, there is a single goal, which is both positive and negative. For example, an individual taking up a job abroad may be excited about the opportunity but also has to face the fact that s/he will have to stay away from the family. Thus, this goal has both negative and positive consequences and thus, an individual may experience stress.
- iv) **Multiple approach-avoidance Conflict:** It may so happen that the conflicts faced by us are quite complex and they are combinations of approach and avoidance conflicts. In this conflict, an individual has to choose between the options that have both positive and negative consequences. For example, a student may have to choose between two educational opportunities, one of pursuing music that s/he is interested in which will make her/his parents unhappy and the other of pursuing engineering, which will make his/her parents happy but s/he is really not interested in it.

Pressure is yet another source of stress that can be external or internal. External pressure are pressures that could be as a result of demands from the environment, responsibilities and obligations that are mainly social in nature as well as demands and expectations of the significant persons in our lives. With regard to internal pressures, Mangal (1984) states, “Internal pressures are caused by our own self for maintaining the picture of ourselves—as we think we could and should be” and an example of external pressure is when a child is pressurised by parents to do well in examination, and an example of internal pressure is when a child herself /himself feels that s/he needs to study and do well in examination.

Thus, any stress can be categorised into the above three sources, though a person may experience stress due to more than one or all the three sources as well.

Besides the above sources, stress can also be a result of personality factors that may make an individual prone to stress. Past experiences, basic temperamental factors, perception of control over the situation causing stress play an important role in determining the reaction of individual to stress (Parmeswaran & Beena, 2004). In the context of personality, the type A and type B personalities can be discussed. Individuals with Type A personality display hurriedness, restlessness and are often involved in carrying out various activities at the same time. They are also competitive, anxious and are often achievement oriented. The individuals with type B personality, on the other hand, display behaviour that is relaxed. It can be said that individuals with type A personality are comparatively more prone to stress when compared with individuals with type B personality (Parmeswaran & Beena, 2004).

Further, certain life events, like death of a near or dear one, divorce, pregnancy, child leaving home, change in conditions of living, retirement, marriage, losing one's job and so on can also lead to stress (Nolen - Hoeksema, 2009).

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1) Enumerate the symptoms of stress.

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2) Discuss the types of conflict of motives with suitable examples.

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1.6 CONCLUSION

The present Unit mainly focused on the nature, symptoms and sources of stress. The term stress has been derived from 'stringere' that is a Latin word and means 'to draw tight' (Cox, 1978). It is a commonly used term today and we find individuals referring to it from time to time in their day to day lives. Stress can be termed as salt and pepper and a life without stress would be without motivation, as stress often motivates us to work in certain direction and therefore, stress is not altogether negative and does have numerous advantages. Hans Selye (1974) described stress as a response of the body to certain demand, that is made on it and he further stated that this response was non-specific. Various definitions of stress were also discussed in this unit that mainly described stress as the demand and an individual's response to the same. The concept of stressor was also discussed that can be explained as a situation, event, person or anything that leads to the stress response. Stressors can be categorised into physical, psychological, environmental, social and as life events. The unit further described the various

approaches to stress including the medical approach/ the homeostasis approach, the cognitive appraisal approach, the person-environment approach and the psychoanalytic approach. Various types of stress including eustress, neustress and distress were also discussed in the Unit. The unit further focused on the concept of occupational stress with an emphasis on stress and performance.

The Unit then moved on to explain the various symptoms of stress that were categorised into behavioural symptoms, cognitive symptoms, emotional symptoms and physical symptoms. Further, the sources of stress mainly, frustration, conflict of motives and pressure were also explained.

1.7 GLOSSARY

- **Conflict of motives:** Conflict of motives is a source of stress that occurs when an individual has to choose between alternatives, and, decision-making in this regard can lead to stress in an individual.
- **Frustration:** Frustration can be described as occurring when goal oriented behaviour of an individual is thwarted.
- **Pressure:** Pressure is a source of stress that can be external or internal. External pressure could be as a result of demands from the environment, responsibilities and obligations that are mainly social in nature as well as demands and expectations of the significant persons in our lives and internal pressures are caused by our own self for maintaining the picture of ourselves-as we think we could and should be.
- **Psychological test:** Psychological test can be explained as a measure of sample of behaviour, that is objective and systematic in nature.
- **Stress:** It refers to a particular relationship between the person and the environment, that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding her/his resources and endangering her/his well-being.

