CHAPTER – II

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The social-psychological concern with unemployment stemmed with the publication by Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel (1933) and strengthened during 1980s with a number of researches encompassing the characteristics of the unemployed and the economic, social and psychological impact of unemployment on the workless and their families. This chapter includes a review of some of the social-psychological researches under 5 sections to bring the issues relevant to the perceptions and attributions of unemployment to the central stage. These are — (I) What unemployment does to the people, (II) How do the experiences of unemployment vary, (III) Why people suffer unemployment, (IV) How people's attributions of unemployment vary, (V) Covariates of alienation and locus of control and (VI) Summary and focus of the study.

2.1 What Unemployment does to People?

With regard to the effects of unemployment, the most celebrated research has been by Jahoda et al (1933), a detailed sociography of an unemployed community of a one factory small Austrian village, Marienthal. Jahoda et al pointed out that unemployment caused more personal apathy and disintegration than political insurrection or organised revolution in the community. Following this, Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) published a review on psychological effects of unemployment, that included
the findings of 112 studies relating to unemployment during the Great Depression and the 1930s. They noted a number of adverse reactions of unemployment such as apathy, resignation, depression, self-doubts, diminished self-esteem and fatalistic beliefs among the unemployed.

The studies on unemployed reappeared in 70's following the numerical expansion of the educational system in all countries. Researchers noted diverse socio-psychological experiences by comparing the unemployed and employed groups. Some of the major findings are presented below.

(A) Depressive Symptoms:— These include the affective reactions in terms of poor well-being and other negative experiences of the unemployed. In the early 1970, Tiffany et al, the compared working and non-working groups and found that the non-working felt more anxious, depressed and unhappy than the working groups. The unemployment was found associated with restlessness and frustration also by Kirpal and Bhan (1972). As Daniel (1975) pointed out the most common complaints among unemployed included feelings of boredom, depression or apathy, feelings of failure and inadequacy and being looked down. The consequence of unemployment in the form of depression, by using the Beck Depression Inventory, was consistently reported (Radloff, 1975; Cobb and Kasl, 1977; Figuerra-McDonough; 1978; Kasl, 1979).

While conducting research on macro-economic factors
and mental health in metropolitan communities, Catalano and Dooley (1980) found that there were significant time-series associations between monthly unemployment rate and depression, and the various psycho-physiological symptoms were associated with low income groups. A higher amount of stress was experienced by the unemployed workers (O’Brien and Kabanoff, 1979) and the manager (Fineman, 1979). Jones (1979) observed that unemployment causes stress which in turn results in depression, withdrawal and retreat, and these psychological factors interfered with job search process. Fraser (1980) reconsidered the study by Jahoda et al (1933) and reported that apathy, despair and depression were more frequent among the unemployed. The depression was found associated with the perceptions of financial security and future status of the economy (Oliver and Pomictere, 1981). Initial shock and fear, uncertainly about the future among the unemployed managers and the professional staff were reported by Swinburne (1981).

Among the unemployed school leavers, Stokes (1981) found that initial despair and pessimism transformed into resignation and apathy. Unemployed school leavers were also found more depressed and anxious (Donovan and Oddy, 1982) and prone to psychological illness-symptoms (Jackson and Bank, 1982). While, examining the relationship between mental health and unemployment Banks et al (1980), and Warr and Jackson (1982) used the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and found that the
unemployed had higher depression and other psychiatric disorders. The depressive reactions associated with unemployment were found correlated with low expectation of finding a job, helplessness, and inclination towards self-blame (Feather and Barber, 1983).

In a longitudinal study Jackson et al (1983) found that the psychological distress was higher when unemployed, but changed with changes in employment status. Similarly, Fruensgaard et al (1983) observed that anxiety, depression and psychotic illness were accentuated by or commenced with unemployment. Frequent negative mood and higher depression among the unemployed had also been reported in longitudinal studies by Tiggeman and Winefield (1984), and Feather and O'Brien (1986). The psychological distress was found significantly associated with reported changed in behaviour (Warr, 1984; Feather, 1989).

The perceived threats of anxiety, depression and general psychological distress associated with unemployment pervade all social classes (Payne and Hartley, 1984). O'Brien and Kabanoff (1985) found that the unemployed workers had significantly more symptoms of lower work values, a higher external control orientation, stress and helplessness. Warr, Banks and Ullah (1985) reported that distress levels were significantly higher among the unemployed than among comparable employed group, and the symptoms had usually commenced after the
onset of the unemployment. Consistent with this Rowley and Feather (1987) observed that more financial strain and psychological distress tended to accompany the increasing length of unemployment. The feeling of hopelessness was also found associated with unemployment (Fryer and McKenna, 1987; Jahoda, 1986b; Fryer, 1986; Adams, 1986; Botton, and Oately, 1985; McKenna and Fryer, 1984).

Banks and Ullah (1987, 1988) used the General Health Questionnaire in order to study the effects of employment status on psychological well-being of 17 and 18 years old. They found that general health scores were strongly associated with employment status. Transitional impacts upon general distress, depression and anxiety had been found for teenagers of both sex. Winefield et al (1988) on the basis of longitudinal and cross-sectional data confirmed that employed and unemployed had more depressive effect than the satisfied employed.

Unlike other comparative studies, Winefield and Tiggeman (1989) compared three target groups - employed, full-time students, and unemployed on depressive affect and mood. They found that the employed and student groups displayed overall well-being significantly superior to the unemployed. Within the unemployed group, those unemployed for intermediate periods were worse off than those unemployed for shorter or for longer periods.

their study to four occupational groups—satisfied employed, dissatisfied employed, unemployed, and students, and compared them on a range of psychological measures. Results revealed that the students and satisfied employed showed low depressive effect, externality, negative mood, social alienation, and hopelessness than the dissatisfied employed and unemployed. Similar relationship of changes in employment status with psychological well-being had been observed in other longitudinal studies (Iverson and Sabroe, 1988; Isaksson, 1990; Leena and Feldman, 1990; Ullah, 1990; and Arnetz et al, 1991).

