Chapter VIII
Major Findings and Discussion

This chapter discusses major findings of the study by keeping in view the contemporary relevant literature. All the findings are based on the analysis done under Chapter IV to VII. The reasons to make use of particular statistical analysis were explained under research methodology chapter. Here, while discussing findings statistical values are reproduced whenever found necessary. However all the conclusions made, based on findings which are methodically tested.

Chapter first describes the profiles of the trained social workers (TSWs) participated in the study. Thereafter, major components of stress process, i.e., stressors, stress and coping are discussed. Further, individual differences on the basis of socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of TSWs in the stress process have been explained.

At the end of the chapter, suggestions put forward by TSWs at training and organisational levels are discussed. All the suggestions were listed to discuss them in the light of relevant literature. Accordingly, results are debated under seven sub-sections. These are:

- **I-** Profile of the TSWs (TSWs).
- **II-** Stressors (related to nature of job, individual/personal context and organizational stressors).
- **III-** Occupational stress levels of TSWs.
- **IV-** Ways of coping used by TSWs.
- **V-** Relation of occupational stress and coping.
- **VI-** Individual differences in the process of stress-based on the following socio-demographic and occupational details of TSWs.
  - **VI.A-** Sex
  - **VI.B-** Marital status
  - **VI.C-** Work settings
  - **VI.D-** Work experience
  - **VI.E-** Education, salary, type of job and job level.
- **VII-** Suggestions by TSWs to deal with occupational stress and to have better coping.
  - **VII.A-** Suggestions to be implemented at the organisational level.
  - **VII.B-** Suggestions to be implemented at the social work training level.
I. Profile of the TSWs

A total of 186 TSWs were interviewed, out of which 63 per cent were males and 37 per cent females. The mean age of overall sample was 34 to 35 years. So there were more young adults in the sample. All the TSWs interviewed had work experience of 10 to 12 years. A majority of the TSWs were married. However, there was equal proportion of married and unmarried TSWs in each work setting. In a given sample of 186 TSWs, more female TSWs had contractual jobs, whereas there were more male TSWs working as permanent employees.

Almost 50 per cent (i.e., 92 out of 186) TSWs worked in non-Governmental sector in positions like programme/project coordinator, assistant programme/project coordinator and district programme/project coordinator. Another 33 per cent in corporate/industries holding positions like assistant manager, human resource executives, and administrative assistants. The rest of 18 per cent (i.e., 33 out of 186) worked in academic work setting a majority of whom were contractual lecturers. As explained previously, development sector in India is mostly govern by NGOs and serves as the major sector to absorb TSWs as employees (Hazra, A., 2011). That may be the reason to have more TSWs from NGOs in the sample. For TSWs from academics, no sampling was done, 18 per cent TSWs (i.e., total 33 TSWs) were from 7-8 colleges at the given area of data collection. From this we can easily estimate that there were approximately 4 to 5 working in one college which indicates the overload of the job tasks for TSWs employees in social work colleges (providing social work degrees both at bachelor and master level).

There were experienced TSWs working in corporate sector and minimally experienced in academic sector. In NGOs and academics more females were employed as compared with corporate work setting. Lower number of females in corporate sector may be explained on the basis of education they opt for. In the total sample it was found that more females opted for M.Phil./Ph.D. after their MSW instead of going for additional degrees like PGD in human resource development or doing LLB and MBA which are usually considered professional courses and facilitate career in corporate or industrial sector. Moreover, it was found out that TSWs with other additional degrees were paid highly as compared to their counterparts. Further, a majority of TSWs worked as permanent employees in corporate work setting, whereas in NGO work setting more TSWs worked on contractual jobs. TSWs working in academic work setting were the least to have permanent jobs. The reason for this can be explained on the basis of job designations and job levels of the TSWs in each work
setting. In NGOs there were more TSWs working on projects which were time bound and so had more contractual jobs, whereas in corporate setting there were more regular promotions and attainment of high job levels which were leading job security and having permanent job positions. In the present sample, academic works setting was not providing regular promotions to high job designations and job levels. In academics, most of the TSWs were working as contract lecturer on the condition of renewal of contract each year, even after having considerable work experience. So, most of these TSWs did not have permanent jobs.

One of the major findings of the study is that the TSWs from NGOs were attaining higher job levels with increasing work experience. However, increase in work experience and higher job levels were not resulting into higher salary. In the case of TSWs working in academic work setting there was neither attainment of higher job levels with the increasing work experience nor the rise in salary. In the case of TSWs from corporate work setting with increasing work experience, there was promotion to high job levels which led to higher salary.