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1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following:
 - The Medical Approach/ The Homeostasis approach
 - The Cognitive appraisal approach
 - The Person-Environment approach
 - The Psychoanalytic approach.
- 2) Your answer should include the following:
 - Honeymoon stage
 - Full shortage stage
 - Chronic symptom stage
 - Crisis stage
 - Hitting the wall stage.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Behavioural symptoms
 - Cognitive symptoms
 - Emotional symptoms
 - Physical symptoms.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - Approach-approach conflict
 - Avoidance-avoidance conflict
 - Approach-avoidance conflict
 - Multiple approach-avoidance conflict.

UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING TIME MANAGEMENT*

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Time Management: Meaning and Significance
 - 2.2.1 Time Management
 - 2.2.2 Significance of Time Management
- 2.3 Consequences of Wasting Time and Benefits of Time Management
- 2.4 Techniques of Time Management
- 2.5 Skills of Time Management
- 2.6 Time Management: Role of Administrator/Manager
- 2.7 Time Management: Suggestions for Employees at Workplace
- 2.8 Conclusion
- 2.9 Glossary
- 2.10 References
- 2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning and significance of time management;
- Highlight the major techniques and skills of time management that can help in promoting effectiveness and efficiency in government organisations as well as private sector;
- Analyse the role of Manager/Administrator in effective time management at a workplace; and
- Examine the practice of time management at the workplace, and suggest necessary measures to be used for effective time management to enhance productivity at the workplace.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The judicious use of time to succeed in all aspects of life refers to time management, which is important for students, workers, administrators, political leaders and all those individuals who aspire for happiness and success in all walks of life. It has been observed that top-level administrators keep extremely busy schedules that arise out of their leadership requirements, office work, or coordination with outside agencies. Thus, in order to avoid feeling stressed due to overwork, which affects health, performance and relationships, it is necessary to implement effective time management. In this Unit, we will focus on the meaning, significance, techniques, and skills of time management. In addition, we will

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analyse the role of Manager/Administrator in implementation and monitoring of time management at the workplace. Further, we will explore and suggest necessary measures for the effective implementation of time management.

2.2 TIME MANAGEMENT: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

2.2.1 Time Management

Time Management contributes to the best possible use of time. It is a concept that deals with the effective management of time. It means the practice of using the available time in a useful and effective way, especially in work (Cambridge Dictionary). Rowan stated, “Your time management is like the operating software on your computer. It runs in the background, enabling you to achieve more in less time and to enjoy your challenges at work. Whether you work for yourself, for government, in industry or providing a service, the better you manage your time, the more successful you will be” (Rowan, 2015, p. 4). Scott believes that time management is not about speed; it is about effectiveness at work (Scott, 1992, p. 10). However, Furner opines, “Time Management means the efficient use of our resources, including time, in such a way that we are effective in achieving important personal goals. Further he concludes, “Thus, time management is a continuous, ongoing process of analyzing, planning, reanalyzing, and replanning” (Furner, 1995, p. 12). It has been observed that an individual remains involved in multiple tasks, which include daily routine activities, performing job-related duties, recreational activities such as watching movies, attending parties, going out with friends and family etc. It is worth mentioning that when an individual is involved in multitasking, especially a working woman, just to quote an example, who is at the position of a Manager in a Bank, has multiple tasks to carry out not only to improve performance and productivity at work but also to balance personal and professional life to avoid stress. Thus, it is essential for her and others to implement time management. It is to be noted that time is limited for everyone to fulfil unlimited wants. There are certain characteristics of time; it is measured in units, every individual gets the same amount of time each day (fixed 24 hours) to efficiently carry out her/his work, duties and responsibilities. In this regard, a myriad of activities and tasks are performed according to the scheduled time that may be meetings in the office, lunch breaks, working hours, etc. It is rightly stated, “Time and Tide wait for none”. Hence, everybody should understand the value of time to succeed in all aspects of life. In this regard, it is necessary to identify the more important activities, and decide the amount of time to be allocated for the same; and prioritise the important activities based on their importance.

An individual who organises tasks and duties according to the scheduled timings becomes more disciplined, organised and efficient. Time management provides an opportunity to prioritise tasks on the basis of their importance and make the best use of important limited resources; enhances an individual’s knowledge and skills to perform constructively; and promotes delegation of responsibilities. It contributes in enhancing happiness and success of those individuals who strictly follow time management. They balance their personal and professional life without any type of stress because stress is a personal response to a situation, which can be changed through time management.

