CHAPTER - V

DISCUSSION
In this chapter the investigator has discussed various issues pertaining to
the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Comparison has been made in the
light of the findings of earlier researchers. The effort here is to describe the
various personality and marital dimensions studied and to provide an
interpretation for their manifestation based on their association with other
variables and the statistical testing done in the previous chapter.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The majority of the respondents (both study and control groups) were
Hindus with a mean age of about 31 years. They were housewives with a low
level of education having studied up to the high school level. Those employed
were mostly engaged in unskilled vocations and had an average monthly income
of Rs.192/= (study group) and Rs.164/= (control group) respectively.

The mean age of the alcoholic husbands was 38 years and those of the
controls was 36 years. Their education level was low, with the majority (of both
groups) having studied only up to high school. At higher levels of education, the
husbands of both groups far out-numbered their spouses. They were mostly
employed in skilled and unskilled jobs with an average monthly income of
Rs.1202/= (alcoholic husbands) and Rs.1270/= (control group husbands). The
majority of the families of both groups were single earner families with an
average monthly family income of Rs.1394/= (study group) and Rs.1484/= (control group) respectively.

Thus the background of the respondents reveals that the majority belonged
to the lower socio-economic stratum in terms of education, occupation and
income. As mentioned earlier, this would be the case since the de-addication
clinic where data was collected is run by a NGO and offers highly subsidised
facilities and as such caters mostly to people from the slums of the town and
adjoining mofussil areas and villages of the district.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

The wives of alcoholics have a lower mean age at marriage (19.77 years) as
against the control group wives (21.27 years). While most of the wives of
alcoholics were married at a relatively early age than the control wives, the mean
age at marriage for both groups by Indian standards doesn't appear to be low.
Susan de Blois (1985), observes that young women have a less chance of
succeeding in marriage owing to relative immaturity. Further in the case of the
study group wives, they would have had to cope at a relatively early age with the pressure generated owing to their husband's drinking.

The mean age of the husbands (of both groups) at the time of marriage when compared to the wives was 26 years. This reflects the general trend in our culture which lays an emphasis on early marriage for women than men. It was also noticed that the mean age difference between the spouses was more in the study group (6.24 years) than the controls (4.31 years). Further, the mean duration of marriage in the study group was slightly higher (13.17 years) when compared to the controls (11.32 years).

The high majority of the respondents (in both groups) had an arranged marriage which is more the norm in our society. One of the positions of the disturbed personality hypothesis is that wives with certain personality "needs" choose alcoholic mates in order to gratify their needs. However, the fact that the majority of the wives of alcoholics in this study did not opt for their partners but entered into a conventional, arranged marriage lends little support to the DPH. Thus the findings of this study strongly supports the observation of Rao and Kuruvilla (1991) who challenged the validity of the DPH in the Indian socio-cultural context. While the majority of the couples from both the groups had a non-consanguinous marital relationship, higher consangunity was observed in the study group.

The child density was slightly higher in the study group (2.19) than the control (1.99). The majority of the respondents (both groups) belonged to nuclear families with each family on an average comprising of 5 members. The association between alcohol use and nuclear families has been reported by Udaya Kumar (1992).

PERCEPTION OF HUSBANDS' DRINKING

Most of the study group wives reported that they became aware of their husband's drinking habit within a year of their marriage (44.7%) and 17.3 per cent said they were aware of his drinking prior to marriage (perhaps many of these respondents had a consanguinous relationship). These two groups of respondents taken together constitute nearly sixty per cent of the study group sample. These figures undermine the contention of the disturbed personality hypothesis that personality deficits in the wife drives the husband to drink. Further, only 29.3 per cent of the wives were certain that their husbands took to drink only after marriage.
The duration of drinking as reported by the wives ranged from 2 months to 25 years and was below six years for the majority. On the other hand, 72 per cent of wives reported that what they perceived as the duration of problem drinking was less than three years. This suggests that once occasional and controlled drinking behaviour collapses and uncontrolled drinking with its accompanying problems becomes manifest, most of the alcoholics have been brought for de-addiction. To some extent this also indicates a growing awareness among the lower socio-economic classes for the need for therapeutic intervention in alcoholism.

Regarding drinking pattern, the majority of respondents reported that it was throughout the day with no regular timings and that the consumption was unlimited. This does to some extent reveal that the majority of these alcoholics had lost control over their drinking behaviour. The majority of the wives felt that their husband's were spending up to Rs. 200/= per week on alcohol which going by their average monthly family income (Rs. 1394) is rather on the higher side. It is to be expected then, that the majority of the families would have experienced a severe financial strain as reported by more than half the sample. Further, most husbands had incurred debts owing to their drinking expenditure. The majority of wives experienced having faced social and psychological difficulties also besides their economic burden. Varalakshmi (1988), also reports that wives of alcoholics experience burden in areas of finance, daily routine and leisure time activities.

The majority of these wives have also reported several negative experiences consequent to their husbands' inebriation. These incidents involved abusing family members, quarreling with the family and wife beating. Blacking out in strange places and getting involved in accidents have also been frequently reported (table no. 1.21).

SELF-ESTEEM

Very few studies were seen in the literature which specifically investigated the dimension of self-esteem in wives of alcoholics. The first hypothesis formulated in this study was that:

HYPOTHESIS 1: Wives of alcoholics would manifest lower self-esteem than wives of non-alcoholics.