II. Stressors (related to nature of job, individual/personal context and organizational stressors).

For TSWs major stressors were fewer opportunities of career growth (86 per cent, i.e., 160) and anxiety about job insecurity (78 per cent, i.e., 145). Moreover; they were expected to work for longer hours and that too sometimes on unsocial hours (73 per cent, i.e., 135). They expressed concern over managing wide breadth of their work task, uncertainty (71 per cent, i.e., 132), and low salary (66 per cent, i.e., 123). As per the literature, social work jobs are stressful as they are embedded in the intricacies of social problems as well as organisational nature. The organisational structure was also found to create complications (Horwitz, 2006; Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth, 2002).

The above explained stressors related with the nature of social workers’ job were in accordance with the previously drawn conclusion from the literature, that many times occupational stress in social workers is due to their heavy workloads (DePantilis and Zlotnik, 2008; Yamatani, Engel, and Spjeldnecs, 2009). They are also poorly paid (Kadushin & Kulsys, 1995) for their work.

Further, in the present study with regard to stressors in individual/personal contexts, three main stressors surfaced, i.e., conflict between their own aspiration and nature of current job
conflict between demands of job and home (63 per cent, i.e., 117) and ideological differences (65 per cent, i.e., 121) they face at the work place. Similarly, McLean and Andrew (2000) found that differences of values between organisation and social workers can be the sources of stress. Moreover, in social work occupation stress is not only due to excessive demands from the nature of work, but it is also due to exposure of social workers to traumatic experiences of their clients (Horwitz, 2006; Lloyd, et al., 2002). Similarly, the study found TSWs are sensitive for not being able to bring about desirable changes in their clients’ life/scenario.

In relation to organisational context, more than 80 per cent TSWs faced lack of resources and opportunities to refine their job skills (like lack of opportunities to utilize their skills and talents, lack of opportunities to learn new skills and lack of support for additional training and education) as one of the stressors. They also did not get contingent rewards (75 per cent, i.e., 140) and had inadequate resources to complete the allotted task (67 per cent, i.e., 125). Social work and other social services are usually plagued by inadequate resources for their clients which makes the workers stressed (McLean & Andrew, 2000).

II.A Violence at the work place

During social work occupational tenure physical abuses (physical fighting causing bodily harm) were experienced by TSWs working in NGOs only. They also reported verbal abuse most (51 per cent, i.e., 38) as compared with TSWs from other two settings. TSWs from corporate work setting reported to have received more threats of violence (69 per cent, i.e., 11) as compared with other two work settings. TSWs working in academic work settings experienced less violence in their social work tenure. Briggs et al., (2004) also found that social workers are more exposed to work place violence.

In social work profession individuals who are directly involved with clients are highly likely to get exposed to higher levels of stress. This is also validated by the fact that professionals encountering difficulties during their service deliveries are likely to be highly stressed in their occupations (Coyle, Edwards, Hannigan, Fothergill, and Burnard, 2005; Fahy, 2007). Rinstand, (2005) found experiences of violence faced by social workers during their professional career. In this, verbal abuse and threats are more common. Further, those who are involved directly with the clients are at higher risk to face violence as compared with other human service professionals (Coyle, et. al., 2005; Latta, 2002). It has also been noted
in literature that social workers who experience violence are more vulnerable to anxiety, role conflicts and severe depression (Arnetz, J.E. and Arnetz, B.B., 2001; Song, 2005).

**III. Occupational stress levels of TSWs**

In a given sample of TSWs, 50 per cent (i.e., 93) had moderate occupational stress, 30 per cent (i.e., 56) low occupational stress, and 20 per cent (i.e., 37) had high stressed due to their occupation. Poor peer relationship, low status and responsibility for other persons are the factors due to which TSWs were moderately stressed. High level of stress was caused by role overload, role conflict, unreasonable grouping and political pressures at the work place, feelings of unprofitability and strenuous work conditions.

From the review of literature it is evident that professional social workers can go through high degree of role ambiguity and role conflict (Kim & Stoner, 2008; Lloyd, C. et. al., 2002; Mor-Barak, Nissly, and Levin, 2001). Further, lack of co-operation from colleagues, relationship with supervisors (Hopkins, 2002), and organisational and job framework also contribute to occupational stress (Wooten, Kim, HaeJung and Fakunmohu, 2011). Social work profession is stressful due to dealing with the troubles of clients and that too with less work autonomy given to social workers (Lloyd, C. et. al., 2002), further because of unsafe work conditions (Arnetz, J.E. and Arnetz, B.B., 2001; Song, 2005).

