CHAPTER - SIX
SUMMARY
AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary:

The present study has been undertaken by the present researcher to explore (1) the nature and level of locked-in feeling of a group of stagnated teachers designated as Reader, (2) the fatal effects of being locked-in for a prolonged period and (3) the coping strategies adopted by those stagnated teachers.

Such locked-in condition of the concerned university Readers is the obvious consequence of following reality-issues: (a) abrupt and whimsical withdrawal of a career advancement scheme popularly known as Merit Promotion Scheme (MPS) in 1987, which was introduced by the UGC in 1983 for the promotion of Reader to the post of Professor, and (b) non-availability of the substantive vacant posts of Professors for promoting those stagnated Readers in their respective departments.

Meanwhile, the UGC had appointed one committee known as Rastogi Committee for reviewing and revising the existing pay scales, promotional opportunities and other service conditions. The said Committee submitted the recommendation incorporating one vital issue of “re-introducing a Career Advancement Scheme (CAS)” for the stagnated Readers, in the year 1997. But in spite of that, the necessary Government orders issued by both Central and State Government departments concerned sometimes during the end of 1998 and 1999, respectively with certain directives to the universities to modify the structure of the existing selection committees. Following the said directives, most of the universities had to start the process of CAS very recently i.e. during the end part of 2000. Hence, the concerned researcher had to explore the consequences of such a bureaucratic negligence to implement the recommendations of a national policy-making body meant for the revision of pay scales, career development and improvement of the quality of work-life of
university teachers of India on whom the responsibility of higher education and research of Indian students are entrusted with. The said recommendations are considered as an essential adjunct to translate National Education Policy (1985) into effective action at the university level.

In the prelude of the said recommendation the following observation of the committee is crucial and revealing a vivid portrait of sheer negligence in the part of the bureaucratic policy-makers for their ‘red tapism’ to accept and implement the relevant recommendations:

“The commission noted that although teachers have higher qualifications and are also required to take a national (or equivalent) entry level tests at the time of first recruitment in the profession they are paid less than other Civil Service Officers, and the rise in their career is at a slower pace as compared to them, so that the gap between the two increases up to 40 percent in the higher brackets. Moreover teachers do not get the perks enjoyed by the administrative cadres in the Government including telephones, free newspapers, car pools and individual cars, even for the Senior Readers and Professors, whereas, these facilities are available to equivalent level officers in the Civil Services”.

“The commission stressed on the need to assure that the pay scales of teachers should not be less than those of the Civil Service, and accordingly, recommended pay scales and career advancement scheme for teachers. The commission felt that the teaching profession is the ‘mother’ of all professions but the pay structure did not reflect this thinking. While the teachers are equally intellectually competent and are far more qualified in terms of academic degrees, their salaries are compared unfavourably with those of IAS (Indian Administrative Service), specially as they move up the scale. In fact, while both teachers and civil service personnel start at the same level, they do not continue to maintain parity throughout their career. Had there been a mere replacement of scales, the disparity between the two would have widened in their respective career advancement. This had also been the situation with the earlier pay scales and the problem would have persisted with replacement of the scales.” (Information Bulletin, CUTA, 1998).
Assuming that the delay caused by the concerned administrators of central and local Government to implement the said recommendations have generated locked-in feeling in the stagnated teachers employed under different universities of West Bengal, the present study has been designed to understand its impact on the stagnated teachers' motivational framework and thereby towards their quality of work life, as stated in details under (Chapter four, 4.2). The problems perceived by the stagnated university teachers are explored by standard instruments and interpreted in the light of relevant 'operational concepts' (Chapter Four, 4.3) involving both 'personal' and 'situational' variables – which interacted to generate university teachers' organizational role-oriented behaviour, irrespective of stagnancy.

To uphold the scientific value of the study, relevant research enquiries as identified in the survey of literature (Chapter Three) were utilized to frame six research hypotheses (Chapter Four, 4.4) and a pool of 400 matched sample (of which 354 participated finally) were sized properly (100 for Pilot and 254 for Final Study) – by fulfilling the requirements of the design of the present study. Data were collected, on two different Test Sessions, from the above sample group of Readers and Professors of West Bengal (Chapter Four, 4.5) by administering standard instruments (Chapter Four, 4.6). The data were then processed for necessary statistical treatment (Chapter Four, 4.9). The findings were analyzed and discussed, Table-wise, to draw up inferences and conclusive comments.