(B) Loss of Self: Some studies focused on the self-concept, self-esteem, self-competence, self-confidence, self-involvement, self-identity and so on. Tiffany et al (1970) on a comparison of the working and non-working group, found that the profile of the non-working group reflected lower level of self-esteem, self-confidence and more doubts about self-worth. Impaired self confidence among the unemployed was also reported by Lauterbach (1977).

Lescohier (1977) noted a variety of the effects of unemployment on the workers efficiency. It induces idleness and self-indulgence; saps one’s self-respect and the sense of responsibility, impairs technical skills and weakens nerve and will-power, destroys a workman’s feeling about oneself.

Using the psychoanalytic idea of Erikson, Gurney (1980) developed a questionnaire and administered to the
unemployed school leavers. He concluded that unemployment had the effect of inhibiting personal development in school leavers, rather than inflicting trauma.

Jahoda (1982) also talked of feelings of rootlessness, disorientation and spoiled personal identity, which were confirmed later by Henwood (1983) and Miles (1983). Kaufman (1982) observed that the professionals, who had suffered long term unemployment, remained permanently scarred by the experience and had lower self-esteem. Many of the long-term unemployed people are found to develop a 'work inhibition syndrome'. Lower self-esteem among the young unemployed was also reported by other researchers (Donovan and Oddy, 1982; Feather 1982a; Feather and Bond, 1983; Tiggeman and Winefield, 1984; Rowley and Feather, 1987; and Frost and Clayson, 1991). In contrast, no difference between employed and unemployed on self-esteem was reported by Cobb and Kasl (1977); Kasl (1979); Hartely (1980); and Gaskell and Smith (1981).

Kelvin and Jarnett (1985) were of the view that the unemployed person's position was highly ambiguous. It described what a person is not, and not what he is. They argued that the self-concept is a schema which locates the individual within the social environment, and shaped the consequent interactions. Hence becoming unemployed causes psychological disorientation and dislocation, which induces a modification of self concept. Those who were not able to find a job also tended to see
themselves as less competent and less active (Feather and O'Brien, 1986b). One's movement into unemployment led to significant deterioration in self-confidence and internality (Layton, 1987). Decreased internality was also reported by Winefield and Tiggeman (1988, 1989), and fluctuation of emotions and reduction of self-confidence during job search process by Borgen et al (1990).

Patton and Noller (1990) found that the unemployed subjects had less positive self-image than the employed subjects and students. Sheeran and Mc Carthy (1990) examined the impact of unemployment on self-consistency, self-involvement, self-evaluation, self-affection, and positive and negative self-esteem. In a cross-sectional design they compared 48 employed and 40 unemployed subjects and found that unemployment was associated with increased inconsistency in the attribution of characteristics to the self, retarded progress towards the realization of valued goals, and diminished self-affection. Brand and Pullan (1991) compared the employed and unemployed white South African men and observed lower self-concept among the unemployed. Sheeran and Mc Carthy (1992) drew a distinction between public and private self-esteem and within private self-esteem between self-evaluation and self-affection. Results showed that the unemployed subjects had poorer public and private self-esteem than the employed groups.

(c) Life Satisfaction :- Effect of unemployment on overall life
satisfaction had been reported by many researchers. (Warr, 1978; Fraser, 1980; Hepworth, 1980; Gaskell and Smith, 1981; Miles, 1983; Warr et al 1983b). Fraser (1980) and Warr et al (1983) were of the view that unemployment brings consistent reductions in income and material conditions which deprived a person of a normal role and experiences in a setting that should satisfy some basic human needs.

In a longitudinal study Feather and O’Brien (1986b) observed that the students moving out of the school and remaining unemployed reported less life satisfaction. After job loss the passivity and aimless activities related to financial strain led to deterioration in the quality of life (Feather and O’Brien, 1989; and Winefield et al 1991).

(D) Cognitive Difficulties: In addition to the affective and evaluative reactions, difficulties in cognitive functioning had also been noticed among the unemployed. Fryer and Warr (1984) studied the stability or change in 12 cognitive activities of the unemployed working class men and found that the problems of slowing down and concentration were most common. A slowing down in cognitive and problem solving activity had also been reported by Layton (1987). He found that 37% of the unemployed men indicated that they were now taking longer to do things than they did earlier and 30% were getting "rusty" of things they used to do well. Attitudes towards job security, work, social relationships were adversely affected by long-term unemployment.

(E) Time Structure :- Jahoda (1981), in relation to the latent consequences of unemployment, pointed out that unemployment imposes unstructured time and it becomes a heavy burden rather than leisure which is a complement to employment. This was confirmed later by Hanwood (1983) and Miles (1983). Problems in time structure among unemployed managers and professional staff were reported by Swinburne (1981). A negative correlation between employment importance and the use of time as structured and purposeful for a sample of the young unemployed graduates was found by Feather and Bond (1983); and Fagin and Little (1984). A negative correlation between time structure and length of unemployment had also been reported by Rowley and Feather (1987).

(F) Poor Adjustment :- The behavioural manifestations of unemployment among the unemployed are seen in their poor social adjustment (Gurney, 1980; Donovan and Oddy, 1982). Even unemployed professional workers who became employed in jobs which were inferior to their previous jobs were found 'no better adjusted (Kaufman, 1982). Furnham (1983a) probed into the social adjustment of five groups depending upon their employment status. He found that the full-time employed were best adjusted,
the retired and students had moderately better adjustment, and
the unemployed and part time workers had a very poor adjustment.
Less well-adjustment among unemployed than employed was also
found in a longitudinal study by Tiggeman and Winefield (1984).
Winefield et al (1988) compared three groups—satisfied
employed, unsatisfied employed and unemployed on scores of
adjustment and found that the satisfied employed were better
adjusted psychologically than the other two groups, which did
not differ.

(G) Physical Health Problems :- Unemployed also supply adverse
physical health because of idleness and passiveness. O'Brien and
Kabanoff (1979) observed that the unemployed workers had higher
levels of physical health problems, and made a greater use of
helping services. Decline in health standards of the unemployed
was also reported by Fraser (1980).