**IV. Ways of coping used by TSWs**

Under the discipline of psychology there is lot of advancement about construction of human coping (Valtonen, Sogren, and Cameron-Padmore, 2006). As discussed in the introductory chapter, coping can be understood as a process at the cognitive and behavioural level to lessen the effect of or to change the stressfull person-environment relationship (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Accordingly, there can be problem-focused coping or emotion- focused or combination of both. In regard to the ways of coping used by social workers, there is a need for more exploration (Latack., 1986; Um and Harrison 1998).

TSWs used more problem- focused coping (mean rank 5.34), under problem-focused coping, 79 per cent (i.e., 147) TSWs used to go over the problem again and again in mind to analyse it and solve it bit by bit, and to make plan of action and follow it.

Second, the most used way of coping was to seek social support (mean rank 5.05) under which TSWs talked to a friend who could do something about the problem (86 per cent,
i.e., 160), seeking reassurance and support from friends (75 per cent, i.e., 140), and sought professional help and did as they recommended (66 per cent, i.e., 123).

Third, the most used way to cope was to accept/redefine the problem situation to manage stress at work (mean rank 4.82) under which the most chosen methods were consoling their own selves that things were not at all that bad and could be worse (74 per cent, i.e., 138), trying to look at the bright side (73 per cent). TSWs used negative ways of distraction the least.

Literature also reports many other ways of coping used by professional social workers. Fineman (1985) talked about the use of redefining the meaning of problem situation by social workers as a noticeable way of coping. Satyamurti (1981) found the use of positive and negative ways of avoidance by the social workers to manage stress.

V. Relationship between occupational stress and coping
Coping is a part of stress process and plays a prominent role in it. Accordingly, the relation of stress of TSWs was correlated with their ways of coping. It was inferred that problem-focused coping and positive ways of distraction were prominent coping which helped the TSWs to reduce their occupational stress in the given sample.

Vermeulen and Mustard (2000) observed that the female TSWs sought more social support and were engaged in emotional-focused coping more as compare with their counterparts elsewhere. They were more stressed than male TSWs who were engaged in positive ways of distraction. It argues that ineffective coping does not help to deal with stress to a larger extent (Vermeulen and Mustard, 2000). This may be the reason that above surfaced way of coping may help TSWs to deal with their occupational stress as compared with any other way of coping in the present sample.

VI. Individual differences in the process of stress as per socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of TSWs
It is important to study the individual variances in the stress process as it can help to have individual and environmental focused interventions for managing stress and to have more clarity about the phenomenon of stress and coping (Parkes, 1994, as cited in Mark, and Smith, 2008).
There are studies indicating the relationship between sex, age, marital status, education level and other individual characteristics with presence of stress. Similarly, the present study found out variations as per socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of TSWs. These findings are discussed below in the light of available literature.

**VI. A Variations as per sex of TSWs**

Most chosen stressors by female TSWs (78 per cent, i.e., 54) were the fewer opportunities for advancement and promotion in their occupation and job insecurity. Stressors like low salary, vagueness and extensiveness of the work task (77 per cent each, i.e., 53) and lack of support for additional training and education at the work place (69 per cent, i.e., 48) were also major concerns for them. Female TSWs had conflicts between demands of job and home (71 per cent, i.e., 49), irrespective of their marital status.

However, for male TSWs, ideological differences (69 per cent, i.e., 81) and less support from co-workers (66 per cent, i.e., 77) were the most perceived stressors.

These findings are in accordance with the literature which reports that most of the time females are not properly integrated within organisations (Hofboll, Geller, and Dunahoo, 2003). Moreover, they have to struggle more for career advancements (Bogg, and Cooper, 1994; Burke, 2003). They get less promotions, lower management positions and low salary as compared with their male co-workers (Cox, and Harquail, 1991). Moreover, for them the conflicting demands of career and home are a major source of stress. May be that’s one of the reasons why they had high work stress than their male co-workers (Davidson, Cooper, Baldini, 1995; Hofboll, *et al.*, 2003).

As stated by Vagg and Spielberger (1998), females are stressed more due to inadequate salary and conflicting job roles, whereas males are stressed more due to conflicts at the work place, work overload and not playing role in the decision-making process, which makes them stressful at work.