The inferences drawn on the basis of the findings have revealed the following effects:

1. Report of the Mehrotra Commission recommended certain provisions to improve the quality of work life and its implementation with effect from January 1, 1986. It was implemented accordingly and caused a positive feedback in the population of university teachers up to 1995. The consequences, explained in the light of Herzberg's two-factor theory of work-motivation (Herzberg, 1987), improved the conditions of Hygienic factors and, accordingly helped to
lower down the level of dissatisfaction of the beneficiaries concerned – while its proportion was poor due to problems caused by their “personal inadequacy factor”, as observed by the present investigator in her earlier studies and reported* in 1994. Hence, a good proportion of senior university Readers became the victims of stagnation partly due to “personal inadequacy” and partly due to sudden withdrawal of Merit promotion Scheme by the University Grants Commission authorities. The concerted effects of the said happenings increased the level of job dissatisfaction and generated negative feedback to demotivate them due to fall short of expectancies in career development.

Thus the said readers group became the victims of a locked-in condition. In course of time (of further two years), 25-30 per cent of them had to retire from their Service. In this connection it may be mentioned that the teachers who were holding the Post of Professor and the few Readers who were promoted to the post of Professor were granted opportunity to get an additional five years (2 years + 3 years) re-employment at this stage subject to the records of proven academic effectivity during those five years.

The findings of the present study have helped here to infer that the victimized readers under career stagnancy, endured extreme costs in their situations. They have to experience more amount of organizational stress specially due to ‘role stagnation’, ‘role expectation conflict’, ‘role erosion’, ‘role overload’, ‘role ambiguity’ and ‘resource inadequacy’ in comparison to the non-locked-in teachers i.e. the selected group of Professors in the present study. Thus the said locked-in teachers have been observed to suffer from a negative feeling coupled with a cloud of demotivation due to the non-availability of the resources.

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* The problems caused by sudden withdrawal of the MPS by the U.G.C. in 1987 are observed (Ghosh, 1994) as follows:
In 1994 at least 60-70 percent of the teachers in each of the university departments in West Bengal were Readers. It was observed that in spite of pretty seniority (10-12 years holding the designation) they did not improve their merit-records adequately by doing substantive academic work. Further, when they made up their minds to improve their worth and put efforts for their career development they were made discouraged by sudden withdrawal of promised awards by the U.G.C. under Merit Promotion Scheme for Teachers. Besides, it happened that the posts of Professors were all occupied and there was neither any chance of vacancies for few years to come nor any provision to get new post of Professor due to non-availability of funds.
needed for effective role performance including least or remote opportunity for further promotional avenues.

Over and above, although the locked-in teachers did not differ from their non-locked-in peers in terms of certain areas of job satisfaction, work values, organizational identification and job involvement items, they had expressed lower feelings of self-worth in their job (Wopin and Burke, 1986). Furthermore, they appear to be more marginal in their contributions to the mission of their departments than were their less locked-in colleagues. After a prolonged period of their stagnation they seem to be more under-utilised on their jobs, have had greater doubts about future promotional opportunities in their jobs. They also reported greater negative feelings state – such as depression and worthlessness as well as less life satisfaction (Miller and Smith, 1997).

Finally, it has been observed that their coping strategies are not sufficiently effective as they used poor amount of ‘positive reappraisal’, ‘accepting responsibility’, ‘self-control’, ‘Distancing’, ‘Escape-avoidance’ and ‘problem solving’ as the adopted means of their coping dynamics (Rabasca, 1999). Consequently, they exhibited poorer health status like ‘felt trouble with insomnia’, ‘drowsiness in the morning’, ‘getting excited quickly’, ‘getting tired easily’, ‘problems due to migraine / headache or backache’, ‘smoke more than before’, ‘suffering from respiratory trouble / bronchial asthma’, ‘indigestions of food and / or blood sugar’, ‘loosing memory’, and ‘anxious about his / her own carelessness’. The consolidated picture of the overall facts revealed by the Test data of the university teachers have been presented in the Table – 12. Such a host of undesirable consequences due to the prolonged period of stagnation is not only the immense loss of an intellectually effective group of human potentials but also a failure in view of the objective ‘rationale’ of human resource management policy that leading ultimately to a great national loss.