In a study, Greenberger et al (1981) examined the
health and behavioural states of the 16-18 year old school
adolescents who had part time jobs compared with those who had
never worked. The results indicated that the working youths
reported fewer somatic symptoms than the non-working youths. The
boys who worked under stressful job conditions reported fewer
somatic symptoms. Similar findings are reported by Verbrugge
(1983); Stokes (1983); Warr and Payne (1983); Warr (1984b) and

In a study of the health correlates of unemployment
over three groups- satisfied employed, dissatisfied employed and unemployed, Winefield et al (1987) found that the satisfied employed rated their health somewhat more favourably than did either the dissatisfied employed or the unemployed.

(H) Family Problems: - Joblessness does not affect only individuals but also families. Oliver and Pomictore (1981) studied auto-assembly workers and observed that the psychological impact of being without work often created personal and family problems that directly interfered with reemployment and contributed to the use of other social services. Summarizing her research in Marienthal, Jahoda (1982) noted that while family relations continued in established patterns longer than other relations and activities, there was some evidence that these, too, deteriorated and family quarrels increased' after the job loss. In support of Jahoda's claims, other researchers also concluded that unemployment and family strain are related especially for those previously in poor jobs, and for the longer unemployed (Schlozman and Verba, 1979; Liem and Liem, 1979, 1988; Binns and Mars, 1984; Fagin and Little, 1984; Clarke, 1987; Jackson and Walsh, 1987).

Liem and Atkinson (1982) observed that two or three months after the husbands became unemployed, the wives in the families with continuing unemployment were significantly more depressed, anxious, phobic and sensitive about their interpersonal relationships than their counterparts in employed
families. Other studies presented evidence that many children in unemployed families suffer not only materially and economically but also socially, educationally and psychologically as compared to peers in employed families (Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938; Madge, 1989; Piachaud, 1986; Dhooge and Popay, 1987; Fryer 1987).

The unemployed were more likely to remain unmarried, live alone, experienced early separation from mother (Platt and Dutty, 1986), and have a limited family circle of friends and community (Peregoy et al, 1990).

(I) Social Pathology: – Brenner (1976) found various indicators of social pathology—morbidity, mortality, crime, suicide etc. correlated with the unemployment rates. Boor (1980) examined the data on rates of unemployment and suicide rates between 1962 and 1976 in eight countries and noted that there were significant positive correlations between annual variations in rates of unemployment and suicide for the U.S.A., Canada, Japan and France. A tendency towards alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviours was reported by Fruensgaard et al (1983a). Allan and Steffensmeir (1989) found that labour market effects on arrest rates differed for juveniles and young adults. Availability of employment had strong effects on juvenile arrest rates. The highest rate of parasuicide was consistently noted among the long term unemployed (Platt and Kreitman, 1990).

To sum up the effects of unemployment are diverse and
have adverse psychological consequences, such as depressive symptoms, loss of self, cognitive difficulties, less satisfaction, poor adjustment, more health problems, family problems and social pathologies.

2.2 How do Experiences of Unemployment Vary?

Although unemployment brings negative experiences for the unemployed, the experiences were not uniform. Different demographic and personal variables that shape the experiences of unemployment have been examined in various research studies, of which some are discussed below.

Gender: Comparisons of the unemployed men and women revealed that in some cases the impact of unemployment was same for men and women, whereas in others gender differences were evident. In different cross sectional and longitudinal studies no gender differences were marked in the pattern of distress and self-esteem (Banks and Jackson 1982; Jackson et al, 1983; Warr and Jackson, 1983). Henwood (1983) did not find gender differences on any of the five main categories of experiences suggested by Jahoda (1982). Breakwell et al (1984) found that the comparisons between registered unemployed young men and women revealed very similar scores for general distress, self-esteem and life satisfaction. A weak correlation was evident between gender and work experience (Gaskell and Smith, 1985). Banks and Ullah (1987, 1988) found that both unemployed males and females exhibited general stress, depression and anxiety.
Some studies showed that women tended to obtain lower scores than men on measures of psychological health (Bank et al., 1980; Warr, 1985). Feather (1983) observed that the female students had significantly higher external control; self-rated potency and job expectations than male students. The activities that individuals engaged in, during unemployment, varied by gender (Donovan and Oddy, 1982; Warr et al., 1985). Feather and O'Brien (1986) found that male respondents scored higher on self-rated potency, desired skill utilization and influence in one's job, whereas female respondents scored higher on self-rated positive attitudes, stress symptoms, unemployment disappointment and external control. Gender differences were also reported on measures of anger with self, helplessness, depressed mood (Winefield and Tiggeman, 1989), and career aspirations and expectations (Arbona and Novy, 1991).

**Age** :- The association between age and psychological consequences of unemployment have been found by different researches. Jackson and Warr (1984) used the General Health Questionnaire and found that the youngest and oldest groups had significantly lower scores than the remaining groups. Warr and Jackson (1985, 1987) found that the men aged between 20 and 59 showed significantly greater deterioration than did those who were younger and older on measures of psychological well-being. Curvilinear relationships with age have also been found for a number of other variables like financial stress, employment.
commitment and job seeking (Daniel, 1975; Warr, 1978; Hepworth, 1980), in all cases middle aged showing higher scores. In contrast, Rowley and Feather (1987) observed that the older age group reported more psychological distress, low self-esteem and more financial strain. No age related differences were found by Banks et al (1980) and Furnham, (1983a).

**Social Class** :- Social class of the individual mediated one's experiences in the presence of aversive situation by providing moral support. Gallatin (1975) found that social background influenced young people's expectations, aspirations and self-confidence. Gore (1978) reported that less supported respondents had a larger number of illness symptoms than more supported respondents, after the closure of a factory leading to the workers being unemployed, Warr and Payne (1983) looked at social class differences in specific behaviours after job loss. They found that while greater reduction in entertainment through money was common to all, changes in general health associated with this varied indicating lower well being for middle class than the lower class respondents. Financial constraints and anxiety were more pressing among unemployed working class samples than their middle class counterparts (Payne et al, 1984; Payne and Hartly, 1987). Furnham (1984c) showed that higher expectation of finding a job was positively associated with socio-economic status. Ullah et al (1985) studied unemployed teenagers and found that social support was significantly
correlated with general psychological distress and depression. Recently, Belgrave and Walker (1991) reported that social support was the strongest predictor of employment status.