Statistical analysis in table no. 2.1 confirmed this hypothesis. The low self-esteem indicates feelings of unhappiness about oneself (McKinnon, 1981). The finding of low self-esteem in this study is congruent with the observation of
Corder et al, (1964) who reported feelings of worthlessness in wives of alcoholics. However, this finding is not in agreement with the observation of Rao et al. (1981), who reported high self-esteem in a small sample of wives of alcoholics.

It was seen earlier (table no.1.25) that many of these wives reported experiencing negative attitudes directed towards them by relatives and neighbours such as being stigmatised by them and being disrespected owing to their husbands' drinking. Also, table no.1.22 revealed the experience of several negative events attributed to the husbands' intoxicated behaviour. Further a negative correlation has been obtained between self-esteem and the assigned alcoholic behaviour values of the husband (table no.4.3). All these adverse experiences seem to have contributed to the manifestation of low self-esteem in these wives owing to embarrassment, shame and loss of face.

The ANOVA results in table no.5.8 revealed that wives of alcoholics differed among themselves on their level of self-esteem based on the alcoholic behaviour values assigned to their husbands. Those wives with the highest assigned values of 6-8 differed significantly (P<0.05) and had lower mean self-esteem scores than those with the least values (0-2). This clearly shows that wives who have faced more negative events associated with their husband's drinking have lower levels of self-esteem.

Cole et al. (1960), have observed that emotional maturity manifests in high self-esteem which enhances one's interpersonal ability. Conversely the low self-esteem found in wives of alcoholics is indicative of poor emotional maturity and diminished interpersonal skills. This may probably account for the high communication apprehension seen in wives of alcoholics (table no.2.5) and may explain its negative correlation with their self-esteem (table no.4.1).

The income of the wives showed a positive correlation to their self-esteem (table no.4.2). This is perhaps owing to the sense of security and self-dependendance that earning women generally experience. Conflict and verbal apprehension were seen to relate negatively to self-esteem (table no.4.1). Thus unsavoury incidents, which vitiate the domestic environment and generate marital tension may adversely influence the self-esteem of the wife. Further marital satisfaction correlated positively with self-esteem. While cause-effect interpretations cannot be read into this correlation since each could influence the other, it does indicate how the experience (or lack of ) a rewarding marital situation could affect the personality of the wife.
The multiple regression analysis done with self-esteem as the dependant variable (table no.6.1) reveals that five factors namely, the wives' income, verbal aggression, marital conventionalisation and the two sub-dimensions of pessimism - future expectation and feelings about the future, contribute to the manifestation of low self-esteem in wives of alcoholics.

Marital conventionalisation showed a positive relationship to self-esteem. It is possible that wives of alcoholics may tend to conventionalise their marriage in the direction of social desirability in order to maintain their self-esteem. It was also seen that when categorised in various age groups they showed a significant difference among themselves in the manifestation of self-esteem. The negative relationships seen between the pessimism score, its two sub-dimensions (future expectations and future feelings) and self-esteem indicates that a pessimistic outlook regarding the future could be owing to the low self-esteem of these wives.

NEUROTICISM

This personality dimension has been termed as "negative affectivity" by Watson and Clark (1984) and traits such as fearfulness, irritability, low self-esteem, social anxiety, poor inhibition of impulses and helplessness are said to characterise neuroticism (Costa and McCrae, 1986). Persons scoring high on this dimension have been found to be emotionally over responsive, unstable and over-reactive while low scorers are said to be more emotionally stable and better adjusted (Clive, 1977).

Neuroticism, has been identified to be a more or less normally distributed human trait (Kelly and Conley, 1987). Bhatti and Channabasavana (1985) have observed that normal persons can be high on neuroticism and that a clinically neurotic person may not have a neurotic personality. It was hypothesized that:

HYPOTHESIS NO.2 : Wives of alcoholics would manifest higher levels of neuroticism than wives of non-alcoholics.

The "t" test and mean scores in table no.2.2a prove this hypothesis and establish that the two groups of wives studied are significantly different with regard to the manifestation of neuroticism.

This finding is congruent with most of the literature available on the issue and the neurotic personality of the alcoholic's wife has been reported by many researchers (Igersheimer, 1959; Pattison et al., 1965; Saugy, 1962; Orford, 1976; Sharada Rao et al., 1986).
Several authors on the other hand, have reported neuroticism in both: the alcoholic as well as his wife (Fox, 1956; Paige et al., 1971; Karlen, 1965). The neurotic interaction between spouses has been considered to be a typical feature in an alcoholic marriage (Pixley and Stiefel, 1963). However, since this study did not investigate the personality traits of the alcoholic, the researcher is unable to comment on whether, neuroticism is a trait common to both spouses in an alcoholic marriage or is manifested solely in the wife.