It may be assumed in the light of the present findings that increasing numbers of teachers will experience locking-in in the next two decades. First, the economy, specially the existing trend of budgetary allocation in higher education in our country is no longer expanding. Second, both male and female individuals
are now competing for SLET / NET examinations (of which only 2 – 4 percent are successfully qualified) to get the job of 'Lecturer'. Third, more older teachers are staying in their jobs with relaxation of mandatory retirement laws. Fourth, educational institutions and universities are growing as much through privatization as through expansion due to the newly generated need for rapid technological development. Thus devoting research attention to the phenomenon appears to be warranted to prevent their undue obsolescence. In addition, the findings indicated that teachers feeling locked-in experienced mild distress (low occupational self-esteem, less job satisfaction, etc.) which in itself would require further understanding and addressing.
Table - 12: Consolidated Picture of Qualitative facts revealed by the Test Data of University Teachers (Stagnated Readers: 134; Non-stagnated Professors: 120)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Area</th>
<th>Supportive Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Fitness to avail of Merit Promotion opportunity</td>
<td>92.5% Readers and 100% Professors had Ph.D. degree, supervised Ph.D. Thesis, had personal research projects and published Books / Research papers in standard journals during the period of 1986 – 2000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Locked-in Feeling</td>
<td>Intensity of locked-in feeling, as reflected in the test Score, was found characteristically very high in case of stagnated Readers group – a tell-tale characteristic feature, which was non-existent in case of Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Organizational Role Stress</td>
<td>Significantly higher amount of role stress (in comparison to Professors) was found present in the stagnated Readers (with severe locked-in feeling) in the areas of: (i) Role Stagnation, (ii) Role Erosion, (iii) Role Overload, (iv) Role Ambiguity and (v) Resource Inadequacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Personality type</td>
<td>Stagnated Readers with very high locked-in feeling revealed a trend of Type A (Coronary Prone) in 42% cases, although Professors also expressed similar feelings in 38% cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Coping Strategy</td>
<td>Presence of (i) Distancing, (ii) Confrontation, (iii) Escape-avoidance and (iv) Seeking support were generally adopted by the stagnated Readers with high locked-in feeling; while absence of (i) Positive reappraisal, (ii) Accepting responsibility, (iii) Self-control, and (iv) Problem solving – in the same group of stagnated Readers. Contrarily, Professors group adopted more amount of (i) Self-control, (ii) Positive reappraisal (iii) Accepting responsibility, and (iv) Problem solving.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Health Status</td>
<td>Stagnated Readers with high locked-in feeling reported of their high susceptibility to different systemic dysfunctions of Psychological origin (Aggravating factor). No such signs had been observed in case of Professors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Stagnated Readers with high locked-in feeling expressed a trend of 'dissatisfaction' with their jobs; but Professors group did not exhibit such type of feeling.</td>
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6.2 Conclusion:

The present study is concerned with an unexpected crisis of a group of university teachers of West Bengal who entered the profession of teaching after two decades of the political freedom of the country. Since then, every-thing related to teaching at the highest level of formal teaching programme at the University departments have undergone a rapid change in the policy and practice. When they entered in the profession as university teacher at that time (in the late 60s of 20th Century) the work itself, total monthly remuneration of a teacher, promotional opportunities and capabilities of colleagues in the university used to get evaluated in terms of society’s high esteem for the profession and not in terms of lucrative monthly salary. His university service was his status symbol and his academic worth used to be adjudged by the perception of his students and not by his rank or designation. Ambitious and individuals with high achievement motives and risk-taking propensity hardly dreamt of becoming university teacher. University teachers of 1940s were more fond of simple living and high thinking, and were very serious to protect their self-esteem and not their bank-balance.