**Social Contact** :- The significance of social contact for individuals' well-being has been explained in terms of its instrumental and emotional support. Miles (1984), observed that a narrow range of social contact during unemployment was significantly associated with greater stress. Warr et al (1985) and Ullah et al (1985) observed that greater amount of time spent with friends was significantly associated with low scores on measures of general distress, depression and anxiety. Kilpatrick and Trew (1985) found that affective well-being was positively associated with greater social contact. Botton and Oatley (1987) observed that the unemployed men who had little social contact with other people in the month before losing their jobs were particularly likely to exhibit depression after 6-8 months of unemployment. Positive correlation between social contacts and life satisfaction was also reported by Feather (1989). In Indian context, Panchamukhi (1984), Verghese (1988) and Azad (1990) reported social contact as important factor for the placement of persons in labour market.

**Subcultures or Ethnicity** :- Warr et al (1985) obtained data from black and white youths of both sex who had been unemployed for a minimum of 4 weeks. They found significant ethnic differences in depression and general distress. Whites reported
lower well-being on both measures. On the other hand, no ethnic differences were noticed in distress scores (Banks and Ullah, 1988) and in subjects' career aspirations and expectations (Arbona and Novy, 1991). Ullah (1987) expressed the view that ethnic differences were not evident because of mediating role of other variables.

Region: Different geographical and physical location of respondents give rise to variations in the experience of unemployment. This has often been noticed in terms of higher or lower local unemployment rates. Ashton and Maguire (1986) reported its impact upon employment prospects. Dooley et al (1988) observed that the high rates of local unemployment gave rise to job insecurity and consequently impaired mental health. Verghese (1988) and Honess (1989) found employment market to be the predictor of employment placement. Alternatively, Jackson and Warr (1987) observed that unemployed people living in areas of high unemployment were found to have significantly better psychological health than those in areas of moderate or lower unemployment. In addition to the differences in regional labour market, Warr (1987) proposed nine environmental features which could lead to variations in experiences of unemployed subgroups. These were (i) opportunity of control, (ii) opportunity for skill use, (iii) externally generated goals, (iv) variety, (v) environmental clarity, (vi) availability of money, (vii) physical security, (viii) opportunity for interpersonal contact, and (ix) valued social position.
**Personal Vulnerability** :- Some people are dispositionally more likely than others to be affected by unemployment because of their inability to cope with adversity. As Tiffany et al (1970) used the term 'work inhibited' to describe people who were 'physically capable to work...but prevented from working because of psychological difficulties. Fryer and Payne (1984) reported that good copers had less negative experience in the presence of unemployment. Warr (1987) found that affective well being, personal competence, aspiration and autonomy mediated mental health after the loss of a job. A number of level personality related individual factors which made persons differentially vulnerable to unemployment distress had been reported, like motivation and attributional style (Feather and Davenport 1981), pro-activity (Fryer and Payne, 1984; Evans, 1986; Howorth and Evans, 1987), and neuroticism (Payne, 1988). Another systematically researched individual factor had been employment commitment. It had been considered a relatively stable dispositional variable and had been operationalized differently like work involvement (Warr and Lovatt, 1977) and employment commitment (Jackson et al 1983). Employment commitment moderated the association between employment status and mental health. The employed people who were higher on employment commitment had fewer depressive symptoms. They were however more severely affected by loss of employment, whereas the unemployed people higher on employment commitment had more
depressive symptoms ( Banks and Jackson, 1982; Jackson et al, 1983; Payne and Hartely, 1984; Warr et al, 1985).

The findings showed that unemployment was not a uniform experience. Wide within group variations in the experience of unemployment had been recognised. The deficit in psychological well-being varied by individual’s life history, personality and other factors.

2.3 Why People Suffer Unemployment?

A pioneer study within attributional framework to explain social events, particularly poverty and unemployment was carried out by Feagin (1972). He proposed three types of explanations: (i) individualistic causes, which hold individual responsible; (ii) societal causes, which blame external social and economic forces and, (iii) fatalistic causes, which place responsibility on luck or fate. He found that most Americans attributed events to individualistic causes and rated fatalistic reasons as least important.

Weiner (1979) found that the high achievement motivated individuals tended to perceive unsuccessful performance due to lack of effort. The low achievement motivated individuals did not show this attributional pattern, and instead focussed on stable and uncontrollable factors.

Dayton (1981) looked at the way in which young people looked for a job. He set out to determine what job-seeking approaches were being used by young people and what factors were
found positive and useful (aids), negative, and worthless (barriers) in a job search. Using a population of 250 young Americans, he found that subjects regarded their own positive personal attributes as the most important aids in their job, and external factors as least important. Employment success and satisfaction were found correlated on a careful analysis by which job suited them best, letters of recommendation and persistent job search.

Gurney (1981) examined the attributions of unemployment in both employed and unemployed groups of school leavers. He found that the unemployed males attributed both getting and not getting work significantly more to external factors, but there were no differences in the female group. In a second longitudinal study students were given a 12-item attribution questionnaire for getting jobs prior to leaving school, and then approximately four months later. The results showed that prior to leaving school, the group did not differ, yet later it was not the unemployed who changed their attributions; but the employed who shifted significantly toward a more internal set of casual ascriptions.

Furnham (1982c) examined differences in the explanations of unemployment in Britain as a function of whether people were employed or unemployed as well as their age, sex, education and voting pattern. The results showed that there were differences between the employed and unemployed, the former
believing more in individualistic explanations and less in societal explanations than the later. There were few sex and age related differences, but education and voting revealed numerous differences in explanation of unemployment. Conservatives offered individualistic explanations for unemployment more than the labour voters.

Feather (1983c) examined causal attributions and beliefs about work and unemployment among Australian adolescents in state and independent schools. The results were analysed for school and sex differences. The children from the independent schools (of higher socio-economic status) as opposed to those from state schools had higher expectation of obtaining employment, and made more internal attributions. Female students had lower expectations about finding employment, as compared to their male peers.