Similarly, it was not surprising to find female TSWs (mean rank 110) more stressed in their occupations than male TSWs (mean rank 84) in the present study. There are many studies citing males to be more stressed in an occupation. But most of the time females faced higher stress in their occupations (Hall, Chipperfield, Perry, Ruthig, and Goetz, 2006; Matud, 2004; Pines & Zaidman, 2003). Many reasons are suggested for this difference, one being that
females are exposed to higher stressful surroundings and environment like double responsibility of home and work and unfavorable job conditions (Barnett & Brennan, 1997). Ineffective coping can be the other reason for them to be more stressed than males at work place (Vermeulen & Mustard, 2000).

Moreover, literature mentions difference in the ways of coping among males and females. Recent reviews suggest that male and female athletes might utilize different coping strategies when dealing with stressful encounters (Kaiseler and Polman, 2010; Nicholls, and Polman, 2007). The present study does find a similar kind of differences in the coping strategy among female and male TSWs. Females used more of negative ways of distraction and methods of religion/faith and denial/blame to manage occupational stress. Male TSWs used more problem-focused (mean rank 107) ways of coping and sought less social support (mean rank 73) as compare with female TSWs (mean rank for problem-focused =71, social support =130). Males were also involved more into positive ways of distraction to deal the occupational stress.

The reason for this difference can be understood from two viewpoints. One is the difference in the perception of stressors and effect of stress on male and female individuals (Decker, and Borgen, 1993). It is evident from the literature that females might perceive exclusive stressors other than males, and this might be the reason for the difference in ways of coping (McDonald L.M., Korabik K., 1991). Females liked to ventilate more and to seek greater social support. They also perceived less control over the stressful situation and hence were seen indulging in emotion-focused coping. But males perceived higher control over the situation and used problem-focused coping (Hammermeister and Burton, 2004). Another reason is based on differences in the basic features of being male and female which could be traced to their social set up, due to which there are variations in their ways of response to stress (Tamres, Janicki, and Helgeson, 2002).

VI .B Variations as per marital status
Marital status of TSWs was another factor responsible for having variation in the way stress was perceived. Unmarried TSWs (mean rank 106) were more stressed as compared with married TSWs (mean rank 88). Unmarried TSWs had more of paper and administrative work (80 per cent, i.e., 43) and did not have variety in their work (76 per cent, i.e., 41), were not getting basic employment benefits (like provident fund, etc.) (73 per cent, i.e., 39) and found themselves more sensitive towards pain and sufferings of their clients (72 per cent, i.e., 39).
However, married TSWs were concerned about low salary (65 per cent, i.e., 86). Low salary as major stressor was perceived by married female TSWs compared with their counterparts. As per the correlation analysis, married TSWs used more ways to accept or redefine the stressful situation. They also used more negative (mean rank 103) and positive (mean rank 99) ways of distraction from stressful situation as compared with their counterparts elsewhere (mean rank for negative distraction= 70, positive distraction= 80.5).

It was found by other studies also that married individuals cope better than their other counterparts. At the same time, in the present study it was found that there were more young adults who were not married and, in accordance with the available literature, with increasing age coping improves and so dealing with the stress also improves (Beena and Poduval, 1992; Chand and Monga; 2007; Chaturvedi and Purushothaman, 2009; Hunnar and Bagali, 2014).

VI .C Variations as per work settings

TSWs from NGOs were stressed due to minimum support from co-workers (77 per cent, i.e., 71), lack of recognition as professional Trained social workers in a team (78 per cent, i.e., 72), and feelings of job insecurity (87 per cent, i.e., 80). TSWs working in academic work setting faced problems of low salary (82 per cent, i.e., 27), job insecurity (79 per cent, i.e., 26) and lack of recognition for the accomplished tasks (70 per cent, i.e., 23).

On the other side, TSWs from corporate/industries setting faced ideological differences (75 per cent, i.e., 46), stringent bureaucratic work environment (77 per cent, i.e., 47), inert-personal conflict with co-workers (68.9 per cent) and involvement in more of administration and paper work (66 per cent, i.e., 40).

TSWs from NGOs (mean rank 101.5) and academics (mean rank109.8) were more stressed than TSWs working in corporate/industries setting (mean rank 72). There was not significant mean rank difference between occupational stress experienced by TSWs from NGOs and academics. Moreover, stress due to monotonous nature of work task and lack of opportunities to utilise skills was not significantly different among TSWs from all the three work settings.