It was seen in table no. 1.22 that wife beating, abusing family members and frequent domestic quarrels were reported by a majority of the wives. Further, they have experienced economic, social and psychological problems owing to their husband's drinking (table no. 1.24). Moreover, positive correlations have been obtained between neuroticism and anxiety, depression, verbal aggression and violence. The scenario which emerges is grim and bleak, that of a tormented marital life marked with suffering and anguish and its is obvious that these women have been under intense stress. Gurmeet Singh et al. 1984, have reported that those scoring high on neuroticism have experienced greater subjective stress. Mayamma and Sathiyavathi (1987) have also reported a higher mean index of strain in neurotic women. Observations in consonance to these findings have also been made by Bhatti and Channabasavana (1985), who found that neurotics experienced more stressful life events than normals.

The procedure of multiple regression identified three dimensions which are seen to contribute the most to the manifestation of neuroticism in wives of alcoholics. They are violence and loss of motivation which are positively related and dyadic cohesion which is negatively related to neuroticism. Thus it appears that the high amount of violence and poor dyadic cohesion and the accompanying loss of motivation explain most the manifestation of neuroticism in the wives of alcoholics.

Against this background and in the light of the evidence generated by this study the researcher concurs with the enunciations of the stress theorists (Finlay, 1972; Jackson, 1962; Bailey et al., 1962; Paolino et al., 1976; Leikin, 1986) that it is the stress and pressures of co-existence in an alcohol complicated marital relationship which influences the manifestation of personality traits such as neuroticism.

Neuroticism scores were negatively associated with marital adjustment with its component dyadic cohesion. Bhatti and Channabasavana (1986) also did
obtain a significant negative association between marital adjustment and neuroticism in women and report that neurotic women had disturbed relationships with their spouse. Wallin (1953) has also reported a negative correlation between neuroticism and marital adjustment.

It was also seen that the wives' age and their duration of marriage related positively to their neuroticism scores (table no.4.2). The majority of wives of alcoholics in this study were housewives (table no.1.5) who were above 31 years of age (table no.1.2). Sood et al. 1996, have found a higher incidence of neuroticism in middle aged housewives. The reason attributed by them for this was that pent up emotions were bottled up within this category of women owing to restrictions regarding the expression of anger, hostility and aggression.

It was seen earlier (table no.2.10), that the majority of the wives of alcoholics manifested a low self-esteem and table 2.20 shows that they rank high on neuroticism. This finding is in consonance with that of Dominian (1979), who also reported higher neuroticism in those who were married and had low self-esteem.

The dimension of neuroticism has been considered to comprise of four sub-dimensions namely, tendermindedness, submissiveness, depressive tendency and anxiety (Schier and Cattell, 1961).

**TENDERMINDEDNESS**

This dimension is also referred to as femininity versus masculinity. It was seen that of the four sub-dimensions of neuroticism, this was the only one on which both the groups of respondents did not show a statistically significant difference (table no.2.2a). Kutty and Sharma (1988), in a study of the temperament of wives of alcoholics found them to be less aggressive and assertive. Rao and Kuruvilla (1991) found traits indicating that they were more timid and mild. However the data in this study does not lend itself to the categorisation of wives of alcoholics as being typically emotionally sensitive, tenderminded and feminine or as being toughminded and with a more emotionally masculine temperament A negative association was seen between this sub-dimension and conflict and it correlated positively with the wives' income (table no.4.4).

**SUBMISSIVENESS, DEPENDENCE**

Data analysis revealed that wives of alcoholics are more submissive than those of non-alcoholics (table no.2.2a). The characteristics of those with high scores on this dimension shows that they are obedient, dependent, lack will power and are non-assertive (Schier and Cattell, 1961).
Several previous investigations have established the high dependency traits seen in wives of alcoholics (Price, 1945; Rao and Kuruvilla, 1991; Rajendran and Cherian, 1989).

Other authors, from a psychoanalytic perspective have commented that the alcoholic's wife has a personality "need" to be dependent (Lewis, 1936; Fox, 1956). Drewery and Rae (1969), were of the view that wives of alcoholics experience conflicting dependence-independence needs.

The majority of respondents in this study were housewives who had to depend on their husbands for economic sustenance. Further, it could be that the need to avoid unnecessary quarrels at home and aggravate the already vitiated domestic environment may have made these women to be more malleable, non-assertive and submissive.

Interesting correlations were obtained of a positive nature between submissiveness and the age of the wives at marriage, the present age of both; the wives and husbands, as well as the duration of married life. Besides, this sub-dimension related negatively to the use of reasoning and positively to the tendermindedness and depressiveness of the wives.

**DEPRESSIVE, SERIOUS, INHIBITED TENDENCY**

Statistically significant difference on this sub-dimension of neuroticism was seen between the wives of alcoholics and the control group, with the former obtaining higher mean scores (table no. 2.2a). This indicates that they are depressed, subdued, seclusive, incommunicative, introspective and tend to withdraw from people (Schier and Cattell, 1961).

The depressive streak in wives of alcoholics has been well documented earlier by several investigators such as Kalashian, 1959; Corder et al. (1964), Bullock and Mudd (1958), Rae and Forbes (1966), Rajendran and Cherian (1989), Kutty and Sharma (1988).