Gradually education became commercialized and became a contractual professional service (between the teachers and taughts) and teachers were placed as functionaries in an organizational hierarchy and his status got determined by result-oriented academic ventures, pay and other benefits meant for the designation he held in the university service. Again more a teacher’s worth entered within the commanding jurisdiction of the bureaucratic administrators the more the teacher became controlled by the perception of administrative officers and not by the students’ perception. By the end of 1980s, a University teacher had to become interested in fulfilling the demands and requirements of bureaucrats by shifting emphasis from “good teaching” to “good career building” in the University service (to collect materials to fill in the proforma items like ‘how many conferences attended ?’, ‘how many research papers published ?’, ‘how many Ph.D.s produced ?’, etc. and not ‘how many bright students you produced ?’). Moreover, most of the universities had to become
dependent on the bureaucrats for funds to create facilities, to purchase laboratory equipments and library books and journals, and for appointing adequate number of teachers just in time.

Obviously, the bureaucrats in the Government Secretariats or ministries became the controller and ‘alm-giver’ to university authorities. When those bureaucrats slept and created bottlenecks by their sound method of red tapism, the university administration had to face embarrassment and the teachers had to become victims of ‘locked-in’ feelings and consequent organizational role stress under the influence of macro-organizational manoeuvring.

One of the best of many good examples of highly undesirable intervention took place in 1987 by sudden withdrawal of Merit Promotion Schemes of university teachers specially from Reader to Professor, which was once put into action and remained alive for a very short period, although reopened once again very recently (due to the tremendous pressures created by a series of country-wide demonstrations and continuous ceaseworks of the university teachers at the call of All India Federation of University and College Teachers Organization ( AIFUCTO) and other teachers’ union of the Central universities and yet remains unknown for how many days to come that opportunity would come into action for the concerned Readers, and would further be allowed to continue. The findings of the present study has substantiated the claims of Porter and Lawler (1968) which stated that job satisfaction only affects performance through a feedback loop to value the reward. Stagnant Readers studied here could not improve their level of job satisfaction but contrarily increased the levels of their job dissatisfaction.

The results of the present study have revealed (as the findings presented through Table-2 to Table-12 mainly) its miserable impact on the stagnant Readers group – a portion of which very recently (2000) has started to enjoy the benefits while another portion retired from service as victims of role distress and psychological strains – job dissatisfaction, unsuccessful coping, and poor health status that seriously affected the quality of their work life. An unexpected tragedy mainly caused by whimsical withdrawal of awards (i.e. career
advancement schemes like M.P.S.) may be considered as unprecedented which led to the sufferings of a section of university teachers who may be considered as the victims of breach of “psychological contract” – “which covers a range of expectations of rights and privileges and obligations, which do not form a part of formal agreement but still have an important influence on peoples’ behaviour” (Mullins, 1998).

Policy-making body of each university have to adopt equitable personnel policies and procedures and treat members of the staff with respect, as its social responsibility. The present study has substantiated the fact that there can be occasions when the university authority fails to observe the said social responsibility, may be unwillingly due to improper interventions of a more powerful policy-making body at the Government level.

The “psychological contract” implies a variety of expectations between the individual and the organization. The said contract stimulates firstly, dynamics of an effective social interaction and secondly, emergence of a desirable interpersonal relationship. In case of any breach of the said contract both ‘role congruence’ and ‘role expectations’ are severely affected and, thereby, generate pockets of organizational stress and consequently a group of stagnated, frustrated and distressed people in work situations. Once it has happened and care must be taken to prevent its recurrence in future by the policy-making bodies at different stages and levels.

6.3 Applicative Value and Suggestions:

The findings, by and large, leads logically to several areas of potential applications : programmes such as life and career planning and development, individual counseling. Furthermore, the results are contributive to develop appropriate plan and programme to maintain work motivation of the concerned teachers under circumstances of very little upward mobility.

Policy directives are desirably to be framed to implement any declared award within a reasonably short period (2 to 3 months) and steps should be taken not to reiterate the practice of whimsical withdrawal of any award to improve the
quality of life of university teachers – particularly when a part of the teaching population are availing that.

It is interesting to note here that stagnant Readers of universities, under study, did not develop “absenteeism” (as in other groups of employees in business organizations) nor lower down their job satisfaction (by increasing rate of teachers turn over) but introjected the pains and sufferings while coping with Role stress and developed psychosomatic illnesses and met medical expenses from their own pockets – as they get medical expenses at a fixed rate of Rs. 100/- or U.S. $ 2.5 per month indicating still a poor quality of work life. To efface possibility of such recurrence necessary steps should be taken by the authority concerned without delay.