Chapter III
Research Methodology

This chapter explains and discusses the development of the present study. It focuses on the need of the study and its objectives. Further, it deals with the theoretical understanding and conceptualisation of research. It also captures the entire process of formulation of the study under many headings such as objectives, research questions, research design, operational definitions of key concepts, inclusion, exclusion criteria, tools of data collection, methods of data analysis, limitations of the study and ethical consideration.

I. Rationale of the study

Occupational stress has adverse effects on organisations as well as individuals working at various work settings. The work stress may result in job dissatisfaction and poor work performance by the employees (Barak, Nissly, and Levin, 2001; McLean and Andrew, 2000). It is often associated with absenteeism, poor decision-making and low morale among the employees (Thompson et al., 1994). At the individual level, the work stress often brings in anxiety, depression, somatic symptoms, insomnia and high blood pressure for the employees (Adam, Matto, and Harrington, et al., 2001). Besides, it is the leading cause for poor concentration and feeling of hopelessness (Dane, 2000).

Keeping all this in view and the high cost associated with work stress both for the organizations and individuals, it is necessary to study this phenomenon in different contexts and for different occupations. The current study attempts to describe relational meaning of stressors, stress and coping vis-a-vis with one another with respect to the socio-demographic aspects of the respondents.

There is dearth of literature pertaining to occupational stress and coping of professional social workers in the Indian context. Accordingly, description of the differences in the way stressors are perceived, stress is caused and the way individuals cope with stress in their given socio-demographic contexts is being examined in this study with a view to addressing the gap prevailing in the literature and to bring the issue into focus.
Further, the study describes the strategies for the management of stress at organizational level as suggested by the respondents. It also presents the suggested recommendations at the training level of social work which might prepare prospective social workers to deal with occupational stress.

The study would help in identifying the various stressors related to the nature of job, personal/individual stressors and stressors associated with organisations. This identification of stressors would further help to bring out the necessary modifications in job environment and at the organization level in order to combat work stress pertaining to social work profession. The findings of the study will also assist future researches related with occupational stress and its management in the social work domain.

Further, analysis of individual centric variations in the process of stress and coping mainly pertaining to the socio-demographic-organizational aspects like age, sex, work experience, type of job, job designation, work setting, etc., would help in drawing the required attention from the social work fraternity to the issue. It would facilitate to revisit the need for strengthening of social work association of India and to look after the care, security and development of human resources engaged in social work profession in India.

In the end, the study would motivate other studies about the profession and the individuals involved in it, that is, TSWs, to gain a better understanding of the situation so as to develop strategies to manage occupational stress in the social work profession.

II. Theoretical framework of the research

There are interactional and transactional models of work stress. On the one hand, the demand control model (one of the interactional models) does not take into account the multiple stressors at job and individual’s perceptions. Hence, individual differences in the processes of stress and coping remain neglected or undetermined. However, it gives a sketch for the job redesign. The cognitive theory of psychological stress, coping and Cox’s transactional model of occupational stress (transactional models) takes into account the perception of individuals in the process of stress and coping. So this reduces the possibilities of redesigning the job environment. The theories are complex and hard to treat all their aspects empirically (particularly Cox’s model). Even the transactional models do not talk about occupations which are inherently stressful like
the profession of social work. It does not also take into consideration the job environments which at times are difficult to manage and because of which individuals are bound to face stress.

On this basis, the Cognitive Theory of Psychological Stress and Coping was considered as the theoretical base for the present study wherein individuals react to the stressful nature of their job as per their varied cognitive mediation with the prevailing stressful events (stressors).

II.A Cognitive Theory of Psychological Stress and Coping

This theory focuses on the imbalance between perceived demands placed on the individual and her/his coping resources. This model was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), where stress is seen as the mismatch between primary appraisal (perceived demand) and secondary appraisal (perceived ability to cope).

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), a stressful situation is an imbalance between person-environment equations. An act of perceiving a stressful situation depends on the person’s perception about his environmental demands in relation to his available resources. When a person appraises this equation as tough/beyond his/her capacities in relation to his/her available resource and finds it damaging to his/her well-being, then this particular situation becomes stress for him/her. This subjective perception of the person-environment equation creates a significant meaning to a particular individual. However, these kinds of subjective evaluations have few precursors for evaluating the person-environment equation. These are environmental variables and personal variables. Environmental variables consist of demands, constraint, opportunity and culture. Personal variables include goals and goal hierarchies, beliefs about self and world and personal resources. Depending on these precursors subjective evaluation is done through primary appraisal and secondary appraisal which are interconnected and occur simultaneously in the process of cognitive appraisal of person-environment situation. Individuals have their unique aspiration and the difference coming through their subjective evaluations attached to the person-environment equation creates stress for them.

As explained further by the Lazarus and Folkman (1984), during primary appraisal the person judges whether the demand is leading to any ‘harm, threat, and challenge’ to his well-being or to his goals. If it is not, then it is not pursued further in the appraisal process. In case it turns out to be harmful, or a threat and/or a challenge for a person, then the secondary appraisal takes place
to understand how the situation could be handled in accordance with the available resources. Depending on this, a person may try to change the person-environment, by way of problem focused coping or may try to change the meaning and/or to lessen the effect of that stressful person-environment situation through emotion- focused coping. The reappraisal of the complete situation under person-environment is called cognitive coping.