Perhaps the high incidence of psychosocial problems experienced by these wives (table no. 1.24) and the various negative attitudes of neighbours and relatives towards them (table no. 1.25) makes them feel gloomy, less cheerful and to isolate themselves from others. Further, the need to restrict one's social interaction could be to avoid the embarrassment of having to discuss their husband's drinking and to explain various events associated with his intoxicated behaviour (table no. 1.22) to inquisitive friends, neighbours and relatives.
It was also observed that three important marital factors namely cohesion, satisfaction and affectional expression related negatively to depression (table no.4.1). This suggests that a marital relationship which is not gratifying and in which one's emotional and companionship needs are unmet could account for the manifestation of depressiveness in these wives. Also higher depression levels were associated positively with the duration of marriage as well as the duration of the husbands' drinking indicating that, the longer these wives were exposed to difficulties in their marital relationship and to the adversities attributed to their husbands' drinking, the higher was the depression experienced by them.

ANXIETY

It was seen that wives of alcoholics obtained a significantly different higher mean score on this sub-dimension than the wives of non-alcoholics (table no.2.2a). This indicates that they have feelings of guilt, dread, inferiority and frustration. They are also easily upset, tense, excitable, restless, irritable, emotionally immature and with a low frustration tolerance (Cattell and Schier, 1961).

The high anxiety level observed in wives of alcoholics is in agreement with the literature on this issue (eg. Bullock and Mc Crady, 1977; Rajendran and Cherian, 1989; Kutty and Sharma, 1988).

High anxiety may be experienced by wives of alcoholics owing to the heightened daily tensions faced by them, the various problems experienced, the unpredictability of the husband's behaviour and demands when he is drunk and the adverse consequences that invariably seem to follow in the wake of his inebriation. Perhaps this accounts for the positive relationship seen between the anxiety levels of the wives and the assigned alcoholic behaviour values of their husbands (table no.4.3).

The negative association seen between anxiety and the tendency for marital conventionalisation could be that the latter tendency helps in lowering the anxiety experienced by the wives.

The negative relationship obtained between anxiety and marital cohesion could mean that each is capable of influencing the other adversely. The same explanation could hold true of the positive relationship seen between anxiety and submissiveness and the anxiety and depression scores.

Wives of alcoholics thus are seen to be highly submissive, anxious and depressed which makes them considerably more neurotic than the wives of
non-alcoholics. These personality traits as mentioned earlier seem to be in response to the unique complexion of their marital life situation attributable largely to her cohabitation with an alcoholic spouse. These indications lend support to the stress and psychosocial perspectives regarding personality disturbances in wives of alcoholics.

PESSIMISM

This dimension also known as hopelessness, refers to the system of negative expectancies that an individual has about oneself and his/her future life (Stotland, 1969). It was hypothesized that:

HYPOTHESIS NO.3: Wives of alcoholics would have higher levels of pessimism than wives of non-alcoholics.

Analysis of data (table no. 2.3 & 2.3a) proved this hypothesis and it was seen that wives of alcoholics scored significantly higher than the control group on the overall pessimism score and its three component sub-dimensions. Corder et al. (1964) had earlier reported higher levels of pessimism and feelings of hopelessness in wives of alcoholics. Not many previous researchers have specifically studied the issue of pessimism in wives of alcoholics. Lewis (1937), Paolino and Mc Crady (1977), Price (1945) however have reported that wives of alcoholics experience feelings of insecurity. The finding of these authors complements the high feelings of pessimism seen in wives of alcoholics in the present study since feelings of insecurity would inevitably manifest in a pessimistic outlook regarding the future.

The overall pessimism score correlated positively to the assigned alcoholic behaviour values of the husband, indicating that the adverse events associated with the husband's intoxicated behaviour generates a sense of hopelessness and despair in their wives. Poor marital adjustment was seen to be associated with higher pessimism levels as indicated by the negative correlation between the two.

The multiple regression analysis (table no.6.2) showed that four factors namely self-esteem, husband's income, dyadic satisfaction and reasoning contribute the most to the manifestation of pessimism in wives of alcoholics, with all the four variables showing a negative correlation to it. Economic insecurity is indicated regarding the future since the husband's income has emerged as an important variable contributing to pessimism. The poor self-esteem of these women also is seen to enhance their feelings of hopelessness regarding the future as also their lack of satisfaction in their marital relationship.
Poor treatment outcome has been reported by Orford (1976) in marriages where the partners have a pessimistic opinion about the future of the marriage. This observation highlights the need to deal with the pessimistic tendency seen in wives of alcoholics, as part of therapy.

The overall pessimism score was obtained from its three sub-dimensions namely, feelings about the future, loss of motivation and future expectations.

**FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE**

Higher mean scores obtained on this sub-dimension (table no.2.3) show that wives of alcoholics have less hope and enthusiasm related to the future and less faith in anticipating good times ahead (Beck et al., 1974). Lower self-esteem scores and higher communication apprehension levels were seen to be associated with this dimension. Further, the alcoholic behaviour values assigned to their husbands, related negatively to it. Thus it appears that the turmoil faced by these wives, the hardships encountered and the unhappy circumstances of their existence may make them not anticipate a bright and relatively stress free future.

**LOSS OF MOTIVATION**

Wives of alcoholics manifested a greater loss of motivation than their counterparts in the control group (table no.2.3a). This shows a tendency on their part of giving up, of deciding not to want anything and not trying to get something that is wanted (Beck et al., 1974).