Now, it is evident that time management empowers an individual and enables her/him to:

- Assign specific time slots to desired activities as per their importance and priority;
- Delegate responsibilities to team members;
- Properly utilise the time through SMART strategy; and
- Manage the allocated time effectively so that important activities can be completed in specific time.

In view of the above, time management incorporates:

i) **Planning for Effective Time Management**

It is necessary for an individual to plan her/his day in advance and prepare a To-Do List to achieve the targets. In this regard, prioritise and note down the tasks/activities on the basis of their importance against the time, that is allocated for each task/activity. Top Priority should be assigned to the most important work for that particular day, followed by those which are less important. In a disciplined manner, complete the important tasks. It is to be noted that one must not begin any new task unless there is an emergency, and ensure that tasks have been completed without any discrepancy.

ii) **Prioritising Tasks on the Basis of their Importance**

In the next stage, prioritise the tasks on the basis of their importance for the planned day. Here, a clear understanding about the difference between important and urgent tasks is necessary. Clearly mark the number and date against each task in a weekly planner. Hence, tasks should be managed and performed based on priority.

iii) **Delegation of Responsibilities to Team Members**

For effective time management in an organisation, an employee should learn to say "NO" for extra work, which s/he can't perform in given time. S/he need not do everything on her/ his own, when there is other members in the team as well. Thus, an employee should not accept or try to perform an activity that is difficult/impossible to complete within a stipulated time. The team leader must delegate roles and responsibilities as per capacity and specialisation of employees, which will save time and enhance productivity.

iv) **Setting Goals to achieve Success**

To achieve the desired goals in an organisation, team leader should identify and set goals and targets and involve team members in the decision-making. In this context, s/he has to ensure that targets are realistic and achievable.

v) **Setting Deadlines to achieve the Targets**

The next important stage is setting deadlines to complete the tasks within the stipulated time frame. For this purpose, the team leader not only fixes deadlines but also motivates employees to strive hard to try to complete the task ahead of the deadlines. For every person setting deadlines on To-Do List is necessary to complete the assignment at the right time. Marking deadlines in a planner against the important tasks contributes effectively to efficient performance.

vi) **Monitoring to Ensure Completion of Tasks in Allocated Time**

The Team Leader ensures that tasks are completed in the allocated time. As delay disturbs the chain, therefore it is necessary to complete work as early as possible. It is worth mentioning that we all are human beings who need some personal time also to attend personal calls, check emails, etc. so it is advisable to fix deadlines accordingly.

Time management is also considered as a process of structuring lives so that an individual maximises her/his time and energy on what is most important and minimises the time spent on activities, which are not useful as per identified goals. As a tool, it can help in achieving targets, leading a balanced life, meeting deadlines, overcoming procrastination, reducing stress, enhancing productivity and efficiency, increasing opportunities, achieving important personal and professional goals, and improving professional reputation. An individual who understands the value of time feels neither stressed nor overburdened, s/he really enjoys each and every moment at the workplace and in personal life.

Thus, it can be stated that time plays a pivotal role in finishing off tasks within the stipulated time frame and increases productivity. In the next sub-section, we will explain the significance of time management in an organisation that may be public or private.

2.2.2 Significance of Time Management

Time management is an important tool that helps to succeed in work and other personal endeavours. By following time management, individuals or employees can achieve more success, meet deadlines, utilise opportunities, develop better professional reputation, contribute to greater productivity and efficiency, lead a balanced life, have more leisure time, reduce stress level, overcome procrastination, and achieve personal and professional goals. In this regard, significance of time management for an individual/employee has been enumerated below.

- In an organisation, every task has a deadline. In this regard, time management necessitates planning for specific time slots in To-Do List for day-to-day important tasks at the workplace, which helps employees to finish the assigned task within the time frame and enhances productivity.
- An individual/employee keeps herself/himself updated, and assigns some leisure time in the daily schedule to check updates on her/his organisation's website, social networking sites or call up friends and family. In this context, time management allows her/him to keep a check on time-wasters and spend quality time with family, which enhances happiness and success in her/his personal as well as professional life.
- Well organised employee plans her/his career effectively and completes the assigned tasks on time that contribute to reaching at the top of her/his career within the shortest possible time.
- Above all, time management inculcates the habit of discipline and makes an employee more disciplined and punctual. As a result, s/he gets in the habit of reaching work on time and working efficiently that enhances productivity, which reflects growth in an organisation.