**II.B Cognitive approach for coping**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) under cognitive approach define coping thus, “Coping as constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person”. They further explain how this definition of coping takes care of limitations and gaps of traditional approaches of coping. In regard to this, they emphasize four aspects of coping. First, they state coping as a constantly changing effort which brings its characteristics of process-orientation. Second, by restricting coping to demands which are appraised as taxing or exceeding a person’s resources they highlight the difference between automatized adaptive behaviours with coping. It is the coping in relation to psychological stress which needs utilization of resources unlike automatized adaptive behaviour. Third, defining coping as an effort to manage, allows coping to constitute anything which an individual does without evaluating it as bad or good. This approach reduces confusions of considering coping as an outcome of the stress process. Fourth, they put emphasis on the usage of the word ‘manage’ in the definition. It avoids considering coping equivalent to ‘mastery’. Moreover, managing can constitute minimizing, avoiding, tolerating, and accepting the stressful conditions as well as attempts to master the environment. Figure 3.1 depicts the theoretical framework based on the theory.
Figure 3.1 Theoretical Framework based on Cognitive Theory of Psychological Stress and Coping [developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984)]
III. Conceptual map based on Cognitive Theory of Psychological Stress and Coping

The conceptual map is the extension of the conceptual framework as it includes the concepts identified from the overall review of literature for the present study. Thus, a conceptual map (Figure-3.2) gives the interrelationship as understood and adapted for the present study. It depicts the lines of inquiry guiding the present study of TSWs in occupational stress and coping. It clarifies how the study intents to achieve the objectives in order to answer the questions.

Continued…..
Figure 3.2 Conceptual Map based on Cognitive Theory of Psychological Stress and Coping [Developed By Lazarus and Folkman (1984)]

- **Environmental variables**
  - **Stressors**
    - These stressors are classified into three categories as follows,
      - Stressors related to Job nature
      - Stressors related to personal/individual context of TSWs
      - Stressors related to organizational

- **Personal variables (Trained Social Worker)**
  - Sex
  - Marital status
  - Work settings
  - Work experience
  - Education
  - Salary
  - Job type and Job level

- **Cognitive Appraisal**

- **Coping Efforts/ Coping Behaviours**
  - Problem Focused Coping
  - Emotion Focused Coping

- **Social Support (Informal & Formal or Both)**
  - Informal social support (in the form of Family, friends, and relatives)
  - Formal social support (in the form of supervision, appraisal system and colleague support)
III.A Explanation of Conceptual Map

Conceptual map depicted in Figure 2 points to occupational factors (stressors faced by TSWs) which are divided into three categories such as factors under job nature, personal factors and organizational factors. This categorisation is done only for practical purposes to comprehend and to conceptualize various stressors in the profession. It is not a firm classification specified in the literature. Moreover listing of stress factors under these three categories is based on description of stressors which are frequently mentioned in studies carried out in social work occupation (as reviewed in chapter two of the thesis under section-V: sources of stress in social work profession) and on the model proposed by Cooper and Davidson, (1987), and Cox et al. (2000), both cited in Miller, D., 2000 about the sources of stress at the workplace.

For the present study, these occupational factors are comprehended under environmental variables as the precursor conditions.

The socio-demographic and occupational factors of TSWs are taken as precursors under their personal variables. Other than these, availability of resources available with TSWs to evaluate the demands from the occupational environment and to deal with stressful situation (in case of primary evaluation of threat and harm) is taken as a part of both personal variables and also as one of the instruments to cope.

On the basis of primary evaluation and assessment of resources, coping responses depicted could be a problem focused or emotion focused or both. This coping response may have effect on the stressful equation between a TSW and his/her occupational demands.

Theoretical framework and conceptual map of the present study acknowledges the cognitive mediation in the stress process where cognition refers to an individual’s interpretation about the situation or event based on his/her thoughts, knowledge and insights in relation to that particular event or situation. Interpretation of a situation is also influenced by socio-cultural factors of the individual, personality of the individual and others related factors. Accordingly, perception about the situation may be harmful/threatening/challenging mediated by individual’s cognition (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). However the present study is not focusing on the individual difference which occurred in the process of stress and coping based on cognitive mediation of the process. This aspect of the study is taken as one of its limitations.
IV. Operational definitions of key concepts

For the present study, where the aim is to examine stress and coping in the occupation of social work, it was understood on the basis of review of literature (Chapter 2) that social work profession has multiple stressors (which can be taken under environmental antecedents like demands and constraints for a particular job). Further, there are empirical evidences indicating the presence of stress and burnout in this particular profession like other human care professions. Accordingly, it was understood that the TSWs react to the stressors and also try to cope with them with their available resources. Moreover, the socio-demographic (age, sex) and occupational characteristics (salary, work experiences, job type, job level etc..) of TWSs being the personal variables also act as precursors, thus making the reaction to the stress and coping an individual’s own experience, different from that of others.

On the basis of elaboration given above, the key variables identified for the present study are stressors, occupational stress and coping (problem focused coping; emotion focused coping and social support seeking). Following are the operational definitions of these concepts.