Looking at a non-random sample of school leavers in London Furnham (1984) observed a general tendency to attribute getting a job to individual characteristics, while failure to find work was blamed on structural conditions. Working class youth and females were vulnerable to unemployment and made external attributions. In another study, Furnham (1984c) examined sex and class differences in 240 British school leavers' attributions about unemployment, the most and least useful job search strategies, and which school course they believed to be most and least useful in getting a job. The
results of the four different parts of the study suggested that the overall attributions about getting a job were frequently internal rather than environmental or societal factors. Confidence, perseverance and qualifications were considered as primary factors responsible for success in finding employment, yet this was moderated by the belief that jobs are not currently available. The failure to get a job was rarely attributed to the personal shortcomings of the job-seekers. The females made more external in their attributions than the males. The working class subjects tended to place more emphasis on structural or external factors. The results on the aids and barriers showed that the subjects saw their own personal attributes as the greatest aids and external factors as the biggest hindrances.

Lewis et al (1984) asked 900 British people to explain the causes of unemployment. They found that 78% of the explanations were societal, 24% fatalistic and only 7% individualistic. There were very few demographic differences of sex, class, age, housing and trade union membership.

A longitudinal study by Feather and O'Brien (1985) assessed the impact of postgraduation labour market experiences on explanations of unemployment. They identified four distinct types of beliefs; namely economic recession, lack of motivation, competence deficiency, and poor interview skills and appearance. Unemployed respondents and females had a greater propensity to blame youth unemployment on the economic recession. The
longitudinal data revealed few attributional differences when respondents were still in school, but those who subsequently found jobs tended to downplay the causal importance of the recession. The other types of explanations did not show employment status or time effects.

Gaskell and Smith (1985), in a study of a random sample of London male school leavers (both employed and unemployed), showed that regardless of their employment status the respondents viewed external causes more important than the internal ones. Only on the political and governmental causes, the unemployed had significantly different views. Bose et al (1987) found that the responses of the unemployed and employed differed. More than 50% of unemployed graduates reported that the unemployment was due to not receiving any help from relations and not having enough political connections and influence. The corruption and nepotism were found persisting factors in job selection as recommendations played an important role in placement.

Lowe et al (1988) sought young people's explanations of unemployment and found that the high school and university students viewed unemployment as a serious problem. Their explanations of unemployment were more structural than individualistic. High school and university graduates differed significantly in explanations of unemployment, reflecting the effect of education and age. The multiple regression analysis
revealed that the students with higher grades were less likely to agree with the external factors in job explanation. Socio-economic status had little bearing on the type of explanation of respondents.

Heaven (1989) examined the explanations of unemployment among community sample of 300 adult Australians. Explanations were multi-dimensional—individualistic or "blame the victim", societal (inefficiency), societal (government policy), and fatalistic explanations. Subjects who had received unemployment benefits at some stage were less likely to endorse individualistic explanations and more likely to endorse societal explanations. Generational and cross-cultural similarities in the attributions of unemployment were also found related differentially to various demographic variables. Few sex differences were noted but level of education was an important correlate of subjects' explanations.

In a test of the socialization effects on attributional processes, Guimond et al (1989) examined the effects of field of study and level of education on the causal attributions of unemployment. The results suggested that the type of education received by the student affected the attribution process. Social science students blamed the system more and the person less than did administration and science students. These differences were insignificant at the high school level and developed only after exposure to the chosen field of study.
Furnham and Hesketh (1989) examined the national differences in explanations of unemployment, by comparing the explanations of groups from Great Britain (N=184) and New Zealand (N=195). The results revealed that the Britishers rated societal explanations more and individualistic explanations as less important than the New Zealanders. Varghese (1989) found 'contact' an important variable in the actual placement of the graduates. The waiting period was longer in the case of the samples from outside the metropolitan city. In general, the graduates of professional courses had a relatively shorter waiting period than the graduates from general faculties.

Social interpretations of attribution diversity were made by Guimond (1989a) by comparing the causal attributions of social science students of various ages and the responses of a group of poor and unemployed youth of similar ages. The results over 188 social science students (61 males and 127 females), and 110 young unemployed individuals (42 males and 68 females) showed that the former were less likely than the latter to blame unemployment on internal factors. Guimond and Palmer (1990) also compared university students in social sciences, commerce and engineering at different points of training in terms of their explanations of unemployment. Results of cross-sectional analyses showed no field specific differences in causal attributions at the beginning of the first academic year, but significant differences at the end of the year, with social
science students blaming the system more than the commerce and engineering students. Longitudinal analysis showed that, within a six month interval, the causal attributions of the students changed significantly as a function of their field of study.

The importance of various explanations of unemployment was examined by Payne and Furnham (1990) by asking 468 young people from the Caribbean island of Barbados. Subjects rated 20 explanations of unemployment. The findings suggested that subjects viewed economic factors beyond their personal control and chiefly responsible for unemployment. These explanations were found related to subjects' sex, age and education but not to employment status.

In a study of the racial differences in attributional patterns, Whitehead and Smith (1990) demonstrated a self-serving attributional bias among the black and white races. The blacks attributed their outcomes to effort more than the whites, who attributed their outcomes more to the task.

Ward (1991) attempted to replicate the studies of perceived explanations of unemployment by Payne and Furnham (1990) in Barbados and by Furnham and Hesketh (1989) in the UK and New Zealand. The factor structures of evaluations made by US subjects indicated that a combinations of societal and fatalistic explanations account for the largest amount of variance, as different from the previous studies indicating the individualistic factor.
2.4 How Peoples' Attributions of Unemployment vary?

Although researches on explanations of unemployment had shown a fairly consistent relationship between employment status and causal attributions, the researches on determinants and correlates of these explanations revealed a number of significant findings.

Weiner and Kukla (1970) and Weiner (1979) investigated the relation of achievement motivation and perceptions of causality. They found that high achievement motivation individual tended to perceive failure due to lack of effort, whereas the low achievement motivation individual focused on uncontrollable factors. Feather and Davenport (1981) found motivation to find work, protestant work ethic beliefs, depression and job expectations all related to causal attributions of unemployment. Furnham (1982b) found protestant work ethic beliefs to be related to explanations of unemployment. Furnham (1982c) found that the explanations of unemployment were to a large extent a function of the education and voting pattern and to some extent of sex and age. Age differences in explanations of unemployment had been reported also by Webley and Wrigley (1983).