A negative relationship was obtained between this sub-dimension and the dyadic adjustment and satisfaction scores. It appears that the disappointments experienced by them in their marital life and their apparent inability to improve it has generated feelings of helplessness and made them apathetic. This is also reflected in the positive association between loss of motivation and the duration of awareness of the wives regarding their husbands' drinking. It was also seen that with increase in age and higher levels of communication apprehension, loss of motivation also increases. Higher pessimistic feelings about the future were also seen to adversely affect the motivation of these wives (table no.4.9).

**FUTURE EXPECTATIONS**

Higher mean scores obtained by the wives of alcoholics on this sub-dimension reveals greater pessimism in them with regard to expectations from the future (table no.2.3a). It shows that they apprehend the future to be vague, uncertain, bleak and do not anticipate good things to happen to them in the future (Beck et al., 1974).
Again, this lack of optimism regarding the future could be influenced by the distressing events and current stress experienced by them. This perhaps accounts for the positive correlation obtained between this sub-dimension and the assigned alcoholic behaviour values of their husbands.

Pessimism regarding future expectations also correlated positively with the duration of drinking and the duration of problem drinking as perceived by the wives. This shows that longer the duration of their husbands' drinking and the associated problems and hardships, lesser are the feelings of optimism experienced by them, that things would change for the better in the future. Similarly, the low marital satisfaction experienced by these women is associated with greater pessimism regarding future expectations. Also, lower levels of self-esteem are seen to be negatively associated with this sub-dimension.

It was seen that wives from arranged marriages differed significantly from those in love marriages, in terms of experiencing more adverse consequences of their husbands' alcoholic behaviour (table no.3.12). Perhaps this may account for the significantly higher scores on the dimnension of pessimism and two of its sub-dimensions (future expectations and feelings about the future) obtained by the wives from arranged marriages compared to those from love marriages (table no.3.7). It appears as if those who had a love marriage still nurtured hopes that their husband would mend his ways and that their relationship could be straightened out while those from arranged marriages did not see much scope for improvement in the future.

Wives from consanguinous marriages obtained higher mean scores and differed significantly from those in non-consanguinous relationships with regard to the duration of their husbands' drinking (table no.3.13). This seems to indicate that wives from consanguinous marriages, may have been aware of their husbands' drinking even prior to marriage. Perhaps they feel that the situation they find themselves in is incorrigible and consequently it is also seen that wives from consanguinous marriages have manifested significantly higher pessimism than those from non-consanguinous relationships (table no.3.10).

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

One of the primary objectives of this study was to gain an insight into the marital adjustment of wives of alcoholics and the hypothesis formulated in this regard was that:

HYPOTHESIS no.4: Dyadic adjustment would be low in wives of alcoholics when compared to wives of non-alcoholics.
Table no. 2.5 and 2.5a revealed that the two groups of respondents were significantly different on this dimension and this hypothesis stands confirmed. This finding supports that of Soni et al. (1993), who also reported poor marital adjustment in wives of alcoholics.

The multiple regression analysis (table no. 6.4) done with this dimension, in order to understand which variables contributed the most to it, revealed the significant influence of marital conventionalisation and communication apprehension on it. While the former showed a positive correlation to marital adjustment, the latter dimension was associated negatively to it.

Thus wives of alcoholics who as a group have obtained low dyadic adjustment scores than the controls (table no. 2.4a), are seen to manifest a lesser tendency for conventionalisation (also revealed in table no. 2.7a). Even if the tendency to conventionalise is viewed as a contaminant of the dyadic adjustment score, it would only mean that despite of an attempt to present their marital relationship in a more socially desirable direction, wives of alcoholics still manifest significantly lesser dyadic adjustment scores than the controls.

Significantly higher communication apprehension scores obtained by the wives of alcoholics (table no. 2.5a) and its negative relationship with marital adjustment is in agreement with the authors of the communication apprehension scale used for data collection in this study (Powers and Hutchinson, 1979). They have observed that higher communication scores is indicative of poor marital adjustment.

The overall dyadic adjustment score related negatively to the duration of the wives' awareness of their husbands' drinking as well as to the assigned alcoholic behaviour values. These associations reflect the adverse influence of the husband's drinking in undermining the marital adjustment of the wife.

Dyadic adjustment was studied with regard to four components namely: consensus, satisfaction, emotional expression and cohesion.

**DYADIC CONSENSUS**

Wives of alcoholics reported lower marital consensus (table no. 2.4a). This according to Spanier (1976), indicates a divergence of views on several issues relating to family finances, recreation, friends, conventionality or proper behaviour, major decisions, household tasks and leisure time activities. Lack of consensus, it can be expected would heighten marital conflict and is an indicator of marital incompatibility.
The wives' income as well as the total family income correlated positively with the dyadic consensus scores. This indicates greater consensus on various issues in relatively high income families. Thus it appears that economic hardship and need deprivation attributed by the wives to their husband's drinking expenditure may undermine consensus between the spouses in alcohol complicated marriages.

Further, the positive correlation between dyadic consensus and the duration of drinking and its negative association with the assigned alcoholic behaviour values as well as the duration of the wives' awareness of his drinking, clearly implicate alcoholism to be detrimental to better consensus.

Dyadic consensus showed a positive association with marital satisfaction, which means that since wives of alcoholics have obtained low consensus scores, they could be expected to manifest higher marital dissatisfaction. This is substantiated by the low marital satisfaction scores obtained by them and depicted in table no.2.4a. Rollins and Galligan (1978), have also found marital satisfaction to be related to perceived marital consensus.