- **Stressors**- Operationally stressors are conceptualised as any occupational demands and constraints which are capable of distorting the perception of available resources to cope. Accordingly, it progresses to the condition of stress. These demands and constraints can be physical or psychological. (Adapted from the definition given by Dollard, 2003 and the explanation of the stress and coping phenomenon by Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

- **Occupational Stress**- According to Dollard, Winefield, H.R. and Winefield, A.H., 2001 work stress is a transitional arousal state between objective stressors and strain where strain is a reaction to the condition of stress. Accordingly, for the present study stress has been operationally conceptualized as the state where an individual finds himself/herself incapable to meet the demands from the occupational environment in relation to his/her available resources. (Adapted from the explanation about the explanation of stress and coping phenomenon by Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

- **Coping**- According to Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) coping is understood as a consistent and continuous effort at the cognitive and behavioural level to handle the imbalanced person-environment situation and to minimize or to survive the stressful situation.
- Problem focused coping, emotion focused coping and seeking social support (methods/ways of coping) - When an individual tries to alter/change this imbalanced person-environment situation, it can be referred to as a problem focused coping, whereas when an individual tries to lessen the effects of this imbalance equation, then it is referred to as emotion focused coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). For both the (problem and emotion focused) ways of handling the stressful situation, an individual seeks social support. So seeking social support as one of the methods of coping is the combination of both types of coping (Rao, Subbakkirishna, and Prabhu, 1988).

V. Research Paradigm

For the present study it was understood that social work profession has multiple stressors and due to their presence, it is considered to be inherently stressful.

Accordingly, it was identified that there are stressors (events, incidents and experiences which are capable of producing stress) that are taxing to the secondary appraisal (perceived ability to cope) of TSWs. This particular interaction between the objective stressful environment of social work occupation and TSWs results in stress.

The very recognition of the objective social reality calls for the positivist paradigm that guides quantitative mode of inquiry. Accordingly, the study has made efforts to gain the objective knowledge of stressors, stress and coping among TSWs.

The main aim of applying quantitative paradigm for the present study was to gain reliable, valid and generalizable results with their clear description of variables and their inter-relations. This paradigm has kept the study away from biased and subjective pitfalls.

VI. Research design

In order to give justice to the aims and objectives, the study has developed an analytical study design. Its purpose is to analyse the situations of TSWs leading to occupational stress and to unravel coping. The study intended to do so against the personal, job-related variables and work setting (NGO, Corporate, Academic) acting as the predecessors. In order to give justice to the aims and objectives, the study aims at an analytical design wherein it would test authentically the construct of stress process (i.e., stressors, stress, and coping).
VII. Objectives

1. To know the basic socio-demographic and occupational details of TSWs.

2. To identify various stressors faced by TSWs in their occupation, and to understand differences in perception of these stressors as per their socio-demographic and occupational variables.

3. To know the stress levels of TSWs in their occupation and to know the relation of occupational stress as per their socio-demographic and occupational variables.

4. To understand the various methods of coping under each way of coping used by TSWs to overcome their occupational stress.

5. To know the prominent ways of coping used by TSWs to deal with occupational stress and to know the variations in coping as per their socio-demographic and occupational variables.

6. To know the relation of occupational stress faced by TSWs with their ways of coping.

7. To understand the factors to be implemented/addressed at the educational/training level of TSWs and at organizational level that can help to fight occupational stress and to have better coping during their professional life.

VIII. Research questions

1. What are the various stressors in TSWs’ occupation, and how these stressors are related to their socio-demographic and occupational variables?

2. What are the stress levels of TSWs in their occupation and how the occupational stress varies with their socio-demographic and occupational variables?

3. What are the various coping methods under each way of coping used by TSWs to manage occupational stress?

4. What are the prominent ways of coping used by TSWs to deal with occupational stress and what are the variations in coping as per their socio-demographic and occupational variables?

5. What is the relation of occupational stress faced by TSWs with their ways of coping?

6. What are the strategies at training level of TSWs and at organizational level that can help them to fight stress and to have better coping during their professional life?
IX Inclusion and exclusion criteria

IX.A Inclusion criteria

- First, TSWs should have formal education training (BSW/MSW/M.A Social Work/M.Phil./Ph.D.) in social work, or may have any other additional degree after formal training in social work.

The study focuses on TSWs, and not the voluntary social workers who are engaged in works of philanthropy and charity. It focuses on the stress and coping of TSWs in their occupation. Accordingly, those individuals who are pursuing the profession of social work are considered and who had undergone formal training for it.

- Secondly, they should have a minimum 3 years of work experience in the occupation.

As there is no specified period evident in the literature for a stress to occur, there was a difficulty to estimate a period-span during or after which an individual might feel stressed in his/her job. But at the same time, the literature does indicate the presence of stress for the TSWs in their profession. Keeping this in mind, the study decided to take at least three years of work experience as a period sufficient enough for an individual to have experienced some kind of stress due to having been through enough exposures to the various facets of his job.

- Thirdly, they should be working in any one of the three work settings, that is, NGOs, academics and corporate/industries.

Social workers work in a variety of settings. Their professional work profiles are extensive, leading to settlements in a variety of social work practices. In India most of the social work training institutes/schools/colleges offer specialisation/concentration in subjects like community organization, medical and psychiatric organization, family and child welfare, labour welfare and personnel management etc., Accordingly, there is a possibility of social workers getting engaged in a variety of jobs settings having different job designations under various job profiles. However, the different nature of job based in different settings affects the types and processes of stress and coping.

Hence, work setting can served as one of the mediating/moderating variables in the process of occupational stress and coping, but at the same time gathering information from TSWs working...
in different fields seemed difficult. So it was decided to collect information from TSWs working in three work settings, i.e., NGOs, academics and corporate/industries.

