CHAPTER 3

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In the present research work the author intends to study role of family structure and perceived family environment in stress management of working and nonworking women. For this purpose, the specific problems and the relevant hypotheses formulated are described in the present chapter.

A. INDEPENDENT EFFECT

PROBLEM (A-1)

First problem of the present research is to verify impact of family structure on stress management ability of women. More specifically, the problem is whether women living in nuclear family structure and those living in joint family structure differ in regard to their stress management ability?

HYPOTHESIS (A-i)

Family plays an important role in development of a person. Exposure to stressful life events, the experience of chronic stress and the level of psychological resources are rooted in social structural context of people’s lives (Chowdhury et al., 1999). Stressful and other psychological experiences as well as life style of individuals are patterned by various social structural variables (Denton & Walter, 1999; and Denton et al., 2004). There is always a room for higher level of emotional and social support in joint family than in nuclear family during the time of crises. Ugwu (2010), Madhavi & Vimala (2011), and Akram & Khuwaja (2014) found that women belonging to joint family system received care giving supports, help in sharing responsibility, and other kind of social support which can help to cope with stress, and may be protective factors or buffer against the incidence of depression and anxiety disorders.

Hence, it is hypothesized that women in joint family would excel those in nuclear family in regard to their stress management ability.
PROBLEM (A-2)

Second problem of the research is whether perceived family environment plays any role in stress management ability of women? In other words, the problem is whether women of perceived good family environment and those of perceived poor family environment differ in respect of their stress management ability?

HYPOTHESIS (A-ii)

Family provides most of the early environmental influences upon the personality which remains throughout the life. Family environment plays a vital role in women’s life (Agrawal, 1979; Frumm, 1993; Flaxman, 1999; and Gaur & Gupta, 2004). It can be reasoned that a perceived good family environment nurtures problem-, emotion-, and social-focused coping strategies leading to a better management of stressful situations. Zunzunegui et al. (2003), Charles & Mavandadi (2004), B’eland et al. (2005), Varma & Dhawan (2006), Herman et al. (2007), and Mardhekar & Wadkar (2009) also asserted that family cohesion, supportive relationship, close relationship help to cope with stress and reducing stress responses by enhancing emotional support. Whereas negative or perceived poor family environment was related to incidence of anxiety, depression and other psychological problems.

Hence, it is expected that women of perceived good family environment would show better stress management ability than those of perceived poor family environment.

PROBLEM (A-3)

Third problem of the present research pertains to effect of working status of women on their stress management ability. More specifically, the problem is whether working women and nonworking women differ in respect of their stress management ability?
HYPOTHESIS (A-iii)

Indian women work with the framework of family system. They play significant role in household activities. In prevailing twenty first century, the role of women in urban sector of society is changing rapidly. Women can play multiple roles as working women, as good housewife, as mother, and as caregivers for older parents. The term working women here in the present research means who work outside of/or inside their homes to earn, and nonworking women means who are not economically or gainfully employed and are totally involved in household job as homemakers. Barnett & Marshall (1991) observed that women who participated in multiple roles experienced low level of stress related mental and physical problems. Bernas & Major (2000) also found that a working woman could take the initiative in finding a work-family management strategy that was best suited to her needs. Wadkar & Mardhekar (2007) found that working women perceived more cohesiveness and less conflict among their families and used their cognitive coping resources quite effectively. Aditi & Kumari (2005), Thompson et al. (2005), Anderson (2009), Beja Jr. (2012), Soomro et al. (2012), Dudhatra & Jagsan (2012), and Akram & Khuwaja (2014) also found that women’s employment were the source to enhance their self-esteem, confidence, problem-solving behaviour, independence, freedom etc. and working women utilized their abilities and skill as a safeguard against stress and they were less depressed than nonworking women.

Hence, it is expected that working women would show better stress management ability than nonworking women.

