CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS
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6.1 SUMMARY

Given the growth and variations in unemployment pattern of educated graduates in successive five year plans, this study was undertaken to examine the different socio-psychological covariates of perceptions and attributions of unemployment among graduates.

It was assumed that differences in the rates of unemployment among graduates of metro and non-metro, professional and non-professional courses, and males and females may relate to the differences in opportunity structures and their expectations, beliefs and judgements and thus to their perceptions and attributions of unemployment. Secondly, as the causal thinking influences the beliefs and decisions of the individuals, their perceptions and attributions of unemployment may be related. Thirdly, the demographic and personal variables (like age, locus of control, alienation, socio-economic status, caste etc.) may be related with each other and yet differentially facilitate or reduce the access to certain categories of experiences, and may be related to the perceptions and attributions of unemployment. Lastly, various personal and social variables may be related with each other.

The main hypotheses formulated were as follows.
(1) There will be significant main and interaction effects of context, course and gender on perceptions and attributions of unemployment.
(2) There will be significant main and interaction effects of context, course and gender on alienation and locus of control.
(3) There will be significant differences between metro and non-metro, professional and non-professional and male and female graduates in their demographic and personal characteristics.
(4) Perceptions and attributions of unemployment will be significantly related and perceptions of unemployment can differentially be predicated by using attributions of unemployment.
(5) Socio-psychological variables of age, alienation, locus of control, socio-economic status, caste etc will be significantly related to each other.
(6) Perceptions and attributions of unemployment will be significantly related to socio-psychological variables like age, alienation, locus of control, socio-economic status, caste etc; and can be differentially predicted by the personal and social variables.

The final year college graduates constituted the sample. The selection of sample was done in four stages - (1) Location of area (metro, non-metro) (2) Selection of programme type (3) Selection of institutions colleges and (4) Selection of students.

A total of 640 students were selected. These included 320 students from one metropolitan area (Delhi) and 320 students from one non-metropolitan area (Western Orissa). Out of 320 metropolitan students 160 were from professional courses (80 medical and 80 engineering) and 160 from non-professional but science courses (80 biology and 80 non-biology). An equal number
of males and females were selected in all courses. A similar procedure was followed to select 320 students from the non-metropolitan area. The selection of sample was done by using the purposive method of sampling.

A 2x2x2 factorial research design was used. The first two units indicates the context (metro and non-mero), the second course (Professional and non-professional) and last the gender (males and females).

The variables used were of two types - (1) classificatory variables (context, course and gender); and (2) explanatory variables (perceptions of unemployment, attributions of unemployment, alienation, locus of control, age, socio-economic status, caste, academic performance, job seeking behaviour and time input).

The data was collected by using the questionnaire technique. The questionnaires on perceptions and attributions of unemployment had been constructed new. The scales to measure alienation and locus of control had been adopted from previous researches (Feather et al, 1986 and Dean, 1966 respectively). In addition to these a proforma containing was used to seek information on context of education, course type, gender, age, caste, socio-economic status, academic performance and the job search behaviour. All questionnaires were pre-tested and the newly formulated scales factor analysed on a smaller sample before administering them to actual sample population.

The data were collected individually from 620 students. These were scored and coded. The data were factor analyzed to
find out the factorial dimensions of each scale measuring major variables. Each factor was then treated as one variable.

The data were analysed by using the techniques of correlation, regression, analysis of variance. Means, standard deviations and 't' test, were calculated. Analysis of variance was computed to detect the treatment effects of context, course and gender on different measured variables. The 't' test was used to find out the differences between groups on various demographic and personal characteristics. The correlational analysis was done to find out the relationships among different variables. Regressions were done to predict the variance in dependent variables by using the independent variables.

The analysis showed the following significant findings:

(1) Course had significant main effect on perceptions of unemployment indicating that the professional graduates had more positive perceptions of unemployment than the non-professionals. It appeared that the professional graduates have less negative experiences of unemployment. They feel less threatened by the unemployment situation and their subjective well-being about their placement is more positive compared to the non-professional graduates. On two dimensions of perceptions of unemployment—the job expectancy and perceived success, the professional graduates scored higher than the non-professionals. Course also had significant effect on attributions of unemployment. Non-professional graduates ascribe significantly greater importance to external and fatalistic factors than the professionals, but they do not differ
significantly on internal attributions of unemployment. This implies that while the professional and non-professional graduates perceive individual dispositions basic to employment/unemployment, they attach differential importance to the external and fatalistic factors. Among the factors of internal and external attributions, the non-professionals attributed unemployment to ability, educational and economic factors more than the professional graduates.