The NGO sector serves as the major sector to absorb TSWs for different causes (Ramchandran, and Padmanabha, 1969). Currently in India, the development sector is administered largely by NGOs/private sector. This has created an important pull of employment for the TSWs. Individuals with formal degrees in social work t (M.A. Social Work, Master of Social Work) are seen getting absorbed in this sector easily to do social work (Hazra, A., 2011).

In addition to this, there has not been thorough research carried out on job stress and burnout in academic sector. Little efforts are being taken to understand the stress and coping of TSWs engaged in academic sector within the context of their individual characteristics vis-à-vis with other professional groups (Maria Lusia A.N. and Mercedes B. M., 2010). There are many studies focusing on stress among managers, supervisors in corporate and industry sector (Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, and Manoharan, 2003) but no major studies have been done on, particularly in Indian setup, for TSWs TSWs working in corporate sector.

In such a scenario, the study found it suitable to include only those TSWs working in these three settings, namely, NGOs, academics and corporate/industries.

**IX. B Exclusion criteria**

- **Social workers who have been diagnosed for any of the chronic mental or physical illnesses**

With these exclusion criteria, the study tried to control the effect (stress) of any of the chronic mental or physical illnesses which can also interfere with the occupational stress and coping of the TSWs. To rule out the presence of this criterion the study did not use any questionnaire or validated scale (like general health questionnaire- GHQ etc.). It made sure about the clause with the each TSW before the interviews.
X. Area of the study

In the absence of any official listing or directory of TSWs in India at present, it was difficult to identify total number of social workers at any randomly chosen area. Accordingly, there was a need to identify the area of the study purposely. Following requirements were taken into consideration while choosing the area of study:

- Area of study should have strong history of social work training and should have possible job avenues so that TSWs from various fields can be included in the research (preferred area of practice was NGOs, academics and corporate/industries).
- At the same time the area of study should be familiar to the researcher and he should also know few of the TSWs, so that he could mobilise the resources with their help to get in touch with other TSWs to prepare the list of available TSWs working in that particular area.

Taking the above mentioned criterion as a base, the study identified the following cities of Madhya Pradesh. These are Indore, Dhar and Dewas.

**Indore**- It is the educational hub of Madhya Pradesh. Many young students after completing their schooling move to Indore for higher studies from various towns and districts of the state. It has the oldest and first college of social work (established in 1951) in Madhya Pradesh. The Indore University has also efficient Social Work Department running programmes like BSW, MSW and M.Phil. in Social Work. Moreover, there are total 9-10 private social work colleges providing social work education which are affiliated to University. There are more than 100 NGOs which are active on social issues. There are TSWs teaching in these colleges. Indore as an area of study which is important to include TSWs working in academic and NGO work settings.

**Dhar**- It is an industrialised city. Many industries have corporate social responsibility wings. Moreover, suburb of Dhar is having second largest industrial area of Asia, i.e., Pithampur. Many TSWs are engaged in various jobs in these industries and are settled at Dhar for their livelihood. Dhar as an area of study was important to include TSWs working in corporate/industry work settings.
Dewas- It is also an industrialised area which has medium-sized and small scale industries. Many NGOs also function in the area for social causes. It is an important area of study of TSWs from corporate/industry and NGO settings.

XI. Sampling

Procedure followed to prepare sampling frame:

To start with the process of listing TSWs working in the selected areas, we contacted alumni groups and social work colleges to get the contact details of TSWs passing out from them. The contacted TSWs further made contacts with their seniors and colleagues. Each TSW coming into contact was asked to provide contact details of other TSWs from their professional or personal circle. In this way we listed all possible TSWs with their contact details. We stopped the process when we started receiving repeated names. At the end of the process, a list of 645 TSWs was ready from all the three areas of study.

All the listed 645 TSWs were contacted on phone. Table 3.1 gives the types of responses received.

Table 3.1 Frequency Distribution of Responses from Total 645 TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses on dialing contact numbers (Round 1)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact was established</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found to be wrong number</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive the call (on repeated attempts)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found to be out of coverage area (on repeated attempts)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile was found to be switch off (on repeated attempts)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, contact was established with 355 TSWs out of 645 TSWs. To these 355 TSWs, researcher introduced herself and briefed them about her research study. Researcher also asked for their consent to participate in it. Table 3.2 summarises their responses.

Continued …
Table 3.2 Frequency Distribution of Responses from 355 TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses from 355 TSWs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Said yes to participate in the study</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Said no to participate in the study</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded from the list (Reasons- 1. Left the social work profession. 2. Found to be having formal training in other disciplines)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is mentioned in table 3.2, total 260 TSWs happened to give their consent to participate in the study. Therefore only these 260 TSWs were considered for the sampling frame.

Selection of sample from the sampling frame

These 260 TSWs were classified on the basis of their work setting and sex (to have a balanced representation of work setting and sex). Table 3.3 gives these details.

Table 3.3 Frequency Distribution as Per Sex and Work Setting of the 260 TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Work setting</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 3.3, the sampling frame consisted of 260 TSWs from three different work settings, i.e., NGOs, Academics and Corporate. Out of them, academic setting had only 33 TSWs. Hence, it was decided to include all of them in the study, instead of carrying out a random selection of few from them.