The importance of dyadic consensus from the perspective of therapeutic intervention has been highlighted by a few authors. Brown et al. (1985), report that low husband-wife consensus is predictive of high relapse rates. Lower consensus and more arguments in relapsed patients than in non-alcoholic controls and recovered alcoholics has also been observed (Moos and Moos, 1984).

**DYADIC SATISFACTION**

Wives of alcoholics reported lower levels of marital satisfaction than the controls (table no.2.4a). This indicates less happiness, lack of intimacy and a feeling that their needs are not being met in their marital relationship (Spanier, 1976). Soni et al., 1993, have also observed that wives of alcoholics are dissatisfied with their marriage.

The association between marital satisfaction and consensus has already been discussed earlier. Besides this, a negative relationship was also obtained between the dyadic satisfaction scores and variables such as conflict, pessimism, communication apprehension and the alcoholic behaviour values of the husbands.

A few studies in the general marriage literature hold that, marital aggression does not preclude the possibility of marital satisfaction (O'Leary et al., 1989) and that marital satisfaction and conflict are compatible, since the spouse could be the greatest source of conflict and satisfaction (Argyle
and Furnham, 1982, 1983). However, these observations do not find support in the present study since it is seen that wives of alcoholics report higher levels of conflict and low marital satisfaction.

Marital dissatisfaction also seems to stem from the adverse consequences of the husband's alcoholism experienced by their wives as is indicated by the negative association with the husbands' alcoholic behaviour values. While Renne (1970), observes that heavy drinking is both the cause and effect of marital dissatisfaction, the evidence in this study points more to it being the cause for dissatisfaction in the wife.

**AFFECTIONAL EXPRESSION**

Lower mean scores on this sub-dimension of dyadic adjustment was obtained by the wives of alcoholics (table no.2.4a) indicating lack of emotional intimacy with their spouses. This shows that behaviour demonstrating feelings of love, affection and warmth and verbal expression of such feelings is lacking in their marital relationship. Frankenstein et al. (1985), have observed significantly few positive non-verbal behaviour in alcoholics than in their spouses.

Positive correlations were obtained between affectional expression scores and dyadic consensus and satisfaction. It appears that lesser consensus with the spouse and lower marital satisfaction, restricts intimacy and the expression of warm feelings between the partners.

The duration of problem drinking also showed a positive association with affectional expression. It may be that with increase in the duration of problem drinking, conflicts between spouses occur more frequently, and the hardships and difficulties experienced by the family consequent to chronic drinking become more manifest. The resulting bitterness and acrimony then may gradually extinguish the expression of tender feelings towards the spouse.

Moos and Moos (1984), found that relapsed patients often come from families which are low in terms of expressiveness. Orford (1976) also reports a poor treatment outcome in marriages where spouses give and receive little attention to the other.

**DYADIC COHESION**

This component of dyadic adjustment also elicited significantly lower scores from the wives of alcoholics than the controls (table no.2.4a). This shows that both spouses hardly undertook any activity together or exchanged ideas or discussed issues of common interest. This is to be expected, since it was seen
earlier that consensus on several issues between spouses was more the exception than the norm in these families.

The duration of marriage and the duration which the wife was aware of the husband's drinking related negatively to dyadic cohesion. It seems that with the increase in the span of marriage and the deterioration in the husband's drinking behaviour and the manifestation of higher conflict levels, the spouses gradually fall apart and seldom come together to involve in joint activities.

Luckey (1966), explains that the duration of marriage is negatively related to marital satisfaction since, the longer a couple is married, the less favourable personality traits they tend to see in their spouse. Perhaps in a long standing marital relationship were the husband is an alcoholic, the unfavourable perception of his personality by the wife could be further accentuated owing to the havoc and suffering that follows in the wake of his alcoholism. Several bitter experiences and problems were attributed to their husbands' drinking by the respondents of this study (table no's 1.22 and 1.24). Orford (1976) found a negative relationship between marital cohesion and the degree of hardships reported by the wife.

Dyadic cohesion scores correlated positively to other sub-dimensions of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale such as affectional expression, consensus and satisfaction. Levinger (1979), has earlier established that dyadic cohesion is determined by satisfaction in the marital relationship. Thus it appears that the low dyadic satisfaction scores obtained earlier could account for the less cohesion seen in couples from alcohol complicated marriages.

The finding regarding low cohesion between couples in alcohol complicated marriages has definite therapeutic implications as has been pointed out by several authors. Moos and Moos (1984), found less cohesiveness in the marriages of relapsed alcoholic patients. Moos (1979), reports better treatment outcome in families which are higher in cohesion and have a higher active recreational orientation. Orford (1976), also has reported a better treatment outcome for cohesive marriages. Also it has been observed that adolescent children of recovered alcoholics report that the marriages of their parents are more happy and cohesive than reported by the children of active alcoholics (Callan and Jackson, 1986).

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

A significant statistical difference was seen between both the groups
HYPOTHESIS NO.5. Communication apprehension would be higher in wives of alcoholics than in wives of non-alcoholics was hence accepted.