In a different type of study, Doring (1984) found that school leavers and school stayers tended to offer different explanations. Feather (1984) and Furnham (1984) found that the explanations of unemployment were related to political, soical
and work related beliefs. In Australia, Feather (1985) noted that the explanations of unemployment were related directly to general conservatism, voting pattern and human values. Gaskell and Smith (1985) studied a sample of London male school leavers both employed and unemployed, and found political orientations and locus of control to be the best predictors of youths' attributions for unemployment. Gender, socio-economic status work experience and education had weak correlations with unemployment explanations. In another British study Lewis et al (1987) found that voting pattern and trade union membership were closely related to explanations for unemployment. In Canada, Lowe et al (1988) found that high school and university graduates differed significantly in explanations of unemployment, thus, reflecting effects of education and age. A similar finding was reported in Barbados (Payne and Furnham, 1990). In India, Verghese (1989) and Azad (1990) found that the subjects reported social influence as cause of their unemployment.

In a cross national study of differences, Furnham and Hesketh (1989) found that Britishers tended to rate societal explanations more important and individualistic explanations as less important than the New Zealanders. The effects of fields of study and level of education on causal attributions of unemployment were observed by Guimond et al (1989), and Guimond and Palmer (1990) in Canada, whereas effects of only level of education was observed by Heaven (1989), in Australia. Racial
differences in attributional patterns were reported by Whitehead and Smith (1990).

In contrast to the findings of Feather (1989c), Furnham (1982c), and Gaskell and Smith (1985), sex-related differences in attributions of unemployment were reported by many other researchers (Feather, 1985c, Furnham, 1984, 1984c; Feather and O’Brien, 1986; Heaven, 1989; Payne and Furnham, 1990). Unlike Gaskell and Smith (1985) and Lowe et al (1988) class-related differences were reported by Feather (1988), Furnham (1984c), and Lewis et al (1987). Lastly, there was evidence of significant relationship between academic performance and causal attributions of unemployment (Feather, 1986; and Lowe et al 1988).

Thus, it appeared that causal explanations of unemployment were related more to cognitive-affective beliefs than the demographic factors.

2.5 Covariates of Alienation and Locus of Control

Alienation: The literature on alienation is voluminous and varied. Miller and Galanter (1960) pointed out that the development of purpose required formulation of plans for action and a set of priorities. When plans had meaning, these carried forward interests, values and way of life. On the other hand, alienation resulted from plans that were unclear and ineffective. Beecher et al (1966) and Chickering (1967) pointed
out that students felt alienated when they did not have well defined goals.

Murray and David (1964) found that distrust was a primary variable in the alienation syndrome. Keniston (1965) found that alienated students distrusted the positive thinking. McClosky et al (1965) found alienation significantly related to high anxiety, guilt feelings and lack of confidence. Highly anxious persons could not perceive the environment in a structured way and they tended to escape. Propper and Clark (1969), and Sinha (1972) reported negative relationship between alienation and achievement. High achievers were less alienated than low achievers. Preiss (1976) found self-concept and academic ability related to alienation. Smith (1971) maintained that the achievement orientation in terms of both performance and commitment was positively related to the sense of personal control, thus, eliminating the feeling of powerlessness.

Srivastav et al (1971), found sex differences on alienation. Some other studies showed that students with low socio-economic status were more alienated than those who had high socio-economic status (White, 1971; Crowden, 1971; Martin, 1971; Leinberg, 1974). Long (1977) used the concept of academic alienation to include affective-evaluative reactions on the part of students, which was typically a function of how they perceived the operation of the university. His concept of academic alienation embodied five dimensions feelings of
cynicism, meaninglessness, powerlessness, negative affect and evaluations of university administrators.

Tapp (1978) found a decrease in meaninglessness related to the achievement of high test scores. He further found that increase in the perceived degree of powerlessness over the situation was negatively related to the quiz performance, confidence and learning. A decrease in normlessness was related to the general interest in learning. Also, Sood (1979) found inverse relationship between achievement anxiety and alienation among the scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste students.

Pestonjee and Usmani (1980) conducted a study to find out the differences on creative thinking ability and level of alienation between the students of Arts and Science streams. The results indicated no significant differences in the alienation of Science and Arts students. The correlation between alienation and creativity was also not significant. Vashishtha (1980) conducted a study with a view to explore and ascertain the relationship between 20 personality traits and alienation among students. Ten of the twenty personality traits such as sizothymia, affectothymia, ego, artlessness, shrewdness, introversion, tenderminded, scholastic mental capacity, exceptionally alert and poise contributed to alienation feeling in the majority of students.

Davis and Haller (1981) found a limited relationship between school curriculum and the adult jobs as an antecedent to
alienation, whereas Mau (1989) reported that contingencies in the school setting appeared linked to student alienation. Calabrese and Raymond (1989), and Calabrese and Cochran (1990) found family background, religion, economic status of parents, educational grade and cheating behaviour in school related to alienation.

Singhal (1990) argued that the way the system of education was organised had some inherent strains that induced alienation among students and made them feel powerless. The level of education was found to have significant effects on powerlessness and alienation, while gender was found to have significant effect on normlessness.

In addition to the above studies some other researches indicated high levels of alienation among students (Saxena, 1979; Pestonjee and Singh, 1980; Usmani, 1981; Moyer and Motta, 1982; Joginder, 1984; Bhat, 1985; Calabrese and Schumer, 1986; Calabrese and Fisher, 1988; Verma and Nayak, 1990 and so on). It appeared that to a good extent schools and colleges in most countries and also in India induced alienation among students, since they were not clear of their self-identities and were not able to use self-direction. No study could be traced about the experiences of unemployment.

**Locus of Control** :- The role of locus of control as a mediator of aversive situation and determiner of performance outcome has been reported in many researches. Phares (1957) and Rotter
reported that perceptions of control predicted performance outcomes. Changes in performance were significantly greater when the subject perceived skill than when they perceived chance instructions.

Some investigators indicated that locus of control was a correlate of the cognitive activity which should facilitate the maintenance of personal causation. Persons having internal control expectancies would be more cautious and calculating about their choice and involvement than those with external control orientation. One of the initial studies linking locus of control and cognitive activity was done by Seeman and Evans (1962). They found that internals availed an information even if it had negative connotations for themselves more than externals. Internals required more information while externals accepted readily what others said. Crandall, Katkovsky and Crandall (1965) pointed out that the more intelligent and achieving the person, the more likely he was to perceive one as an active effective person. They found that locus of control played a mediating role in determining whether persons became involved in the pursuit of achievement.