The main effect of context was not significant on perceptions of unemployment. It indicated that the metro and non-metro graduates have comparable perceptions of unemployment. They have similar experiences of unemployment and similar job prospects. Results show that while the non-metro graduates have higher job expectancy the metros have higher perceived success. This indicates that the perceptions of unemployment of non-metro graduates are determined by job expectancy, and of metro graduates by perceived success. Unlike similar perceptions of unemployment metro and non-metro graduates differ significantly on attributions of unemployment. Non-metro graduates tend to attribute their unemployment both to internal and external factors highly than the metro graduates. Among the factors of attributions, effort, education, and economic attributions are frequently used by the non-metro graduates.

The effect of gender on perceptions of unemployment revealed that males and females do not differ significantly, thus indicating similar consequences of unemployment for their psychological functioning. They have similar job expectancy and
perceived success. The females have higher tendency to make internal, external and fatalistic attributions than males. On factors of internal attributions they make both effort and ability attributions more than the males and among factors of external attribution they attach more importance to support attributions. The interaction effects of context, course and gender on perceptions and attributions of unemployment revealed that context and course interacted significantly to influence the perceptions of unemployment, internal and fatalistic attributions. Context and gender have significant interaction effects on internal and fatalistic attributions of unemployment, whereas course and gender have significant interaction effects on fatalistic attributions only. Context, course and gender together influence the external attributions of unemployment. Context and course exercise significant influence on perceived success, effort and ability attributions of unemployment, whereas gender in interaction with context as well as course affected effort attributions of unemployment. None of the interaction effects of context, course and gender on factors of external attributions (education, economic and support), were significant.

(2) The context, course and gender have significant main as well as interaction effects on alienation. The non-metro, non-professional and female graduates feel more alienated than the metro, professional and male graduates. The significant interaction effects of context and course indicated that the professional and non-professional graduates in non-metro feel
more alienated than their counterparts in metro areas. Similarly interaction effects of context and gender showed the males and females in the non-metro were more alienated than their counterparts in metro areas. The males and females in the non-professional course felt more alienated than their counterparts in professional courses. The gender interacted both with context and course to influence alienation. It appears thus, that different contextual factors induce alienation in students to different extents.

On isolation the main effect of course is found significant showing higher feeling of isolation among the non-professionals than the professional graduates. The factors of context, course and gender independently affected the feelings of normlessness and powerlessness. The non-metro, non-professional and female graduates had higher feelings of normlessness and powerlessness than the metro, professional and male graduates. While the context, course and gender in interaction with each other, influence powerlessness significantly, gender interacts with context and course separately and influences normlessness.

On locus of control only gender has significant main effect showing higher externality among females than males. The non-significant main effects of context and course indicate that metro and non-metro, and professional and non-professional graduates have equal external orientations. None of the interaction effects are significant.
The between group differences on demographic and personal characteristics reveal that the metro graduates come from higher socio-economic status than the non-metros. The educational and occupational status of father and mother are higher for metros than the non-metro graduates. The non-metros have higher job need and start job search earlier than the metro graduates. The metro graduates, because of low cost per attempt for jobs more number of times and anticipate a shorter waiting period.

The professionals have higher socio-economic background than the non-professional graduates. On each aspect of socio-economic status like parental education, parental occupation and family income they have higher scores than the non-professional graduates. They are older, have extra experiences and anticipate shorter waiting period for a job.

The females come from higher socio-economic background than the males. The scores on mothers' education and fathers' occupation are higher for females than the males. Males are more active in their job search and are older.

Perceptions of unemployment are significantly related to external attributions of unemployment, indicating that those who perceive fewer employment opportunities, tend to blame the external factors. External attributions of unemployment also significantly predict the perceptions of unemployment. Among the factors of external attributions, education and economic attributions emerge as important predictors of perceptions of unemployment. Although the negative perceptions of unemployment are significantly related to external attributions, the positive perceptions are not necessarily related to internal
attributions. This indicates that there is no 'attribution bias' in the attribution process. The internal and external attributions are found positively related indicating that both factors can be responsible for unemployment.