It is to be noted that effective time management helps an individual to reach the pinnacle of success and stay firm at the top for a longer duration. The study emphasises the fact that individuals/employees who accomplish their tasks on time are less prone to stress and anxiety. In the subsequent section, we will highlight the consequences of wastage of time and the benefits of time management.

2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF WASTING TIME AND BENEFITS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Wasting time involves not only using the time inappropriately but inadequately also, which leads to its under-utilisation, un-utilisation or even wrong utilisation. In this context, there can be no exact objective analysis of what a time waster is.

A particular activity, for example dance practice may be a time waster for a scientist, but not for a dancer. A time wasting activity, which is deliberate, imposed or borne in ignorance can be dysfunctional, which is having negative consequences for the goal in view. As time is the most precious resource therefore, individuals as well organisations have to pay a heavy price for its wastage in terms of squandering away of financial resources, non-achievement of goals, dissatisfaction of the beneficiaries of a project and lowering of discipline and decorum. To conclude, time is considered wasted in the following conditions:

- a) When productivity is less than the usual standards.
- b) When benefits accruing from a particular slice of time are less than anticipated.
- c) When satisfaction is meager and below expectation.
- d) When a Project or effort results in loss, conflict or damage to the goodwill of a person or organisation.

(For more details, study Unit 7, titled ‘Time-wasters and Time-savers’)

i) **Consequences of Wasting Time**

The consequences of wasting time or failing to manage time effectively lead to following undesirable circumstances:

- a) An individual misses deadlines, which affects productivity and reputation.
- b) A poor professional reputation affects health and career.
- c) It causes higher stress levels, which affects health, job performance, and relationships.
- d) Inefficient work flow, which affects the coordination and productivity.
- e) Results in poor quality of work, which affects the output.
- f) Spending less quality time with family affects relationships and all-round development of children.

After a clear understanding about the consequences of wasting time, now we will discuss the benefits of effective time management in the next part of this Section.

ii) **Benefits of Time Management are as follows:**

a) **Inculcates the habit of Punctuality and Discipline**

An individual learns to make judicious use of time. S/he prepares a To-Do List and jots down important tasks, which s/he has to complete as per priority on a particular day against the specific time slots. It provides a clear direction to an individual/employee to focus on the completion of task within a stipulated time, which inculcates the habit of punctuality and discipline.

b) **Builds Confidence and Boosts an individual's Morale**

When an individual/employee efficiently accomplishes the given task within the stipulated time frame, it makes her/him popular amongst peers. It is evident that such individuals create a special place for them and become the centre of attention everywhere, which builds confidence and boosts their morale.

c) **Encourages to Prioritise important Tasks**

The techniques of time management enable an individual/employee to prioritise important tasks at the workplace and in personal life. For

completing the assigned task within the stipulated time, one has to say no to unimportant tasks and everything that comes her/his way.

d) **Develops Organisational Skills**

An individual/employee becomes more organised due to time management. For example, s/he keeps the frequently used items such as important files, folders, stationery etc. at a proper place, which saves time and energy, and avoids distraction. Thus, time management paves the way to enhance focus, productivity and efficiency of individuals. They keep their workstations, shelves, and meeting area clean and well organised; and develop organisational skills.

e) **Improves Skills in Forecasting and Planning**

Effective time management contributes to better planning and forecasting. Individuals/ employees who learn career planning know exactly where they stand five years from now. The team leader in an organisation can improve its productivity, if s/he can forecast and anticipates major issues and challenges that may affect efficiency and productivity, and find out their solutions. In this regard, the implementation of necessary changes in the system on the basis of forecasting and planning is the result of effective time management.

f) **Realises Goals within the Shortest Time Span**

Those individuals/employees who strictly follow and work according to the planned To-Do List, they realise their goals within the shortest possible time span. Hence, effective time management contributes in meeting the targets way ahead of deadlines. An individual/employee who works for the sake of working, that is only as a quantity producer, is never taken seriously at work. Effective time management not only increases an individual's efficiency and productivity, but also plays an important role in realising goals within the shortest possible time span.

Thus, time management helps an individual/employee to achieve happiness and success through a planned approach in life, and finish off work on time to enjoy with friends, relatives and family members.

It is essential for everybody to value time and allocate the specific time for important activities/ tasks in the planner or to properly prepare a to-do list. In this regard, we will discuss some time management techniques in the ensuing section.