From the NGO and Corporate settings, TSWs were selected by random sampling. After excluding TSWs from academic setting (33), there remained 227 TSWs (NGO-137 and Corporate-90). It was decided to have around 60 to 70 per cent of 227 as a sample size from these two settings, which turned out to be total 153 TSWs. From them 92 and 61 TSWs were drawn from NGOs and corporate settings respectively at random in proportion to each other, to have total of 153 TSWs.
Sample was drawn randomly (to pick the random sample from NGO and Corporate interval sampling method was used) from these two strata by following the prescribed formula explained below (Lavrakas, 2008).

Population (N) = 227,
Respondents in each Stratum (S1, S2)-
NGO (S1) =137, Corporate (S2) =90
Sample to be drawn = 153, Sample size (sample to be drawn) from each stratum = n1, n2
So, n1 = S1/N *153

From NGO
n1 = 137/227*153= 92

From Corporate
n2 = 90/227*153= 60.6

This way 92 TSWs out of 137 from NGO and 61 TSWs out of 90 from corporate/industry and all 33 TSWs of academic work setting, together 186 were considered as sample (out of 260) for the study. Table 3.4 shows the distribution of 186 TSWs across their work setting and sex.

**Table3.4 Frequency Distribution as Per Sex and Work Setting of the 180 TSWs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>NGO</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Corporate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**XII. Tools for data collection**

To identify stress levels and coping, the study planned to use Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava, and Singh, (1984) and the Coping Checklist developed by Rao, *et al.*, (1988). Both the scales are validated and standardized for the Indian population. Besides, a structured questionnaire was used as well.

**XII.A Structured Questionnaire**

It was designed to gather socio-demographic information details to identify stressors, and get suggestions to be carried out at organizational and social work training levels to address the problem of stress.
To identify stressors, the information puts forward the list of stressors (question nos. 15, 16 and 17 of the questionnaire) under three main divisions, namely, stressors related to nature of job, individual or personal context of the TSWs, and organisational stressors. Regarding these stress causing factors (stressors), the respondents were asked to mark ‘yes’ or ‘no’ if they felt these factors stressor from themselves. As described earlier, this classification is done only to comprehend and conceptualize stressors in the profession. It is not a firm classification specified in the literature.

Lists of factors acting as stressors under these three categories were prepared by keeping in view the common sources of stress in social work profession (as reviewed in Chapter II of the thesis under section-V: sources of stress in social work profession) and the model proposed by Cooper and Davidson, (1987), and Cox et. al., (2000) (both cited in Miller, D., 2000) about the sources of stress at the work place.

Every stress causing factor listed in the questionnaire is self-explanatory, avoiding any confusion hereby, the list of these factors under each category or division of stressors along with their connotation in the context of the present information is presented as follows:

XII.A.1 Stressors related to job nature

- **Lack of autonomy** – Autonomy in work is explained as the freedom TSWs to make a decision in regard to their job responsibilities.

- **Expected to work for long hours/on unsocial hours and uncertainty and wide breadth of the work task**- These two factors are in relation to the overload of the work task/responsibilities and worries related to them.

- **Minimal support from co-workers or supervisors and inter-personal conflicts with/among co-workers**- These two factors were explained in regard to TSWs’ relation with their workmates and colleagues to sort out co-operation and support for the fulfilment of job responsibilities.

- **Insufficient quantity/quality of work, lack of recognition as professional social worker in a team, lack of recognition for work accomplished and more of paper/administrative work**- These four factors are described in regard to the quality of work and satisfaction from that work.
- **Lack of social status** - It is explained as the image and prestige of their work, job and profession among their work-mate and society at large in which they are working.

- **Job insecurity** - It is explained as a perceived threat of the loss of job worries related to that.

- **Low salary and few opportunities for advancement or promotion** - These two factors are in regard to the economical and carrier growth of TSWs in their present occupation.

**XII.A.2 Stressors related to individual TSWs**

- **Conflict between the demands of job and home, and lack of family support and cooperation** - These two factors are in regard to the co-operation from family and the perception of TSW about work and life balance.

- **Lack of proper training and orientation for the job, and lack of expertise/skills as social worker to handle present job responsibly** - These two factors are about the perception of TSWs that their training was insufficient to handle the present job responsibilities and so they feel worried about it.

- **Physical or mental difficulties** - A question was asked in relation to any physical or mental illness which was acting as an additional issue to deal with problems at the work place.

- **Ideological difference** - It is the difference faced by the TSWs in regard to their own ideas about social work and the ideas they learn during their training with the organisation in which they are working.

- **Conflict between aspirations and present nature of job, and whether deserve a better job (as being more qualified for the present job)** - These two factors are in relation to dissatisfaction of TSWs in regard to the mismatch between their skills as TSWs and the job they are involved in.

- **Frustration for not being able to bring desired changes in the client’s life scenario and finding oneself extremely emotional and sensitive for his pain and sufferings** - These two factors are referred to as the emotional sensitivity of TSWs which they perceive as vulnerability for stress at work.

**XII.A.C) Stressors related to organisational context**

- **Lack of employee benefits (provident fund, health insurance, life insurance, etc.), lack of paid vacation time/sick leave offered, and lack of compensation or protection in case of**
any grievances by the employer- These factors are in regard to the provisions of basic benefits provided by organisations to their employees.