This indicates that, wives of alcoholics 'did not disclose their feelings and emotions to their spouse and were hesitant to voice opinions, share problems, discuss issues and indulge in casual and intimate conversations with their husbands' (Powers and Hutchinson, 1979).

Wives of alcoholics as a group were seen to manifest a high degree of neuroticism and they are also seen to score high in terms of experiencing communication apprehension towards their husbands. This observation is in agreement with that of Mayamma and Sathiyavathi (1985), who having used the same tool for investigation as in the present study found that neurotics scored relatively higher than normals on the dimension of communication apprehension.

Commenting on the disturbed communication in alcoholic marriages, Glass (1979) has observed that each partner experienced difficulty in expressing their feelings directly to the other. Hanson (1968), found that more than the alcoholic husband, it is the wife who shares more information, feelings and attitudes with him. However, on the basis of the present study it is not possible to comment on whether communication apprehension is solely experienced by the wife of the alcoholic or is manifested in both the spouses.

The ability to communicate has been identified to be an important characteristic of interpersonal competence (Gottman and Potterfield, 1981). Clear communication is a pre-requisite for conflict resolution (Raush et al., 1974). Navran (1967) found that happily married couples show better verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. High communication apprehension results in reduced self disclosure (Hamilton, 1972) and in lesser social attractiveness and sexual desirability (Mc Croskey et al., 1975). Further, it has been found to be negatively related to emotional maturity, confidence and self control (Mc Croskey et al., 1974). Thus it is to be expected that high levels of communication apprehension as seen in the wives of alcoholics would certainly have a bearing on skills related to interpersonal effectiveness and thereby adversely impact their marital relationship.

When subjected to regression analysis (table no.6.5) as many as seven variables emerged as significant contributors to the manifestation of
communication apprehension. They are dyadic cohesion, feelings about the future, future expectations, dyadic satisfaction, the husbands' age at marriage, the positive support received from relatives and the duration of awareness of the husbands' drinking.

The two important marital dimensions of cohesion and satisfaction related negatively to communication apprehension. Thus wives who were not satisfied in their marital relationships and who experienced less marital cohesion seem to experience more apprehension in communicating with their husbands. These associations are in consonance with the findings of earlier authors (Satir, 1964; Jourard, 1964; Navran, 1967; Bey and Lange, 1974) that inadequate communication is an important factor of marital dissatisfaction and could impair one's overall marital adjustment. That high communication apprehension scores are indicative of low marital satisfaction has also been observed by the authors of the scale used in this study (Powers and Hutchinson, 1979).

Another important finding pertains to the positive correlation obtained between the overall pessimism score (table no.4.1), its two sub-dimensions of future expectations, future feelings and communication apprehension. Thus it appears as if higher pessimism levels and a bleak outlook of the future influences the extent to which the wife could spontaneously communicate with her husband.

The duration for which the wife was aware of the husband's drinking is also seen to contribute to her apprehension. Longer durations it appears, would have exposed her more to his unpredictable moods and demands and to other adversities, thereby interfering with the spontaneity of her communication towards him.

The husband's age at marriage, it is interesting to observe, is positively associated to communication apprehension. This suggests that wives experience greater apprehension towards husbands who are relatively older.

CONFLICT

Willis (1980), observes that conflict is normal and not inimicable to marital harmony so long as it is appropriately handled and satisfactory solutions evolved. The problems associated with drinking may be located in pathological group processes, rather than in individual pathology.

This study sought to ascertain if alcoholic and non-alcoholic marriages could be differentiated by the frequency of conflict and the strategies used by the
wives to deal with it.

**HYPOTHESIS NO.6: Inter-spousal conflict would be higher in the families of alcoholics than in those of non-alcoholics**

The above hypothesis was statistically tested and confirmed (table no.2.6). This finding is consistent with the literature regarding the higher manifestation of conflict in alcohol complicated marriages (e.g., Bullock and Mudd, 1959; Gelles, 1972; Cohen and Krause, 1971; Coleman and Straus, 1983).

Three dimensions emerged as contributing to the manifestation of overall conflict. They are submissiveness, dyadic satisfaction and husbands' income (multiple regression analysis, table no 6.6).

It was observed that higher dyadic satisfaction scores are associated with lower conflict rates. A similar negative relationship between marital satisfaction and conflict has been earlier reported by Mathews and Milhanovich (1963). Similarly a positive association between marital dissatisfaction and discord, verbal aggression and violence has been reported in earlier studies (Leonard and Blane, 1992; Margolin et al., 1988; Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981).

The husband's income was negatively related to conflict. It was seen earlier in table no.1.23 that the respondents reported several economic hardships faced by their family on account of their husband's drinking and having incurred debts in order to meet domestic expenses (table no.1.22). In the light of this information, the low income - high conflict relationship suggests that more conflict is experienced by low income families owing to unfulfilled needs posed by the economic strain arising out of the husband's expenditure on drinking.

The correlation matrix (table no.4.1) revealed more conflict in wives who obtained lower scores indicative of tendermindedness and submissiveness. A related finding was made by Kreitman et al. (1971), who found an association between marital conflict and high scores of assertiveness and dominance. The positive correlation seen between conflict and neuroticism, though doesn't establish causality, in all probability (in line with the stress and psycho-social perspectives) would hold the former account for the latter.