(5) Among the socio-psychological variables only alienation was significantly related to perceptions of unemployment in various groups. The more alienated students perceived unemployment less positively. Among the dimensions of alienation, powerlessness was significantly related to the perceptions of unemployment. Perceptions of unemployment and locus of control were negatively correlated for the metro and non-professional graduates, indicating the externally oriented perceive higher probability of unemployment. While students' perceptions of unemployment are positively related to age of the metro, non-metro, male and female graduates, these are positively related with academic performance of the non-metro and male graduates. Perceptions of unemployment of the non-professional graduates are positively related to their socio-economic status indicating that the socio-economic status facilitates the career aspirations of non-professional graduates. Males' perceptions of unemployment have positive relation with fathers education, whereas females' perceptions of unemployment correlate with mothers' education.

Results showed that the external locus of control is positively related to external and fatalistic attributions of unemployment. Alienation and its dimensions (isolation, normlessness and powerlessness) are also positively related to external and fatalistic attributions of unemployment. The
negative correlation between age and external attributions are found for non-metro, non-professional and female graduates. Among the metro graduates those who have lower academic performance tend to make more luck attributions.

It is found that the social factors have higher predictability in perceptions of unemployment, while the personal factors have higher predictability for attributions of unemployment. Among the social factors course emerges an important predictor of perceptions of unemployment, whereas context and course are important predictors of attributions of unemployment. Among the personal factors alienation significantly predicts perceptions of unemployment, whereas alienation and gender are important predictors of attributions of unemployment.

(6) Among the socio-psychological variables, the alienation and locus of control are positively related showing higher externality among alienated students and vice versa. Those who anticipate longer waiting period also feel more alienated. The socio-economic status, caste and academic performance are not significantly related to alienation. Similarly the locus of control is not related to age, socio-economic status, caste and academic performance.

Socio-economic status and academic performance are positively related showing better academic performance among students of higher socio-economic background. Females show better academic performance than males. Similarly, general caste students outperform scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students.
academically. Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students are older and have low socio-economic status. The older non-metro, professional and non-professional graduates have lower academic performance.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of above findings, following conclusions may be drawn-

(1) The course affects one's perceptions of unemployment significantly.

(2) Unemployment has strong negative effects on non-professional than professional graduates.

(3) Socio-economic status of the non-professional graduates facilitates their career aspirations.

(4) The severity of unemployment is equally experienced by metro and non-metro graduates, thus indicating that the differential rate of unemployment in metro and non-metro have little consequences on one's perceptions of unemployment.

(5) For the non-metro and male graduates academic performance as facilitator of positive perceptions of unemployment.

(6) Employment has equal meaning for males and females and they have similar experiences of unemployment.

(7) Females's career aspirations are significantly influenced by mothers' educational and occupational status, whereas fathers educational status is important for males.

(8) Scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and general caste graduates have similar perceptions of unemployment. The caste factor has thus little influence on graduates' experiences of unemployment.
(9) Perceptions of unemployment are determined more by social factors than personal factors.

(10) Educational system is perceived highly responsible for unemployment.

(11) Attribution processes may not always be biased. When there is involvement of 'ego evaluation', subjects become biased processors of attribution.

(12) The non-metro, non-professional and female graduates blame external factors more than metro, professional and male graduates for the unemployment.

(13) Females perceive social support as a cause of their unemployment.

(14) In metro, those having lower academic performance make more fatalistic attributions.

(15) Attribution process is a function of both personal and social factors, but personal factors are important.

(16) Alienation determines one's perceptions and attributions of unemployment.

(17) Graduates from non-metro and non-professional course, and females feel more alienated than the metro, professional and male graduates.

(18) Those who make more external attributions feel more alienated and are more fatalistic.

(19) Females are more fatalistic than males.

(20) Socio-economic status has positive effect on academic performance.
(21) Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students are older and have lower socio-economic status and academic performance than the general caste students.

(22) The non-metro graduates and males have higher job need and start their job search activity earlier than the metro graduates and females.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study although limited may have some implications for psychological theory, educational policy, manpower planning and intervention programmes.