2.4 TECHNIQUES OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Effective time management is based on:

- a) SMART Goals,
- b) Effective Planning,
- c) Realistic and Achievable targets,
- d) Prioritisation,
- e) To-Do List,
- f) The 80/20 Principle,
- g) Optimum Excellence,
- h) Do it to a Finish,

- i) Efficient self-management,
- j) Motivational and positive work culture,
- k) Well-organised system,
- l) Delegation,
- m) Management of Subordinates' time, and
- n) Time Auditing.

For more details, study Unit 9 titled 'Time Management: Approaches and Techniques'.

2.5 SKILLS OF TIME MANAGEMENT

In this section, we will focus on significant skills of time management that help an individual to make the best use of time and ensure the successful accomplishment of tasks within the stipulated time frame. These skills are:

- i) Always stay organised at work and in personal life,
- ii) Setting SMART goals,
- iii) Prioritising important tasks to be completed on To-Do List,
- iv) Using planners, organisers, calendar Apps such as Google Calendar, and reminders on phone or personal computer,
- v) Taking ownership of work and responsibility at the workplace,
- vi) Eliminating time-wasters at the workplace,
- vii) Organising digital files for easy retrieval at the workplace,
- viii) Using new technology to complete the assigned work within the stipulated time frame,
- ix) Effective communication skills,
- x) Saying, diplomatically, 'NO' to undue pressure,
- xi) delegating responsibilities to employees as per their specialisation and capability to achieve the targets,
- xii) Using techniques to enhance focus and concentration on work,
- xiii) Setting realistic standards for quality,
- xiv) Assess and keep one's behavior, conduct and demeanor always positive,
- xv) Maintaining punctuality and discipline in work and life,
- xvi) Participating in relaxation techniques, meditation and yoga during leisure time to maximise energy level at work, and
- xvii) Reviewing the performance, periodically.

Given the above, it can be stated that if an individual learns the skills of time management s/he will become an asset to an organisation, and achieve happiness and success.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Explain the meaning and significance of time management.

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- 2) What are the significant techniques of time management?

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2.6 TIME MANAGEMENT: ROLE OF ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER

In an organisation, the Administrator/Manager plays an important role in monitoring and inculcating the skills of time management in employees, which s/he performs in the following manner:

- i) S/he supervises and monitors the activities of subordinates, and advises them accordingly to achieve the targets. The Administrator or Manager is a role model for staff, so s/he has to be disciplined, only then s/he can expect from the team members to follow her/his instructions regarding time management.
- ii) For effective time management, the Administrator or Manager delegates her/his responsibilities to the team members as per their capability and specialisation so that they complete assignments on time. In this regard, at the initial stage, s/he communicates with team members about goals, targets and deadlines, which enhances the feeling of belongingness and results in active participation of employees.
- iii) Administrators/Managers adhere to the guidelines of their organisation, and train their team members to follow instructions and respect their organisation's/company's policies.
- iv) The rules and regulations of an organisation are meant for all. An Administrator/ Manager keeps a check and asks her/his subordinates to keep their workstations organised. In some organisations, it is expected that s/he should go to each of their desks and check whether files and folders have been arranged properly or not. S/he ensures that there are no heaps of paper on their desks and, if required, instructs them to clean their drawers at least once in a week.
- v) Administrators/Managers motivate their team members to prepare a To-Do List and ensure that they follow it and do important tasks first.
- vi) S/he keeps a check on the activities of the administrative supervisor so that s/he issues necessary stationery items such as notepads, registers, pens, folders, and pen drive to all employees at the right time. As a team leader, it is the Manager's or Administrator's responsibility to point out their mistakes and suggest solutions so that they can contribute effectively in achieving the targets.

- vii) For monitoring and to keep a track of employees' performance, the Administrator/Manager prefers to install software that reflect when an employee enters and leaves the office and implements a strong reporting system. On the basis of deadlines, ensures that the employees must complete the assigned work within a stipulated time. Above all, to motivate employees in the presence of all s/he appreciates the performance of those employees who finish their assignment on time and achieved the target.
- viii) S/he provides a congenial environment to the employees so that, if required, they don't hesitate but have easy access to their Superior's cabin. In addition, for effective time management, the Manager promotes effective communication and coordination between the team leader and members of the team. S/he never keeps tasks pending and gives approvals on time; and ensures that employees do not indulge in unproductive tasks, which will affect the productivity and waste valuable time.
- ix) In every organisation some liberty is given, but Administrator/Manager ensures that nobody should misuse her/his power.
- x) To instill time management skills in employees, s/he encourages them to attend training programmes, and conducts Workshops in the office.