Johnson. S., et. al., (2005), found differences in the occupational stress among 26 different occupations. They found that occupations related to customer services, police, call centre teachers, ambulance and social services were most stressful.
Narayanan, Menon, and Paul, (1999) also found differences in the perception of stressors across the three different occupations. The reason for this was the job decision latitude enjoyed by the employees in relation to their work task (Karasek, 1979). Al-khalefa (1999) found out that work context like non-availability of expected salary, facilities available at the job, perks of bonuses and career advancement are the major causes for stress in teaching profession. In the context of the present study, on the basis of results it is evident that TSWs from corporate sector enjoy more decisions latitude and have more secured jobs with career advancement than the TSWs from other two work settings. Hence, they are less stressed than TSWs working in academics and NGOs.

There were also differences in the way of coping based on TSWs work settings. TSWs from corporate setting used more problem-focused coping (Mean rank 108) as compare with TSWs from NGOs (Mean rank 82). TSWs from academic field (mean rank 99.2) were not statistically different from TSWs used more ways to accept or redefine (mean rank 91) the stressful situation as compare with TSWs from corporate setting (mean rank 86). TSWs from academic sector were least to use negative ways of coping (mean rank 72) as compare with their counterparts elsewhere (mean rank for corporate sector =99.3, NGOs=97.2).

As per the profile of TSWs, those from corporate setting received high salaries with increasing work experience and increasing job levels. As per the literature discussed in Chapter I, coping also depends on the available resources. With better perks and better job conditions in corporate setting, work setting may have facilitated the use of problem-focused coping by TSWS from corporate as compare with TSWs from NGOS and academics.

**VI.D Variations as per work experience**

With the increase in work experience, there was decrease in the occupational stress irrespective of the sex of the TSWs. Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, and Manoharan, (2003) also found that older people have more ranges of coping ways than younger ones (Soderstrom, Dolbier, Leiferman, and Steinhardt, 2000). Similar might be the case with increasing work experience because in the present study the age and work experience factors were collinear to each other.

The second possible reason for this may be the attainment of more career development with the increasing work experience leading to improved coping from stress for TSWs. According to Sager, (1990) and Sharpely, Reynolds, Acosta, and Dua, (1996) younger individuals have
more emotional exhaustion and feelings of depersonalisation and high stress as compared with old individuals who attain career maturity (Dua, 1994).

Another reason could be derived from the findings surfaced in relation to the perception of stressor and higher work experience. After having worked for almost 23 to 32 years, social workers were more concerned about support from co-workers (85 per cent, i.e., 17 out of total 20), rather than their employment, job satisfaction, job insecurity (87 per cent, i.e., 106 out of total 122) and low salary (75 per cent, i.e., 92 out of total 122) which was on the contrary perceived as the major stressors by the TSWs who had worked for three to 12 years. Those TSWs who were in the middle of their career (having worked for 13 to 22 years) were more anxious about their social status (63 per cent, i.e., 28 out of total 44) of their profession only.

Further exploration of the role of work experience in the stress process shows that the effect of work setting was checked by increasing work experience. The TSWs from academic work setting did not show improvement in the management of occupational stress with their increasing work experience. In the case of NGOs it was helpful to a certain extent, whereas TSWs from corporate work setting managed occupational stress well as they gained more work experience. The reason for this has already been dealt with in the earlier section while discussing variation in the stress process due to work settings.

In the present study, TSWs were seen using more problem-focused coping and positive ways of distraction. They sought less social support with increasing work experience also led to the lesser use of ways to accept or redefine the stressful situation. About coping and work experience, Ernest and Leslie (2004) emphasised in-depth exploration due to inconsistent results about them. There are studies stating that the use of effective ways of coping, for instance, being less aggressive, positive ways had to be adopted to deal with stress by the older individuals (Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley, and Novacek, 1987). It may be true in the case of work experience also as in the present study age and work experience was understood to be collinear to each other. There are studies reporting decrease in confronted coping with increase age (Folkman, et al., 1987).

**VI.E Variations as per education, salary, job level and type of job**

In the study, no variation was found in the perception of stressors on the basis of education, salary, job level and type of job of TSWs. However, these variables affected occupational stress and coping of TSWs. As per the literature available, educational level, age and socio-
economic background of the individuals affect the extent of stress. Individuals with higher socio-economic background and higher education experience less stress (Finkelstein, Kubzansky, Capitman, and Goodman, 2007; Gallo, and Matthews, 2003).