- **Lack of essential facilities (like, water, electricity, internet, stationery, communication aids, etc.), and lack of adequate resources to accomplish the given work task**- These two factors are in regard to the non-availability of basic resources at the work place.

- **Lack of opportunity to utilize skills and talents, lack of opportunity to learn new skills, lack of support for additional training and education**- These factors are in relation to the opportunities for self-advancement and refinement of TSWs in the organisations they work.

- **Lack of contingent rewards and stringent bureaucratic work environment**- These two factors are in regard to the absence of any motivational efforts by an organisation for employees and about very formal and non-friendly environment in it leading to stress.

### XII.B Occupational stress index (OSI)

This has been developed and standardized by Srivastava and Singh (1984). It consists of 46 statements. It measures stress on twelve aspects of job life. These are role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibility for the persons, powerlessness, under-participation, poor-peer relations at work, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. Each statement has five options which capture the agreement or disagreement of the TSWs on a spectrum consisting of five points that are totally disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and totally agree. Out of these 46 items, 28 are ‘true-keyed’ and remaining 18 are ‘false-keyed’ items. These 12 sub-domains of OSI are explained (as per explanation given by Subramanian and Vinothkumar (2009) and according to items in the OSI under each sub-domain).

- **Role overload**- It is concerned about the excessive work load, relative paucity of time to manage personal problems and lack of adequate staff for appropriate job allocation.

- **Role ambiguity**- It is an uncertain expectation by workmates, supervisors. It also includes inadequate information or knowledge about the given work task which is leading to poor job preparation.

- **Role conflict**- It constitutes contradictory directives and insufficient facilities to complete the given task. It also includes intrusion by workmates and supervisors in the way of completing the task.
- **Unreasonable group and political pressure**- It includes the conflicts in following the rules and regulations for job performance under the pressure or influence of groups or any ideological grouping at the job place.

- **Responsibility for the persons**- It constitutes the burden of carrying other individuals’ responsibility in a job. It is concerned about the responsibility to take care of another employee’s future and progress of the organization.

- **Powerlessness**- This sub-domain measures the authority of an employee in important organisational decisions, importance of an individual’s opinion and interest in job tasks.

- **Under-participation**- This sub-domain is concerned about the position of an individual in an organization. It is about an individual’s participation/consultation in the major activities of an organisation.

- **Poor-peer relations at work**- This sub-domain looks for the relations at work place, particularly work mates’ support and cooperation in solving the job problems.

- **Intrinsic impoverishment**- It is concerned with the monotonous nature of the work place. It also take into consideration the opportunities to utilise an employee’s skills and ability independently.

- **Low status**- It constitutes the social status related to job. It includes the significance given by supervisors/higher authorities to an employee’s work and position.

- **Strenuous working conditions and unprofitability**- It examines the context in which the work tasks are fulfilled by employees, particularly for the situations which are uncertain and complex.

Further, Srivastava and Singh (1984) stated that for the OSI, the index of homogeneity and internal validity of individual items was determined by computing biserial coefficient of correlation (rbis). The values of rbis ranged from .36 to .59. The internal consistency of the test determined by computing split-half reliability by odd-even method was found to be .935 (corrected by S-B formula). The index of reliability was also ascertained by computing Cronbach’s alpha coefficient which was found to be r=.90. By split half method reliability indices of the 12 sub-scales were also computed by Srivastava and Singh (1984). These were as follows- role overload (.684), role ambiguity (.554), role conflict (.696), unreasonable group and political pressure (.454), responsibility for the persons (.840), powerlessness (.630), under
participation (.809), poor-peer relations (.549) at work, intrinsic impoverishment (.556), low status (.789), strenuous working conditions (.733) and unprofitability (.767).

**XII. Coping check list (CCL)**

Its purpose is to find out how individuals manage with difficult situations or stressful encounters they face. It provides a list of commonly used methods of dealing with stress and reducing distress (Rao, *et al.*, 1988). It consists of seven sub-scales, one problem focused scale (problem solving), five emotion-focused scales (acceptance/redefinition, denial/blame, distraction, positive, distraction negative and religion/faith) and social support seeking which is a combination of both problem and emotion-focused coping. It has 70 items unfolding various behavioural, emotional and cognitive responses used to deal with stress. These are answered in ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Validity and reliability of the tool have been established. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.74 and internal consistency for full scale, as measured by the Cronbach’s alpha, as 0.84 (Rao, *et al.*, 1988).

**XIII. Data analysis**

Data were analysed as per the stated objectives of the study. Before the analysis, we checked the data for outliers drawing normal distribution of the scores of key variables (total stress scores and all 12 sub-domains along with scores of coping-problem focused, emotion-focused and social support). The information has found that all the sub-domains of stress were following normal distribution, except two (role conflict and total stress scores) which had outliers. Later these two scores were treated by replacing outliers’ scores by the mean of the particular domains (Newton, and Rudestam, 2012).

Further, it was found that the scores of coping (problem-focused, emotion-focused and social support) were not following the normal distribution. This is because of the fact that few TSWs gave highest and lowest scores to certain coping methods in the given domains. In the coping check list, every item was to be answered in ‘yes’ or ‘no’, indicating either the presence or absence of a particular way of coping. This interpretation about the scores was discussed in detail with the author of the coping check list, Prof. Kiran Rao, where she reconfirmed it and expressed that this was possible because of a chance that a particular coping method could be used largely by few, while others are never used by other individuals. Therefore, in such cases, those who use a particular coping method mostly may have said yes for each item under that particular way of
coping, and hence got the highest score to it while those who never have used a particular coping method may have got the lowest score (‘0’) to it. So it is not felt logical to remove these scores with the mean of that particular domain.