The wives' present age also showed a negative association to conflict suggesting that older women faced less marital conflict than those who are younger. The overall conflict score had a positive relationship to the duration of the husband's drinking. This association to some extent seems to implicate
alcohol consumption to be the culprit for the heightened manifestation of conflict in these families. Aruna (1988) obtained a negative association between marital cohesion and conflict. Though a statistical correlation has not been obtained in this study it is seen that wives of alcoholics had high conflict scores and were low on marital cohesion.

Wives of alcoholics also obtained higher mean scores than the control wives with regard to the three conflict tactics studied namely, reasoning, verbal aggression and violence (table no.2.6a).

The use of reasoning correlated negatively to pessimism, indicating that perhaps more the pessimistic tendencies in the wife, lesser the use of reasoning as a conflict tactic.

Verbal aggression showed a negative association to submissiveness and tendermindedness, suggesting that more submissive and tenderminded wives were less verbally aggressive. It was also seen that elder women and those with a higher family income tend to be less verbally aggressive (table no.4.6).

The association between marital violence and alcoholism has been well documented (Levinger, 1966; Coleman and Straus, 1979; Leonard et al., 1985; O'Leary et al., 1989; Kaufman-Kantor and Straus, 1990; Leonard and Blane, 1992). Higher violence rates have also been reported by more wives of alcoholics in this study. Willis (1980), observes that violence in marriage is symptomatic of conflicts which cannot be resolved in other ways owing to the lack of coping resources.

Positive correlations obtained between violence and anxiety, neuroticism and pessimistic future feelings provides an understanding of the sheer desperation, frustration and intense provocation under which violence probably has been used by the alcoholics' wives to deal with conflict. It was also seen that wives who were more submissive and had a higher family income had a lower tendency to use violence as a conflict tactic.

A better treatment outcome has been reported in families which are lower in conflict and who report more positive and fewer negative life experiences (Moos, 1979).

MARITAL CONVENTIONALISATION

The researcher began this study with the notion that wives of alcoholics being a stigmatised, much maligned and disrespected category of women might deliberately provide false information regarding their marital lives. Keeping in
mind the intimate and sensitive details being sought from them for the purpose of this study, it was anticipated that this group of respondents would have a higher tendency to cover up the deficits in their marital life and provide more socially desirable responses. The last hypothesis of this study was based on these presumptions.

**HYPOTHESIS NO.7**: Wives of alcoholics would show greater tendency for marital conventionalisation than wives of non-alcoholics.

Contrary to expectation this hypothesis had to be rejected since it was found that though the two groups studied differed significantly on this dimension, it was the control group wives who obtained almost double the mean score as that of the wives of alcoholics and thus manifested a much greater tendency for marital conventionalisation (table no. 2.7).

Rychtarik et al. (1989), had earlier found that the tendency for providing socially desirable responses was virtually negligible in wives of alcoholics when compared to their husbands.

A possible explanation for the relative low manifestation of this tendency could have to do with the setting of data collection and the point at which contact was established with the wives of alcoholics in this study. Data collection was done in a de-addiction centre which many of these wives had perhaps approached with the hope that at last an end could be sighted for the trauma and agony of their personal lives, if their spouses could be successfully weaned away from alcohol. Data was elicited from them during their initial contact phase with the agency. It is possible that their frame of mind was such that they would have been willing to share any information required from them if it would contribute to the purpose for which they had come to the de-addiction centre.

On the other hand, the wives of non-alcoholics who constituted the control group were contacted at their place of residence, to whom the researcher was introduced by one of their own acquaintances (as detailed in the third chapter on methodology). As such they were required to share intimate details with a virtual stranger. Further, they had no stakes in revealing intimate details regarding their marital lives and did not perceive any benefit accruing to them by involving in self-disclosure. These could have been some of the factors responsible for the high tendency to provide socially desirable responses seen in the control group wives.
The regression analysis (table no.6.7) identified three important variables which most explain the manifestation of marital conventionalisation in the wives of alcoholics. Of these, two important subject dimensions: self-esteem and dyadic satisfaction showed a positive correlation to it while the third variable which associated negatively to it was the husband's income. When compared to the controls, wives of alcoholics were seen to have obtained significantly lower scores on self-esteem as well as marital satisfaction. This perhaps accounts for the lesser tendency for conventionalisation seen in them. A positive relationship between marital adjustment and social desirability has been reported by Rychtarik et al. (1989).

It is interesting to see that women whose husbands had lower incomes tend to distort information more and provide conventional responses. Further it was seen that the overall pessimism score, future expectations, anxiety level, the duration of the husbands' drinking and the assigned alcoholic behaviour values all related negatively to conventionalisation.

The ANOVA (table no.5.8) showed that these wives differed on conventionalisation among themselves when categorised according to the assigned alcoholic behaviour values of their husbands. An interesting trend was observed in that the conventionalisation mean scores decreased with the alcoholic behaviour values. This means that wives who reported more negative events associated with their husband's inebriation showed lesser tendency for marital conventionalisation. Thus it appears as if higher levels of frustration, despair, helplessness and apathy inhibits the tendency for conventionalisation and makes these women to report factual information pertaining to their marital life to a sympathetic listener. They perhaps, if one may suggest almost seem to have a 'need' to ventilate and share bottled up emotions suppressed within.