TSWs with additional degrees (PGD in HRD, LLB and MBA) after MSW/M.A (mean rank 62) had less stress as compared with TSWs who had only master’s degree in the subject (mean rank 99.6) or had done M.Phil./Ph.D. (mean rank 98.3). TSWs who did only masters (93) had lower feelings of powerlessness (i.e., less authority in important organisational decisions and less importance given to individual’s opinion) at the work place as compare with TSWs who did M.Phil./Ph.D. in the subject (mean rank 117).

With variation in education, there was variation in the ways of coping of TSWs. This is in accordance with the difference in coping due to education of TSWs. Those TSWs who did only MSW used accepting/redefining ways of coping which were not helpful to manage stress and so they were more stressed in their occupation. TSWs who obtained additional degrees after their MSW (mean rank 126) used positive ways of distraction most (mean rank for MSW=83.1, +M.Phil./Ph.D. = 99.3).

With the increase in job levels, there was decrease in the overall occupational stress of the TSWs. (mean rank for higher levels=66, middle level=86, beginners=118). However, TSWs working on middle level and who were beginners in the occupation felt the stress due to low status at the work place (i.e., stress due to low social status at work and due to less significance given by supervisors to their work). Again the reason could be the effective ways of coping as TSWs of higher job levels made more use of positive ways of distraction and less use of seeking social support to cope stress. Here job levels were decided as per their designation and authority assigned to them in their work according to their designations.

Similarly, increasing salary was led to decrease in the overall occupational stress. TSWs getting salaries above Rs. 25001 per month were minimally under occupational stress. They used problem-focused coping more. TSWs getting salaries ranging from Rs. 5000-15000 and Rs. 15001-25000 per month were similar in experiencing the occupational stress, and used ways of acceptance or redefinition (mean rank 106) of the stressful situation and sought social support (mean rank 101). The reason to cope better and to have less occupational stress among TSWs earning high salary may be because they had more resources to deal with the situations.
Similar was the case with TSWs worked on a permanent basis as they were found with problem-focused coping and positive ways of distraction more and were less stressed as compare with their counterparts elsewhere.

Similar reasons were given by other authors like Mondal, Shrestha, and Bhaila, (2011) who found that in the case of teachers with higher education, there was less burnout. Lau, Yuen, and Chan (2005), stated that teachers with less professional training and having junior job levels were experienced higher job stress. Reasons for these were mainly the attainment of more coping repertoire with higher education and better socio-economic background (Finkelstein et al., 2007). Low salaries generally led to job dissatisfaction and higher occupational stress (Khurshid, Butt, and Malik, 2011; Ofili, Usiholo, and Oronsaye, 2009).

**VII Suggestions given by TSWs to deal with occupational stress and have better coping**

**VII.A Suggestions to be implemented at the organisational level**

The suggestions provided by TSWs are discussed below under following categories:

1. Operative work redesign and promotion of positive work environment.
2. Organisational services/interventions to manage stress.
3. Availability and accessibility of infrastructure and resources.

**VII.A.1 Operative work redesign and promotion of positive work environment**

- Regular arrangements should be made for capacity-building programme by the organizations to improve workers’ skills. For example, TSWs from NGOs and corporate sector demanded that for every new project orientation programmes, specific skill training and study material or reference should be provided to the staff to have productive engagement. Similarly, TSWs from academics recommended arrangements of seminars, workshops and conferences related to contemporary subjects in social work.

- A right person should be appointed on right place with right designation. Selection and promotion should be regular and fairly implemented.

Leka, Griffiths and Cox (2004) stated that organisations should confirm the selection of suitable candidates who should be appropriately matched to requirements of the designation on the basis of their skills and education. Moreover, organizations should provide training, supervision and guidance wherever required to manage work pressure.
There was a very strong appeal/suggestion to have remedies to deal with contractual jobs in NGOs and academic work settings. TSWs insisted on creating permanent jobs (with regular benefits) on the basis of education, and capabilities of the candidates. Even the contractual jobs should have certain benefits/regulations in regard to fixed hours of work, leave, etc., and should have adequate salary along with perks/incentives on the basis of performance. They suggested that this would help them to deal with their feelings of job insecurity.

TSWs suggested measures to enhance work autonomy and to have adequate power/authority in accordance with designation so as to accomplish/manage the allotted work task. They expressed their opinion that the lack of autonomy results into ambiguous and conflicting work situations and non-attainment of desired results. Moreover, too many things done at one time drain them out of their energy.

Many of them expressed their views to have clear job responsibilities and instructions pertaining to their respective roles and responsibilities. They strongly expressed their need for recognition and acceptance in a team as trained social workers.