(A) Implications for Psychological Theory:

The most important theoretical implication of the present findings seems to be for attribution theory. The motivational factors may not always operate in the attribution processes as internal attributions are not found related to positive perceptions of unemployment, although external attributions are related to negative perceptions. Moreover, internal and external attributions of unemployment are positively related. A person may not necessarily be a biased processor of causal information. A fundamental error of attribution bias can be eradicated by using persons in a hypothetical or imaginary situation. Attribution not only can be made after success or failure but before that, using the persons as 'observers'. The persons may be used as 'naive judges'. The difference between the present findings and the attribution theory suggests that the attribution processes are based on motivation and ego-evaluation.
and are influenced by input to the inference process, namely, the focal set of events considered relevant to the causal question.

At another level findings may have implications for theories of unemployment. The deprivation theory of unemployment advocated that the unemployed have negative experiences because they are deprived of the experiences of employment. The results of the present study show that students having negative perceptions also have negative experiences. They thus anticipate that they would be deprived of employment experiences in future. An implication for the deprivation theory seems to be that the unemployed condition of the individual not only affects the perceptions negatively but also the severity of unemployment situation for one’s self may have adverse effects on mental health. The deprivation theory is thus applicable not only for ‘active’ unemployed but also for the students who are yet to enter into labour market.

The structural theory of labour market proposes that a differential labour market composition has differential effects on the functioning of the individual. But it is seen here that the metro and non-metro graduates are in different labour market context and yet have similar perceptions of unemployment. This suggests that labour market composition interacts with social and cognitive processes of individuals.

(B) Implications for Educational and Employment Policy :-

Results showed that the course of study determines the perceptions of unemployment. The negative experiences are rooted
in existing inadequacies in the non-professional education. The policy makers should inject in the some professional element in non-professional courses to make the non-professional students think of self-employment along with the wage employment. A positive disincentive may be introduced against continued general education in the absence of alternatives.

The ineffective link between education and employment frustrates and dampens the expectations of general students. The development strategies therefore should include job training and educational programmes that would provide them fitness for any type of job. The education system should be geared to sharpen the technical skills. In this regard, the implementation of proposed vocational plan under National Policy on Education more systematically and vigorously seems unavoidable. The National Policy on Education proposes that the educational curriculum should be more dynamic and self-employment oriented so that every educated person can compete in the job market. If not employability, attitudinal changes towards self-employment can prepare them psychologically to cope with unemployment.

The analysis showed that educational attributions determine the perceptions of unemployment. It that because of lack of availability and accessibility of knowledge, salience and perceived applicability of information, students are adversely affected in labour market. Though labour market requires skilled manpower, the general graduates are oversupplied because of the low cost of general education. It adversely affects the labour force itself. It is necessary that
the efforts are made to assess the emerging needs of the Indian economy for educated persons on a fairly long-term basis and the needed manpower of the requisite calibre produced. Given the nature of economy, the labour market structure and qualification inflation, the education system should restrict access to general education. The contents of education need to be updated from time to time. The new education policy should give adequate thrust to overall development.

The goal of manpower development and employment policies should be greater individual development, satisfaction, personal well-being and levels of productivity. There is an urgent need of sound policy of manpower planning and development to reduce the large hiatus between the demand and supply of non-professional graduates.

The different institutional expectations of students and parents in metro and non-metro are no more realistic, as both metro and non-metro graduates have similar experiences of unemployment. Pure economic factors may not lend to differential experiences in labour market. Non-metro graduates, though in a poor labour market remain optimistic as they are not fully aware of job opportunities. The employment policy should therefore focus on opening of the job information centres in rural and muffusil areas and should look into the functioning of present employment exchanges so that non-metro graduates would not be deprived of timely information about job opportunities.

The similarity in the perceptions of unemployment of males and females has implications for formulating fair employment
policies. When employment has similar meaning for males and females, the gender based policies can be discouraged. Females should be given chance to come out of normative social barriers and to participate in labour market. A time bound 30% reservation in employment for females in educationally less advanced states should be appreciated. The finding that females' career aspirations are facilitated by mothers' education suggests that education of women has implication for the human resource development. The women literacy programmes should be intensified/pursued for emancipation of social status of women and reducing the gender disparities.

Results show that the scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and general caste graduates have similar perceptions of unemployment. The SC and ST graduates have thus psychologically attained the status of equality. The vigorous initiative taken by government to enforce reservations indefinitely objective of uplifting the oppressed classes has helped, but may be counterproductive.

