Chapter IX

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study analyses the stress components in regard to (TSWs) employed in Indore, Dhar and Dewas cities of Madhya Pradesh. They TSWs were chosen mainly from three types of work sectors, i.e., NGOs, academic field and corporate/industries setting.

The study aims to understand the stress process in view of various stress and coping theories and models. It also highlights the factors that can be stressors, particularly in occupational context. Introductory chapter of the study tries to comprehend the various stress causing factors (i.e., stressors) by presenting the classification given by Cooper and Davidson, 1987 (as cited in Miller D., 2000) and by Cox et. al., 2000 (cited in Dollard, 2003). Thereafter, the stress phenomenon has been explained through various stress theories and models of stress, i.e., stimulus-based models, response-based models, demand control support model, effort-reward imbalance model, cognitive theory of psychological stress and coping, and Cox’s transactional model of occupational stress.

Later coping was also discussed at length under various headings like coping as psycho-analytical approach as a personality trait and as a process under cognitive approach to comprehend.

Moreover, importance of individual differences in the process of stress and coping were also understood. All the efforts lead to the development of theoretical framework based on the cognitive theory of psychological stress and coping given by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984. This theoretical framework was used as the principal base to have conceptual understanding in the current study. It is explained in figure 3.1 in Chapter III.

The chapter on the review of literature is specifically related to social work profession. Moreover, professional status of social work in India and the impact of globalisation on it is also discussed. The review of literature shows that social work professionals are exposed to a number of stress causing factors. Accordingly, it was understood that any individual working in such an occupational context is going to face stress, though there can be individual differences on the basis of personal characteristics or socio-demographic variables. As per this, understanding of the current research problem was acknowledged under the positivist paradigm, where the TSWs were reacting to the stressful environment which was taxing to their coping abilities and leading to the experience of stress in their occupation.
Accordingly, the study seeks to know the basic profile of TSWs and to analyse the various stress factors (i.e., stressors) faced by them. Their occupational stress levels and ways of coping are also analysed as per their socio-demographic and occupational characteristics. To achieve these objectives an analytical study has been designed.

To collect data pertaining to stressors and to get TSWs’ suggestions at training and organisational levels, a structured questionnaire was prepared. Further, Occupational Stress Index (OSI) given by Srivastava and Singh (1984) was used to find the stress levels on 12 factors, viz., 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 at the work place. To measure coping, Coping Check List given by Rao, K., et. al., (1988) was applied. It provides information about a total of seven ways of coping which can be used by an individual, i.e., one is problem-focused scale (problem solving), five emotion-focused ways (acceptance/redefinition, denial/blame, distraction, positive, distraction negative and religion/faith) and social support seeking. Both the scales used are standardised and validated for Indian population.

In this way, quantitative data collected were analysed with the help of a statistical tool called as SPSS 20, i.e., statistical package for social sciences version 20. With the help of SPSS descriptive statistics along with Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis tests and Friedman’s two-way anova were applied (non-parametric equivalent of t-test and ANOVA) as per the data characteristics. Suggestions given by TSWs were listed and presented in theme-based bullets along with major findings of the study under Chapter VIII.

Chief findings of the study are summarised in this chapter in the form of figures which are self-explanatory so as to make it easy and quick to comprehend the problems of TSWs.

A total of 186 TSWs from Indore, Dhar and Dewas in Madhya Pradesh were interviewed, keeping in mind the representation from three main work settings of social work profession where TSWs are absorbed for employment, i.e., NGOs, academic field and corporate/industries setting.

There were more males and young TSWs and equal proportion of married and unmarried TSWs in the given sample. More females were working on contractual jobs. Out of 186
TSWs, half of them were working in NGOs work setting, three-fourths in corporate/industrial work setting and remaining one-fourth in academic field.

TSWs working in academic field were the least in permanent jobs. TSWs were working on contractual jobs in NGOs, while those in corporate setting had the maximum of permanent jobs. Moreover, they were promoted regularly to higher levels. Accordingly, there was increase in their salary with increasing work experience. But this was not the case with TSWs working in academic field. In case of TSWs working in NGOs, with increasing work experience they were promoted to higher jobs without a corresponding rise in their salary.