The assigned work tasks should not be unrealistic. They should be well-planned and based on grass root realities.

As suggested by Stoica, and Buicu, (2010), organizations should set precise and attainable objectives and distribute job responsibilities to avoid ambiguities and conflicts in the work. Moreover, they should ensure decision-making latitude among workers so as to have productive results from them.

As per Leka, et al., (2004), it is always beneficial if key persons involved in the task are clear about their duties. It helps employees to understand and execute the demands of the job allotted. Structure and aim of the job should be made clear to the employees who will assist them to make best efforts to complete it.

Management/Administration should be approachable for employees to address both personal and professional difficulties and requirements in relation to work.

Organizations should conduct performance appraisals (360 degree basis) regularly and reward accordingly.

There should be supportive interaction and guidance among employees and organizations should ensure quality support from supervisors (Leka, et al., 2004). Promotions and other
perks given to employees should be based on experience and professional skills shown by a person. This should be regularly and fairly implemented (Stoica, and Buicu, 2010).

There is a need to have talks/sessions from experts to work on inter-personal relations at work and on related topics like personal and professional growth within the organization, improvement of co-ordination among all working and non-working staff, etc.

- Need for gender equality and sensitization for women’s rights at work place was expressed by female respondents.
- Need for proper communication and networking among staff through development of optimum/adequate ways of communication between the staff and management to share their experiences related with work and problem solving in their daily routine.
- The TSWs recommended more transparent system, especially at policy level or while dealing with some crucial decisions concerning the employees’ work and future.
- Authorities should be more approachable. There should be continuous and consistent support from the supervisors/heads of departments. The respondents expressed a strong necessity of time bound guidance from higher authorities at the time of crisis.

Work environment and culture are among the main factors which help in management of work stress by way of identification and finding of solution to the work problems. It is, therefore, necessary that employees are aware of their work culture and environment. In order to have positive work culture, employees should be involved in work cultural change activities (Leka, et. al., 2004). To have positive work culture, organizations should permit constant feedback back to the employees and freedom to them to utilize their knowledge and skills to the fullest. They should be given chance to design their work responsibilities which could be diverse and inspiring in nature. The employees should be provided with clear objectives and appropriate decision latitude to fulfil their tasks effectively (Stoica, and Buicu, 2010).

VII.A.2 Organisational services/interventions to manage stress
- Organizations should recognize and manage stress at work. There should be awareness programme on mental health at work place and motivational lectures arranged to deal with job stress to build positive work environment.
- Counselling service room should be provided on a regular basis.
- Entertainment activities should be organized by the organizations. Facility of recreational clubs should be provided.
- There should be a proper system to address employees’ grievances.
- Regular Meditation and other relaxing events should be organized frequently.
- Regular meetings on difficult issues and their possible solutions need to be arranged where employees would get chance to express their views.

Organisational services including building up suitable work environment which encompasses services and infrastructure to prevent and manage work stress should be arranged. Organizations should guarantee the provision of individual-based and organizational-based stress management interventions. In doing so, the problems of workers should be listed and addressed carefully (Stoica, and Buicu, 2010).

Stoica, and Buicu, (2010), talk about wellness programme adopted by many companies. One of the programmes they discuss is developed by Weimar Institute of California. It is known as NEW STRAT. Components of this programme are N= Nutrition (food), E= Exercise, W=Water (Daily consumption of more than 2 litres), S= Sun (Judicious exposure to sunlight), T= Temperance (moderation, including periods of employment adjustment/ relaxation), A= air (Fresh air), R= Rest (sleep and relaxation including weekends) and T= Trust (social support). The organizations ensuring these components can have wellness programme to help employees to combat stress.

VII.A.3 Availability and accessibility to infrastructure and resources
- Adequate and appropriate staffing should be done in the organization.
- Adequate resources should be provided to facilitate the work task and to achieve the set goals for productive achievements and for the self-growth of the employees.
- Organizations should have networking with different national/international agencies for regular funds to sustain programme in NGOs sector. In addition, innovative plans should be created and supported by the organizations to raise funds.