Further, all the three domains do not have an equal number of items. As compared with problem-focused and social support seeking, emotion-focused coping was further sub-divided in five sub-scales as acceptance/redefinition, denial/blame, distraction, positive, distraction negative and religion/faith, thus having more number of items altogether. This was creating difficulty to have internal comparison among domains themselves and also with other variables. Therefore, under the guidance of the author of the scale and reference material shared by us, the scores were converted into relative/proportional scorings. Relative/proportional scoring was calculated by summing up each sub-domain and then dividing this score by its respective number of items. In this way, researcher obtained mean scores for each sub-domain. This means that the score for each sub-domain is then divided by the sum of mean scores of all the sub-domains to obtain relative/proportional score (Lapp, William, and Collins, 1993; Turiff, Levy, and Biesecker, 2011). These relative scores are used when required, while carrying out the data analysis.

In the absence of any official/verified list of registered TSWs working in the studied areas, it was difficult to have an exhaustive estimate of the population of TSWs. In this situation, the samples for the study were drawn from the sampling frame consisting of 260 TSWs, prepared by researcher by her-self. The researcher had to use her network of colleagues and friends to get the list prepared. Secondly, the data related with ways of coping among TSWs were found to be not following the normal distribution. Lastly, the data represented observations taken from different groups belonging to the same population. All these conditions together made a strong ground for applying the non-parametric tests on the data (Siegel, and Castellan, 1988) Therefore, in order to know the differences in perception of stressors, stress and coping of TSWs according to their socio-demographics and occupational details, Friedman’s two-way ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used (non-parametric equivalent of t-test and ANOVA). Figures 3.3 to 3.9 present a comprehensive view of the method of data collection and type of analysis carried out in order to achieve the formulated objectives of the study. All the figures are as follows:
Figure 3.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-1</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1              | Questionnaire- question numbers 1 to 14 were asked to collect data pertaining to this particular objective. | Descriptive statistics (frequency and cross tabulation, mean) was done. | Chapter IV  
Chapter IV consists of various charts and tables of descriptive statistics to describe profile of TSWs. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-2</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2 To identify various stressors in TSWs’ occupation and to understand differences in perception of these stressor in relation to their socio-demographic and occupational variables. | 1- Questionnaire- question numbers 15, 16 and 17 listed out the stressors related with nature of job, personal/individual context and organisation respectively. Respondents were told to make choice in the form of ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ for each of the listed items, which they feel as stressors in their occupation. 2- Questionnaire- question number 18 also asked to know the exposure of abuse by client during social work occupational tenure. | Multiple responses were calculated across the various socio-demographic variables. Stressors were classified as 1- Stressors related to job nature. 2- Stressors related to individual/personal context. 3- Stressors related to organisation. | Chapter V  
Chapter V makes analysis under three main headings:  
- 5. I Stressors related to job nature.  
- 5. II Stressors related to individual or personal context of TSWs.  
- 5. III Stressors related to organisations where TSWs were working. Under each heading initially first five stressors are discussed from the chart of multiple responses. Then variations in perception of these stressors are examined by cross tabulating multiple responses for stressors with sex, marital status, work settings, work experience, education, salary, job level and type of job of TSWs.  
- In addition to this, exposure to abuse by clients in TSWs’ occupational tenure (Question 18) is explained by presenting frequencies in a tabular form. (Section-IV). |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-3</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
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</table>
| 3             | Stress of TSWs was measured by OSI. It consists of total score and scores of each sub-domains (there are total of 12 sub-domains as explained above under tools of data collection) | ▪ To know stress levels, raw scores obtained by OSI were converted to low, middle and severe level coding as per the manual of the OSI and then descriptive statistics were applied to these coded scores.  
▪ To know the relation of stress with various socio-demographic and occupational details of TSWs Mann-whiteny U and kruskalwallis along with pair-wise comparisons test was used.  
▪ Along with this Pearson correlation was also calculated whenever required. For this purpose raw score obtained by OSI was used. | Chapter VI  
▪ In Chapter VI stress levels of TSWs are portrayed in a chart.  
▪ Further, analysis is presented with the help of tables comprising of test statistics of Mann-whiteny U and kruskalwallis along with pair-wise comparisons.  
▪ At the end of the chapter, Pearson correlation tables are given to explain the relation of work experience with occupational stress across gender and work settings of TSWs. |
Figure 3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-4</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4              | To understand the various methods of coping used by TSWs to overcome their occupational stress. | 1- For coping, the coping check list (CCL) was used which gives scores for three sub-domains- problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and social support. Under each way of coping, various methods are listed in CCL to which responses are recorded either as ‘yes’ or ‘no’. | To know various methods of coping used by TSWs, scores were added for each method under each way of coping (problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and social support) as per the instructions given in coping check list and then multiple responses were calculated under each sub-domain. | Chapter VII Section-I  
- All the methods used by TSWs under each way of coping have been portrayed in charts. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-5</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To know the prominent ways of coping used by TSWs to deal with occupational</td>
<td>As explained above (i.e., table-9) for coping, coping check list was used.</td>
<td>To the prominent ways of coping Friedman’s two-way anova along with pairwise comparison was applied. For this purpose relative score of CCL was used.</td>
<td>Chapter VII Section-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress and to know the variation in coping as per their socio-demographic and</td>
<td></td>
<td>To explore the relation of ways of coping used by TSWs as per their socio-demographic and occupational variables, Mann-whitney U and kruskalwallis along with multiple comparisons test was used. For this purpose relative score of CCL was used.</td>
<td>Analysis is made with the help of tables comprising of test statistics of Friedman’s two-way Anova, Mann-whitney U and kruskalwallis along with pair-wise comparisons test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupational variables.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moreover, Spearman’s rho correlation was also calculated whenever required. To calculate Spearman’s rho raw score of CCL was used. For this purpose relative score of CCL was used.</td>
<td>At the end of the Chapter, Spearman’s rho correlation tables are presented.</td>
</tr>
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Figure 3.8