Continued…
I. Stressors

Figure 9.1 Major Occupational Stressors listed in Descending Order (most to least chosen)

- Fewer opportunities of career growth in their occupation
- Lack of resources and opportunities to refine their job skills
- Jobs insecurity
- Lack of contingent rewards
- Expected to work for longer hours/on unsocial hours
- Conflict between own aspiration and nature of current job
- Wide breadth of work task, uncertainty
- Inadequate resources to complete the allotted task
- Low salary
- Ideological differences
- Conflict between demands at job and home

I.A Violence at the work place

Violence at the work place was one of the major stressors for TSWs. Those working in NGOs were the most to receive physical abuse (physical fighting causing bodily harm) from their beneficiaries during their social work tenure. They also faced verbal abuse. However, TSWs from academic field were abused least as compared with their counterparts elsewhere. TSWs working in corporate/industries were exposed to violent treats from their beneficiaries.
II. Occupational stress levels of TSWs

Figure 9.2 Occupational Stress Levels and the Factors causing Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50% moderately stressed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Poor peer relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility for persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30% low stressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Powerlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unreasonable group and political pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intrinsic impoverishments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20% severely stressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strenuous work conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unprofitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role overload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=186

III. Ways of Coping used by TSWs

Figure 9.3 Major Ways of Coping used by TSWs and Methods Used for each Way of Coping (descending order).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem-focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go over the problem again and again in the mind, to analyze it and solve it bit by bit, and to make plan of action and follow it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seeking social support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking to friends who can do something about the problem, seeking reassurance and support from them, and seek professional help and do as they recommend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EF- acceptance /redefinition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consoling themselves that things are not at all that bad and could be worse, trying to look on the bright side of things.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EF means Emotion- Focused.
IV. Relationship between occupational stress and coping

Figure 9.4 Inverse Relationship of Occupational Stress with Problem Focused Coping and Positive Ways of Distraction

*EF means Emotion-Focused.*

Continued …
V. Variations in perception of stressors, experiencing occupational stress and coping as per socio-demographic and occupational characteristics of TSWs

V.A Sex-wise variations of stress among TSWs

Figure 9.5 Variations in Perception of Stressors as per Sex of TSWs

Figure 9.6 Sex-wise Variations in Experiencing Occupational Stress and Coping by TSWs

*EF means Emotion- Focused.*
V.B Variations as per marital status of TSWs

Figure 9.7 Variations in the Perception of Stressors as per Marital Status of TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unmarried TSWs</th>
<th>Married TSWs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More of paper and administrative work</td>
<td>Low salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having variety in their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive towards pain and suffering of their clients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of basic employment benefits (Like provident funds etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.8 Variations in Experiencing Occupational Stress and use of Coping as per Marital Status of TSWs

Unmarried more stressed
- Less use of EF- acceptance / redefinition
- Less use of EF- Positive distraction
- Less use of EF- negative distraction

Married less stressed
- EF- acceptance/ redefinition
- EF- Positive distraction
- EF- negative distraction

EF means Emotion-Focused
V.C Variations as per work setting of TSWs

Figure 9.9 Variations in the Perception of Stressors as per Work Setting of TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TSWs from NGOs</th>
<th>TSWs from Academics</th>
<th>TSWs from Corporate/Industries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job insecurity</td>
<td>Low salary</td>
<td>Bureaucratic work environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition as a professional/trained social worker in a team</td>
<td>Job insecurity</td>
<td>Ideological differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum support from co-workers</td>
<td>Lack of recognition for the accomplished work task</td>
<td>Inter-personal conflict with co-workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.10 Variations in Experiencing Occupational Stress and use of Coping as per Work Settings of TSWs

TSWs from NGOs - more stressed

- EF-distraction negative
- EF-acceptance/redefinition

TSWs from Academics - more stressed (equal to NGOs)

- Problem-focused coping
- EF-acceptance/redefinition

TSWs from Corporate - least stressed

- Problem-focused coping
- EF-distraction negative

*EF means Emotion-Focused*
V.D Variations as per work experience of TSWs

Figure 9.11 Variations in the Perception of Stressors as per Work Experience of TSWs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-12 years of work experience</th>
<th>13-22 years of work experience</th>
<th>23-32 years of work experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job insecurity</td>
<td>Perceive lack of social status to the profession</td>
<td>Lack of support from the co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low salary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Figure 9.12 Variations in Experiencing Occupational Stress as per Work Experience of TSWs

Work experience

Overall occupational stress

Continued …
Further variations in experiencing occupational stress and use of coping ways are presented as per education, job levels and salary, and type of job of TSWs. Not much variation was observed in the perception of stressors by these particular occupational characteristics of TSWs.
V.E Variations as per education of TSWs