Another cognitive function that has been examined in locus of control research is of attention. Lefcourt and Kline (1969) in their studies concluded that internals were more likely to attend to all cues which helped to resolve the uncertainties. On the other hand externals attended to all cues coming from the external environments.
Glass et al (1971) during their investigation with different kinds of aversive stimuli pointed out that the persons' reactions were shaped and moulded by the perceptions of these stimuli and by perceptions of the ability to cope with these stimuli. In another study, Efran (1971) found that one's ability to cope with the environmental stress was influenced by one's locus of control. Persons with an internal locus on control appeared to handle environmental stress better than persons with an external orientation. In contrast to internals those having external orientation reported more debilitating anxiety, more neurotic symptoms and more self-punitiveness in response to frustration. Lefcourt (1972) found that externals having cognitive perceptual deficiencies were less aware than the internals of cues which provided informations about the meaning of behaviour, and the probability of success experiences in different situations.

Debolt (1973) observed that the internals had higher aspirations, whereas Strassberg (1973) found externals having lower goal expectations and anticipations. Miller (1973) studied the effect of locus of control on learning and pointed out that the externals were more sensitive to the extra task cues and showed greater differentiation between the learning climates than the internal subjects. The internals were more motivated by the success approach and failure avoidance system. Rotter (1975) pointed out that the locus of control orientation
situation had both specific expectancy and generalised expectancy. The relative importance of each depended upon the amount of experiences of individuals in a particular situation.

Relating to employment, Roark (1978) found that internals attributed the obtaining of their present jobs to their own actions, whereas Hammer and Vardi (1980) found internals attributing past job changes to their own activities. Some other studies showed that internals were more likely than externals to choose jobs that allowed them to use their skills and exercise personal influence in the performance of their jobs (Taylor, 1982; Spector, 1982). Kyrniacou and Sutcliffe (1979) assessed the relationship between locus of control and reported stress of teacher. They found a positive and significant correlation between self-reported stress and a belief in external control.

Meadow (1981) examined the relationship between locus of control and burnout. Results showed that those reporting a greater degree of influence in their work environment had lesser emotional exhaustion, lesser depersonalization and greater personal accomplishment than those reporting lesser influence. As degree of influence lowered, the perceived feelings of burnout increased.

Blau (1987) used sample of 119 nurses and found that the locus of control moderated the relationship between two facets of satisfaction, promotion and pay, and between withdrawal cognitions and turnover. Internals showed significantly stronger
negative relationships than externals between those satisfaction facets and withdrawal cognitions and turnover.

Mishra (1987) found the locus of control highly related to academic achievement. Internals were better on different learning tasks. Lester (1989) and Thomas (1990) using college students reported that depression was positively associated with their belief in control by powerful others. Abrol (1990) used a sample of 469 special education teacher and found significant correlations between increased external locus of control orientation and increased perceptions of burnout.

Relationships among socio-economic status, locus of control and academic achievement were explored on 135 (58 boys and 77 girls) high school students by Maqsud and Rouhani (1991). They found that girls came from a lower socio-economic background, and the socio-economic status was positively associated with internality.

Kunhikrishnan and Stephen (1992) reported that internal locus of control is positively related to the sense of general well-being. There was significant gender difference in locus of control indicating a higher externality among females than males.

The internal-external control orientations thus constituted two personality characteristics, which explained and predicted the cognitive functions and behaviours.
2.6 Summary and Focus of Study

Review of researches from different perspectives converge to indicate that unemployment causes a wide range of negative psychological repercussions. The cross-sectional studies, suggested that the group of unemployed had higher mean levels of strain feelings and lower levels of happiness, life satisfaction, and positive feelings than the comparable employed people (Daniel, 1975; Hyman, 1979; Fineman, 1979, O'Brien et al, 1979; Stokes, 1981; Jahoda, 1982; Donovan and Oddy, 1982; Feather and Bond, 1983; Fagin and Little, 1984; Winefield, 1984; O'Brien and Kabnoff, 1985; Warr and Jackson, 1985; Fryer and Payne, 1986; Payne and Jones, 1987; Rowley and Ullah, 1987; Haworth and Evans, 1987; Banks and Ullah, 1988; Ullah, 1990; Sheeran and McCarthy, 1990; Harworth et al; 1990; Bargen, 1990; Cangdon, 1990; and Winefield et al 1991).


The correlational, anecdotal and impressionistic studies identified unemployment as the cause of virtually every
conceivable personal and social ill including drug addiction, suicide, mortality, crime, alocholism, violence, vandalism and generally anti-social and maladaptive behaviour (Kirpal and Bhan, 1972; Brenner, 1976; Lescohier, 1977; Jones 1979; Boor; 1980; Oliver and Pomieters, 1981; Fruensgaard et al 1983a; Allan et al, 1989; and Platt and Kreitman, 1990). The consequent psychological changes were however not universally negative (Brenner, 1979; Kasl, 1979; Hartley, 1980a; Gaskell and Smith, 1981; Fineman, 1983; and Fryer and Payne, 1984).

There is homogeneous response to unemployment. The unemployed' are a collection of sub-populations each manifesting rather different, though generally negative, profiles of combinations of behaviours and experiences. Many of the factors which caused these variations were gender (Feather and O'Brien 1986b; Henwood and Miles, 1987; Honess, 1989), age (Warr and Jackson, 1987), academic performance (Feather and Barber, 1983; Feather, 1986), social clas (Payne et al, 1984; Feather, 1986; Payne and Hartely, 1987), social relations (Miles, 1984; Ullah et al 1985; Jackson, 1988; Azad, 1990), race (Warr et al, 1985, Banks and Ullah, 1988), environmental factors (Warr, 1987; Fryer and McKenna, 1987; Dooley et al, 1988), commitment (Stafford et al 1980; Jackson et al 1983; Ullah et al, 1985; Warr and Jackson, 1987) and personal vulnerability (Tiffany, 1970; White, 1985; Warr and Jackson, 1985; Evans, 1986; Haworth et al 1987).