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<tr>
<th>Objective no-6</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6              | To know the relation of occupational stress faced by TSWs with their ways of coping. | Stress of TSWs was measured by OSI. Coping was measured by CCL. | Spearman’s rho correlation was calculated. | **Chapter VII (Section-III)**  
Spearman’s rho correlation table is presented. |
Figure 3.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective no-7</th>
<th>Tools used to collect data</th>
<th>Analysis (by SPSS 20)</th>
<th>Presentation of analysis</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 7              | To identify the factors at educational/training level of social workers and at organizational level that can help them to cope better with stress during their professional life. | Questionnaire- question number 21 and 22 were open ended questions seeking TSWs suggestions for strategies at educational level/training level of social workers and at organizational level that can help them to fight stress and to have better coping during their professional life | All the suggestions were listed out and discussed in relation to available relevant literature and research studies. | Chapter VIII  
Suggestions are made presented under two sections.  
Section-VII.A deals with measures at organisational level. Section I is further sub-divided in sub-themes.  
Section-VII.B deals with suggestions to be implemented during training of TSWs. |
XIV. Limitations of the study

- Conceptual framework of the study is based on the transactional model of Lazarus and Folkman, (1984) and so present it focuses on individual differences in the process of occupational stress and coping. The framework also acknowledges the cognitive mediation in the stress process and underlines its presence in the given conceptual map. But due to quantitative paradigm of the study, it was not possible to capture the cognitive mediation occurring in the process of stress and coping.
- The exact number of TSWs in a chosen area of study was not known. We made efforts to list possible TSWs and used probability sampling to derive samples from this prepared sampling frame. Hence, the results could not be generalised for all those TSWs who could not be a part of the initial list and subsequently of the sampling frame.
- Due to non-availability of TSWs belonging to similar fraternity like medical social workers, child welfare officer, etc., it was not possible to bring out inter-group comparisons among them.
- Due to small sample size, the study had to limit the applied test between two variables only. A large sample size would have allowed to go further to explore individual differences having three variables in a given statistical test.
- In-depth interviews were not conducted which could have provided the subjective experiences of TSWs pertaining to stress and coping.

XV. Ethical consideration

- Researcher had thoroughly informed participants about all features (purpose, procedure and need) of the study. She had also taken written consent from the participants. All participants were given freedom to choose or not to participate, as well as to choose to discontinue participation at any time during the data collection process.
- Regarding the usage of mentioned tools, (OSI by Srivastava and Singh, 1984 and CCI by Rao, et al., 1988), a prior permission was taken from the authors. They were assured that the tools would be used only for a Ph.D. study and for no other purpose.
- Given the sensitive nature of the research setting, we maintained confidentiality. The participants’ identities were concealed in all reports and findings. They were assured that the data and information received from them would be strictly used only for the research.
**XVI. Experiences during data collection**

- Area of the study was selected purposefully to prepare the list of TSWs employed in the chosen area. However, it was found to be very hectic and tiresome to prepare their list. A total of 645 TSRs were listed.

- Secondly, the most difficult work was to call each TSW and to introduce him/her to the research and about self to confirm whether he/she is a TSW or not and to request him/her to participate in the study. After finalisation of 180 TSWs, we again made calls to each TSW to fix appointments to have interviews. In many instances even after fixing the appointment, TSWs refused to meet due to sudden changes in their work schedule or sometimes they cancelled the appointment due to the heavy load of work on that particular day. Sometimes, it was heart-breaking to find the appointment cancelled in the middle of the journey. However, it was easy to fix appointments with TSWs working in the academic setting as compare with TSWs working in NGOs and corporate/industrial work setting.

- Data collection process helped us to have contact with many TSWs who were alumni of the same college in which she completed her masters in social work, and who were found to be very helpful in preparing the list of TSWs.

- Only in two instances researcher faced unwanted personal questions (like are you married, what is your age, where is your family, etc.) away from the realm to build rapport by the TSWs and had to furnish fake details in to guard her own personal information and to continue with the interview.

- Overall the process of data collection gave an opportunity to the researcher to explore her own capabilities and to learn own limitations, while communicating with the individuals belonging to the same profession.

**XVII. Conclusion**

This chapter gives the rationale of the study and clarifies the theoretical framework (based on the Theory given by Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Further, it describes the conceptual map developed from this theoretical framework. Important aspects of research like operationalization of key concepts, explanation of research paradigm and design etc., are also covered. Information about tools of data collection, sampling process and plan of data analysis has been provided.