2.7 TIME MANAGEMENT : SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AT WORKPLACE

Every team leader in an organisation has specific goals and targets, which s/he desires to achieve with the help of team members. In the case of an individual, supporters may be family members and friends. S/he has to be constantly on her/his toes to achieve the goal within a stipulated time frame. It is worth mentioning that it is essential for career conscious employees to contribute efficiently to achieve the targets and make a mark of their own at the workplace. Thus, for effective time management in an organisation employees must:

- i) Understand the value of time and nature of targets. If targets are unrealistic and unachievable within the allocated time slot, an employee should immediately discuss with the team leader.
- ii) Every organisation requires loyal employees who work with full dedication, devotion and loyalty even in the absence of superiors. Hence, employees should concentrate on their work rather than loitering and gossiping around or demotivating their coworkers.
- iii) Inculcate the habit of punctuality and discipline to complete the targets within the stipulated time frame, and avoid taking frequent leaves from work unless there is an emergency.
- iv) An employee should be clear about her/his capabilities and priorities. In case an employee is overburdened, s/he should discuss and share work with coworkers. As everybody is not a Superwoman or Superman that s/he will do almost everything on her/his own, therefore distribute work amongst team members to achieve targets within the stipulated time frame.
- v) Self-organisation is the key to success, so arrange important files, documents, visiting cards, etc. and keep them at designated places. If these items are easily accessible, one can save time and focus on work.
- vi) Always keep a notepad and pen handy for meetings and use an organiser, which will help to plan in a better manner.

- vii) Avoid distractions at work such as long phone calls, messages or WhatsApp messages, which are the biggest distractions. Once in a while, one can call family members or friends if it is necessary.
- viii) It is a proven fact that eating while working makes one feel sleepy and breaks continuity so to remain focused and energetic at work eat only during lunch hours.
- ix) To achieve the targets, properly plan and prepare a To-Do List. Now, prepare a strategy and jot down what all tasks are required to be completed in a day against the time slot assigned to each task, which provides a clear sense of direction at work. Ensure before leaving the office that the planned tasks for that day are completed within the stipulated time frame, if not then review the progress and change the strategy for the next day.

In view of the above, employees/individuals must possess effective communication skills, enhance efficiency, seek support and assistance, delegate responsibilities, use the latest technology and calendar Apps, plan targets and set up SMART Goals, focus on Schedule or To-Do List, manage intrusions and eliminate the causes of interruptions, avoid distractions, evaluate their performance, assess their behaviour, keep themselves stress-free and well-focused on job performance. These positive traits will prove to be extremely useful in effective time management and achieving success.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) “In an organisation, the Manager plays an important role to achieve the targets through time management”. Comment.

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- 2) Highlight the important tips for effective time management at workplace.

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2.8 CONCLUSION

We have discussed that time management refers to the best utilisation of available time, which enables an individual to succeed in her/his personal as well as professional life. It is based on planning, setting SMART Goals, prioritising activities on the basis of their importance in a To-Do List, and effective monitoring. It has been emphasised that effective time management encourages an individual/employee to achieve her/his desired goals at work and in personal life. In this Unit, we have focused on the meaning, concept, significance, techniques, and skills of time management. In addition, analysed the role of Manager/

Administrator in the implementation and monitoring of time management at the workplace. Further, the study has explored and suggested necessary measures for effective implementation of time management. It has been observed that time management is a skill, which contributes to enhance happiness, success and professional excellence. Therefore, everybody should learn the techniques of time management and master the skills irrespective of their age, work, caste, class, creed or religion to live a happy, successful, stress-less, and peaceful life. The study concludes and suggests that every individual should strictly follow the principles of time management to achieve happiness and success in personal and professional life; and enjoy time with friends, relatives, and family members.

2.9 GLOSSARY

- **SMART Goal:** In an organisation, goal provides a sense of direction, motivation and a clear focus for planning that helps the team leader to plan, delegate responsibilities and prepare To-Do-List to achieve the targets. Here, SMART refers to an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound. Hence, a SMART goal enhances the focus on efforts and increases the chances to achieve the goal.
- **Procrastination:** It refers to delaying, postponing or putting off work in the office. Sometimes individuals avoid doing work out of the leisure or pleasurable activities. In this regard, if an employee is focusing on something other than the assigned task or the priorities of the organisation, s/he is procrastinating.

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2.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 2.2
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 2.4

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 2.6
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 2.7

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