(B) Implications for Intervention Programmes:-

The intervention programmes may be formulated to assist the youth experiencing unemployment in understanding the socio-economic processes realistically and chalk out appropriate personal goals and strategies. Social policy deals with unemployed people in one way or another, yet it is seen that students are not fully aware of it and are exposed to negative experiences of unemployment. This often diverts the students attention towards the variety of unwanted activities.
Interventions can be planned to teach job seeking skills to such youth. There is need of introducing counselling system or orientation programmes for various student groups to provide career guidance. Vocational counsellors can help in locating faulty cognitive representations of individuals and their environment such as incorrect estimation of personal skills, unrealistic job aspirations and failure to detect obstacles.

Youth opportunity programmes are known to act as a buffer against any detrimental effects of unemployment (Stafford, 1982). These could be introduced to provide career related information. Unplanned job search leads to wastage of time and high cost ones to well-being. Such programmes could give feedback to students about their skills and could improve their well-being.

The negative correlation between perceptions and external attributions of unemployment suggests that if one has to devise a single dimensional therapy, one should focus on developing controllable attributional style.

6.4 LIMITATIONS

The results of this study are sample specific. The subjects used are looking for jobs but they are not very sure of their inner resources. After graduation, they may have some support and perceive the situation more favourably. They may be optimistic in their expectations by an anticipation that situation would change. The results, therefore, may not applicable to other groups like school children, postgraduates and real unemployed.
The measures of perceptions and attributions of unemployment and their relationships with other variables may be specific to conditions of unemployment. The relations may not be generalised to other contexts having different labour market situation. The study generalises the negative perceptions of unemployment to include the negative experiences of unemployment. But it does not take into account the chronic forms of negative effects. It should be advantageous to obtained data from a longitudinal study so that changes in perceptions and attributions of unemployment can be observed over longer time span.

The scheduled caste and scheduled tribe graduates included here are not many and not comparable to general caste graduates. The results relating to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe graduates may thus be tested on larger samples.

The study is limited to one metropoly, and that too the capital. One may not be in a strong position to generalise the results to other metropolises. Moreover, the metro-non-metro differences on different variables may not reflect on urban-rural difference. The role of other variables such as social support could not be investigated.

The present findings are limited to professional and non-professional groups of medical, engineering, and science students. Graduates' perceptions and attributions across different disciplines need to be investigated.

6.5 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The following suggestions may be enumerated for further explorations:
(1) By observing graduates while they were still at colleges, one may be able to have baseline measures, against which one can compare the data obtained after subjects have left college and entered the labour market. This can strengthen the statements of relations among different theoretical concepts.

(2) A detailed study may be undertaken to identify the ways by which the graduates of various categories cope with problems of unemployment. How far the perceptions of unemployment measure the affective well-being need to be tested. The efficacy of the scale used to measure the perceptions of unemployment should be further tested.

(3) Future researches may use students from different fields of study to examine the generalizability of relations among different variables.

(4) Future studies may investigate the dynamics of the family environment, educational system and context within, which influence the expectancy and career aspirations. Further research needs to examine how the gender role socialization and gender differences in educational and labour market experiences create divergent world views of unemployment.

(5) Research on how people think and cope during unemployment is needed. The study of attribution processes based on a 'hypothetical situation' has not shown any attribution bias. A replication of this research by using different causes as stimuli for different populations indulged different cognitive tasks may be informative. An important direction for future
research should be to investigate in detail when and why people select particular relevant events in attributions.

(6) Theories of labour market take into account the distinctions between types of market but not about the types of experiences. This study demonstrated that contextual factors place differential values on two types of trained personnel and affect their perceptions and attributions of unemployment. This issue should be carefully examined in future researches.

(7) The effects of social support on perceptions and attributions of unemployment should be explored.

(8) The relationship between locus of control and attribution processes should be further explored.

(9) The conclusions for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students are based on a very small sample. Since governments' effort is to bring SC and ST into mainstream through reservation policy, their perceptions and attributions of unemployment may be probed further to test the effectiveness of reservation policy.

(10) Alienation has been found prominent in perceptions and attributions of unemployment. Further researches may examine the relationships of alienation to experiences and explanations of unemployment.