The studies on causal explanations of unemployment by adolescents and adults unemployment supported the well-
established attributional finding that success was attributed to internal factors and failure to external factors (Feather and Davenport, 1981; Gurney, 1981; Furnham, 1982a, 1982b; Feather, 1983, 1985; Lewis and Furnham, 1986; Lewis et al, 1987; Schaufeli, 1988; Lowe and Tanner, 1988; Honess, 1989; Guimond and Palmer, 1989; Furnham and Hesketh, 1989; Guimond et al, 1990; Payne and Furnham, 1990; and Ward, 1991). These studies have been done in a variety of countries like Australia (Feather, 1983, 1985), Britain (Furnham, 1982a, 1982b), Holland (Schaufeli, 1988), New Zealand (Furnham and Hesketh, 1989), Canada (Guimond and Palmer, 1990). The explanations for unemployment were found related to various demographic and psychological variables, such as cultural context (Furnham and Hesketh, 1989), race (Whitehead and Smith, 1990), education type and level (Lowe et al, 1988; Guimond and Palmer, 1989, 1990), socio-economic status (Warr and Payne, 1983; Feather, 1983; Furnham, 1984c), sex (Feather, 1983c; Feather and O’Brien, 1986), age (Webley and Wrigley, 1983; Warr et al 1984), employment status (Gurney, 1981; Furnham, 1982b; Feather and O’Brien, 1985; Schaufeli, 1988), motivation (Weiner, 1979; Feather and Davenport, 1981), and personality traits (Gaskell and Smith, 1985).

The role of locus of control, as a personality trait has been investigated in different cognitive and perceptual fields. (Phares, 1957; Rotter 1958, 1975; Lefcourt, 1969, 1972; Glass, 1971; Miller, 1973; Roark, 1978; Hammer et al, 1980; Taylor,

**Few Points:** Looking into the gravity of researches on social-psychological effects of unemployment and attributional styles the following points might be made before proceeding towards the aim of the present study:-

(i) While cross-sectional studies have concluded that the low levels of mental health are due to job loss or not finding a job, longitudinal studies have convincingly demonstrated that mental health was affected by both anticipated loss of job and by becoming unemployed, thus, both demonstrating the association between mental health and employment status. These findings support Jahoda's (1979) concept of 'deprivation' that unemployed are deprived of what employment provides and thus, related to subjective experience of being unemployed. An inherent limitation in the studies is that the observations were made on individuals after they left educational stream and entered the labour market. Studies dealt with the fact that how unemployed reacted to their unemployment. The negative effects had been inferred comparing the unemployed and employed group, and thus, importance given to employment status for any psychological
change. The impact of chronic unemployment on the subject’s experience or mental health who are aspiring to enter into occupational role have not been focused. Thus, the studies on unemployment and mental health are retrospective, because one has negative experiences when he/she feels unemployed. Only few prospective studies are there with respect to effects of unemployment.

(ii) Researchers have involved young people’s explanations of unemployment who are poorly qualified high school leavers unemployed. The socio-psychological theory of attributions has a motivational bias to protect the ego as well as veridical information processing. People thus, attribute their failures to ‘external factors’ and their success to ‘internal factors’. This has been referred as self-serving attributional bias. This has been established using two different types of groups in two conditions—(1) employed vs. unemployed, who were asked to attribute their success and failure respectively, and ; (2) student subjects who were asked to attribute the causes of unemployment problem. These can be based on two situations such as (a) real life situation, (b) imaginary situation (Schaufeli, 1988). Further, the sample group can be described as actors’ (employed/unemployed) who attribute their success and failure, and ‘observers’ (students) who attribute these to present social events (Jones and Nisbett, 1972). However, it can be argued that in these attributional studies like actors attribute the events happening to themselves, observers attribute the events
happening to society or in a general based on two 'one-way direction'. In addition, attributions are made after the occurrence of the event either to person or to society. It can thus be called as 'attribution on a present situation'. Perhaps that is why the bias in attribution process is a fact. It may be examined from other perspectives. An observer may attribute his/her possible unemployment in stead of general unemployment situation.

(iii) Studies on variations in experiences of unemployment and attributional style have used the social and personality factors as the mediators. It seems that different types of negative effects and causal explanations for unemployment are associated only with distinct subgroups within population. It has been suggested that researchers need to concentrate more on mediating processes than on the outcomes of unemployment (Peterson et al 1984, Lowe et al 1988). Previous studies of young people’s experiences and explanations of unemployment ignore the important sociological variables like social context, education type which are determinant of employability. Also personal variables like locus of control and alienation which influence cognitive functioning in the presence of aversive situation. Moreover, the study of interaction effects has been neglected.

(IV) Experiences and explanations of unemployment have been studied separately. Very few studies integrated both. Further no study focused on students’ perceptions and attributions of unemployment together.
(v) The review of researches on attributions (Harvey and Weary, 1984) suggest that the antecedents of causal attribution are inherent in various information processing strategies and/or motivational processes - that is in factors within the individual. Crittenden (1983) noted that the striking fact in the literature is "how little studied, are the social conditions under which differential attributional tendencies emerge. Feather (1983) and Hewstone and Jaspers (1984) have also argued in favour of a more social approach to attribution process. Thus, it seems that the genesis of naive psychology should not be within individual but in one's cultural context. There is little research however, showing the extent to which attributions may be shaped by social and cultural factors, and none on causal attributions of unemployment in the Indian context.

The Focus of the Present Study

The present study proposed to focus on the above points. It was assumed that the severity of unemployment situation might have effects not only on outcome expectations but also on efficiency expectations and on beliefs about underlying causal conditions. The psychological researches on unemployment have addressed to how people react to being unemployed and considerably less to young people's beliefs about getting a job.

The aim of the present study was measure the perceptions of unemployment among graduates in order to establish a 'subject-object relationship'. The attributions of unemployment
among graduates were to be measured in a hypothetical situation, thus asking them to perceive the importance of various causal factors those would be responsible for their unemployment in future. Further, the study aimed at a systematic examination of the relationship of perceptions and attributions of unemployment and also test the role of social psychological variables like social context, education programme, gender, age, locus of control, alienation etc., on graduates' perceptions and attributions of unemployment.