B. INTERACTION EFFECT

FIRST-ORDER INTERACTION EFFECT

PROBLEM (B-1)

The first interaction problem of the present research at first-order level pertains to interaction effect of family structure and perceived family environment of women
on their stress management ability. More specifically, the problem is whether women in nuclear and in joint family structures vary in respect of their stress management ability because of their perceived good or poor family environment? In other words, the problem is whether women in the four sub-groups formed on joint basis of family structure and perceived family environment i.e., nuclear family - perceived good family environment, joint family - perceived good family environment, nuclear family - perceived poor family environment, and joint family - perceived poor family environment, differ in respect of their stress management ability?

HYPOTHESIS (B-i)

It has already been assumed that women in joint family structure and of perceived good family environment would excel their counterparts in respect of their stress management ability. In reference to interaction effect of these two factors, it is expected that women in joint family and of perceived good family environment would be the best stress managers while women in nuclear family and of perceived poor family environment would be the poorest stress managers. The other two sub-groups of women would stand in between these two extreme groups in the same regard. More specifically, it is hypothesized that the difference between the two family structure groups of women in respect of their stress management ability would vary truly because of their differential perceived family environment (good and poor). In other words, it is expected that the four sub-groups formed on joint basis of family structure and perceived family environment would vary truly in respect of their stress management ability.

PROBLEM (B-2)

The second interaction problem at first-order level pertains to joint effect of family structure and working status of women in their stress management ability. More specifically, the problem is whether four sub-groups of women formed on joint basis of the two independent variables – family structure and working status of women i.e., nuclear family - working women, nuclear family - nonworking women,
joint family - working women, and joint family - nonworking women, differ in respect of their stress management ability? in other words, the problem is whether difference in stress management ability of women in nuclear and in joint families varies due to their differential working status i.e., working and nonworking?

HYPOTHESIS (B-ii)

It has already been assumed that women in joint family and working women would show greater stress management ability than women in nuclear family and nonworking women, respectively. When their interaction effect is under consideration, it is hypothesized that there would exist true interaction effect of family structure and working status of women in their stress management ability. In other words, it is expected that the difference between women in joint family and those in nuclear family structure in regard to their stress management ability, would vary genuinely for working and nonworking women or vise versa. More specifically, the four sub-groups formed on joint basis of family structure and working status of women i.e., nuclear family - working women, joint family – working women, nuclear family - nonworking women, and joint family - nonworking women, would vary truly in regard to their stress management ability.

PROBLEM (B-3)

Another interaction problem of the present research at first-order level pertains to interaction effect of perceived family environment and working status on stress management ability of women. More specifically, the problem is whether four sub-groups of women formed on joint basis of the two independent variables i.e., perceived good family environment – working women, perceived good family environment – nonworking women, perceived poor family environment - working women, and perceived poor family environment - nonworking women, differ in regard to their stress management ability? In other words, the problem is whether difference in stress management ability of working and nonworking women varies due to their differential perceived family environment (good and poor) or vice-versa?
HYPOTHESIS (B-iii)

It has already been hypothesized that working women and those of good perceived family environment would excel their counterparts in respect of their stress management ability. In regard to their interaction effect accordingly, it is expected that there would exist true interaction effect of working status and perceived family environment of women on their stress management ability. More specifically, it is assumed that the four sub-groups formed on joint basis of these two independent variables would vary genuinely in respect of their stress management ability. In other words, it is hypothesized that the difference in stress management ability of working women and nonworking women would vary truly for women of differential perceived family environment i.e., good and poor or vice-versa.

SECOND-ORDER INTERACTION EFFECT

PROBLEM (B-4)

The last interaction effect problem of the present research pertains to joint effect of three independent variables – family structure, perceived family environment, and working status of women – on their stress management ability.

HYPOTHESIS (B-iv)

It has already been hypothesized that women in joint family structure of perceived good family environment and working women would show greater stress management ability than their counterparts. In respect of their joint effect, it is hypothesized that there would exist genuine interaction effect of these three independent variables on stress management ability of women. More specifically, it is assumed that the eight sub-groups of women formed on joint basis of two family structures (nuclear and joint), two perceived family environment (good and poor), and two working status (working and nonworking) would vary genuinely in regard to their stress management ability.