Suggestions in regard to availability of basic resources indicate the difficult situations in which social workers work in their jobs. Based on the profiles of TSWs and their perception of stressors the present study proposes a national level council to control the quality of social work employment.
VII.B Suggestions to be implemented at the social work training level

Suggestions regarding social work training are related to the up-gradation of its overall standards. They indicate strong need for an improvement in social work education and to extend professional status to social work in India. Some suggestions are given below:

- TSWs suggested updating the syllabus as per the recommendations given by the UGC’s Second Review Committee and UGC course model curriculum for social work. The syllabus should be relevant to the Indian conditions and include course books of Indian authors.
- TSWs expressed the need for the development of new methods of social work best suited to India through which gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject can be narrowed down. There should be changes in course curriculum according to the filed notes on a regular basis as it may assist in reducing the gaps between theories and practices.
- Duration of the course should be increased. There should be capacity and skill building programmes. One year’s specialization is not enough. New fields/specialisations should be created in social work based on the changing needs of Indian society.
- There should be appropriate placement of students according to their specialisation in field work agencies. Intensive field work and new field methods should be adopted during field work. Specific instructions to field work agencies should be given in advance about the students to be placed for field work. Field work in specialized area should be of a longer duration and of variety. There should be variation in field work to ensure wider exposure. Exposure at rural area should also be included so to understand grass root problems.
- Mushromming of colleges should be checked as standard as quality is not maintained by them. Complaint mechanism should be established at every social work institution.

Many TSWs expressed concerns which echoed the views of experienced social work educators and practitioners. In the 75 years of the growth of the profession of social work in India, similar concerns have been expressed. However, the efforts and actions of social work fraternity have not been always fruitful in bringing about changes uniformly all over India. For instance, adoption of UGC model of course curriculum has not been done by all the social work schools and colleges in India.
In a report by National Network of Schools of Social Work (NNSSW) (2012) the regional representatives pointed out that the curriculum should be regulated as per the requirement of job market. It was correctly expressed by Nadkarni, (2011) that most schools offer labour welfare and personnel management as specialization as it brings more admissions by prospective social work students to get jobs in corporate sector and industries. The present study also found that few colleges provided post-graduate diploma in human resource management as a self-financed course. The report recommended that the curriculum and specialisation should be in accordance with the needs of the concerned region (NNSSW, 2012).

There are minimum standards prescribed by UGC for the recruitment of lecturers, assistant professors and other teaching staff in schools and colleges. Moreover, as UGC says, it is mandatory to attend refresher/orientation courses for the progress of the faculties. TSWs who are social work educators expressed the wish to have capability-building programmes. Their salary packages and job designations, as already seen, are not as per the UGC’s rules.

Recently Prasad (2003) examined the objectives of offering various theories taught at the social work training level. He found out that most of the time too many theories are taught at the training level without having a clear vision or objective of doing so. This has been echoed in the above suggestions made in the present study.

Some other suggestions and concerns raised by TSWs at the social work training level were as follows:

- Career counselling/job placement facility and individual counselling should be provided in schools and institutions of social work. Due emphasis should be given to the establishment of alumni of pass-out students in every social work college. In order to strengthen these alumni associations, they should be provided with professional support during employment and training tenure. Similarly, personality development programmes, workshops, seminars, etc., should be organised on a regular basis. There should be more emphasis on report writing skills, analytical skill and communication skills during education in social work.

- TSWs asked for a scrutiny of the available specialisations at colleges of social work. They wanted the medium of instruction to be only English because the study material was available in English only.
- Selection criteria of students should be standardised. It should be done on a, competitive basis to ensure admission of brilliant students. Moreover, recruitment of permanent and appropriately qualified faculty members is necessary to give good inputs.

- TSWs urged the establishment of a social work council to regulate social work education. They believe it will help to professionalise social work education and practice in India. Besides, it will assist them in their careers.

One of major suggestion by TSWs was regarding career counselling, library facilities, etc., which indicates the absence of these basic facilities at the institutions of social work at chosen area of research. It was echoed by other studies like those of Narayan (2001) and NNSSW (2012). Quality and growth of social work training depends on the availability of academic resources and infra-structure. TSWs working in academics in the given area of study were demanding that medium of the instruction should only be English, as there were no social work subject materials available in local language in their library. Moreover the issue of high selection criteria for prospective social work students so to admit only those who are serious about the subject matter and are not just want to do the social work degrees to get the quick jobs.

Suggestions given by TSWs at training level and the literature discussed under the contemporary social status of social work in India strongly communicate the need to have action oriented concrete steps in this regard. There are research studies and reports generated from time to time by various time functional association of social work in India. But the action on the findings of the available reports and brain churned suggestions are implemented at the snail pace. Now there is need of unanimity and to move for the national level authority to control the training and practice of social work in India. There is need to strength the associations of social work at national level to lobbying for the aim to professionalise social work India.