Figure 9.15 Variations in Occupational Stress and Coping as per Education of TSWs

*EF means Emotion- Focused.*

V.F Variations as per job levels of TSWs

Figure 9.16 Variations in Occupational Stress and Coping as per Job Levels of TSWs

*EF means Emotion- Focused.*
V.G Variations as per salary of TSWs

Figure 9.17 Variations in Experiencing Occupational Stress and use of Coping as per Salary of TSWs

EF means Emotion-Focused

V.H Variations as per types of jobs of TSWs

TSWs working as permanent employees used more of problem-focused coping and positive ways of distraction. They were less stressed as compared with their counterparts who were not permanent.

VI. Recommendations

The study has found that the suggestions given by TSWs (quoted in Chapter VIII) are worth accepting. Their suggestions are comprehensive and logically framed as per the ground realities. These suggestions can undoubtedly be put forward as recommendations as the outcome of the current research. However, on the basis of the results obtained by empirically tested quantitative data, the study has made an attempt to make recommendations which may contribute to facing stress by the TSWs in their occupation. These are as follows:

By and large TSWs were moderately stressed due to their poor relation with work-mates and lack of co-operation from them to solve the job problems. At the same time, supervisors were also did not give significance to the work done by TSWs. They were moderately stressed due to the responsibility of taking care of individuals dependent on them for their jobs. On the other hand, the factors for which TSWs were severely stressed were the strenuous nature of
their job due to uncertainties in their jobs and excessive work load. These findings strongly recommended the sensitisation of staff in regard to the contribution made through the activities of social work professional in a team. At the same time, the organisation needs to promote positive work environment which can be conducive for all to work. Additionally there is a need to have more capacity-building programmes to enhance skills of the TSWs to manage their work effectively with consistent supervision.

One of the major findings of the study is that for the TSWs in the given area and given context of work setting, the problem-focused way of coping and positive ways of distraction from the stressful situation helped to reduce occupational stress. Subject to these findings, social work organisation and training institutions can plan activities to enhance the ways of coping to deal with the stress which TSWs face.

Besides, there is a need to have target group interventions both at training and organisational levels. There is a need to make the work place more conducive and acceptable for female TSWs. As they were more stressed in their occupation, stressors chosen by them should clearly give the direction for the activities required at organisational level. They felt insecure in regard to their job, fewer opportunities for career growth, lack of support for skill enhancement and complain about low salary. These clearly show the need to properly involve them in an organisation, and to sensitise staff and authorities about gender issues at the work place. Further, one of the main findings of the study is that only female TSWs felt conflict between demands from job and home under the first five stressors. It clearly indicates the double pressure from career and home, which definitely demands exclusive intervention plans for female TSWs to deal with the occupational stress like providing them resources to choose for better coping ways to manage their stress.

Similarly, TSWs employed in NGOs and academic field need to take into consideration separate stress management programmes and organisational environment changes. There is a need to scrutinise recruitment procedures followed in most of the academic schools/colleges at the given area of study because TSWs in academic field were the least likely to get permanent jobs even after having higher degrees like Ph.D. (Social Work) and having a number of years of experience. Most of the educators from these schools were working on a contractual basis. Many of them did not get promotions. It added to their occupational stress which may have affected their work efficiency in imparting training to the prospective professional social workers. Similar was the case with TSWs working in NGOs.
Moreover, TSWs who obtained additional degrees (including PGD in HRD, LLB and MBA) were paid highly and were less stressed as compared with their other counterparts. However, the degrees they opted for are not a part of social work spectrum and are outside it. These TSWs were mostly employed in the corporate sector where they worked as assistant managers, managers and personnel officers whose job responsibilities were different from the core of social work profession. Few of these degrees were provided by social work colleges as self-financing course like post-graduate diploma in human resource development/management. This indicates the undesirable practices of schools of social work which harms the professional status of TSWs. Thus, students are motivated to go for such courses in view of the requirements of the job market and the social work institutions do not strengthen the social work training and practice.

These findings strongly suggest the need to have a national level social work body which can regulate the training and practice of social work profession in India. This suggestion should be supported by the social work fraternity in India and Madhya Pradesh.

Further, there is need to undertake similar studies in different parts of India to get clearer scenario about hassles which TSWs face in their occupation. To this end, more of quantitative and qualitative data may be collected and attempts made to put on record the experience of TSWs.