CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
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GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As has been already mentioned in Chapter I, this research is basically a cross-sectional survey, conducted in Orissa, India. Its purpose was to find out similarities and differences due to age/grade, gender/sex, and demography (urban, rural and tribal areas) in children's experiences of, reactions to, and coping approaches adopted in psychologically critical life situations (PCLS) which are stressful. Though a survey, the study attempted to test the following hypotheses with regard to children's stressful life situations, resultant stress reactions, and coping approaches/types; formulated on the basis of the review of research and earlier studies done at the Centre of Advanced Studies in Psychology of Utkal University, India.

Hypothesis-wise Discussion

The null hypotheses which were statistically tested stated: first, that the Urban, Rural, and Tribal groups of children would not differ significantly; second, that the younger Grade 7 and the older Grade 9 groups of children would not differ significantly; and third, that the boys and girls would not differ significantly – with regard to their experiences of, reactions to, and coping approaches in stressful life situations. The findings obtained from the present study with regard to each of the hypotheses are summarised below.
Group Differences

The children of the Urban, Rural, and Tribal groups differed statistically in case of eight (8) out of 34 items of the Stressful Situations Inventory, 12 out of 29 items of the Reactions to Stress Inventory, 12 out of 32 items of the Coping Approaches Inventory, and four (4) out of eight (8) coping dimensions. These findings provide partial support for the first hypothesis. As is evident from these findings, the similarities between the three groups of children, inspite of their different levels of disadvantages, were significantly more than the differences. Particularly in the Orissan socio-cultural context, children’s stressful life situations, reactions to stress, and coping approaches under stress did not seem to vary much with children’s demographic or socio-cultural group characteristics. It adds support to the argument that stress or disadvantage need to be considered at the individual’s level of life-experiences, not as group-related phenomena. With regard to specific items, it was found that significantly higher percentages of Urban and Rural than Tribal children reported that (a) 'being forced to work against one's will', (b) 'being accused as guilty without any fault', (c) 'being deprived of affection and sympathy in critical life situations', (d) 'being haunted by sad and painful memories', (e) 'failure inspite of hard labour', and (f) 'poverty related financial difficulties of the family' were very stressful to them. Significantly higher percentages of Urban than Rural and Tribal children considered (a) 'being forced to work against
one's will' and (b) 'having absurd thoughts'; of Rural than Urban and Tribal children considered (a) 'being suspicious of someone' and (b) 'being subjected to hard work', (c) 'being accused as guilty without any reason', (d) 'insulted by some one', (e) 'recurrent sorrowful memories', (f) 'doing hard work', and (g) 'poor financial condition of the family'; and of Tribal than Urban and Rural children considered only 'sudden illness of a family member' as very stressful for them. These differences can be explained in terms of differences between urban, rural, and tribal ways of child-rearing and family functioning. Irrespective of the area of residence, most children considered the critical life situations stated in the questionnaire as stressful to some extent. In those few items on which the groups differed, children's early exposure to and experiences with ordinary day-to-day stressful situations in the process of socialisation seemed to determine which situations would be considered more stressful for any group.

The significant findings from the Reactions to Stress Inventory showed that, on the whole, more Urban than Rural and Tribal children reported that experiencing life as meaningless, excessive sweating, inability to sit peacefully, joint-pains (in hands, knee and elbow), loss of self-confidence, and feeling like fainting were the more frequent reactions to stress. More Rural than Urban and Tribal children reported feeling like crying, insomnia and sleep disorders, pain in chest and stomach, and
irritability as frequent reactions. More Tribal than Urban and Rural children felt sad/depressed, but less restless. These findings, though few in number, show that the Urban children were the most reactive, the Rural children more reactive, and the Tribal children, the least reactive under stress. Again, these differences might be probably due to early exposure to and experiences of stressful life situations.

Results of the Coping Approaches Inventory showed that significantly more Tribal than Urban and Rural children reported that 'being engaged in some interesting work', 'forgetting one's problems/worries through helping others', and 'trying to please all' were used by them to cope with stressful situations. More Tribal and Rural than Urban children used 'Changing the course of events by changing working style/subject matter' as a coping method. The relatively more prevalent coping approaches of the Rural than Urban and Tribal children were 'arguing a lot with others', 'trying to find fault with others', 'day-dreaming/fantasy', 'seeking more pleasure/fun', 'finding greater faults with others to defend oneself', and 'Viewing the situation according to one's own perspective'. 'Trying to ignore and forget the problem' was used more whereas, 'Getting enough rest and sleep' was used less by the Urban and Rural than Tribal children. With regard to the dimensions of coping approaches, greater percentages of Tribal and Rural than Urban children reported using 'acceptance', 'relaxation', 'aggression', and 'distraction' types of coping. These results relating to
children's coping efforts in the midst of stressful life situations strongly suggest that when confronted by PCLS like stress or disadvantage, most children learn to develop ways of adapting or coping with these naturally and normally. Further, as the samples of subjects of the present study were adolescents, their coping approaches characterise the types of coping typically adopted at their developmental level. Almost all children used certain types of coping, and early exposure to different modes and models of coping seemed to influence their responses.

On the whole, the obtained findings provide only limited and partial support for significant group differences in children's responses to all three questionnaires. On the basis of these results it may be argued that all children encounter stressful PCLS and learn to react to as well as act upon or cope with these PCLS in different ways in the process of growing up, irrespective of their areas of residence.

**Grade/Age Differences**

The results showed that the children of the Grades 7 and 9 differed statistically in case of four (4) out of 34 items of the Stressful Situations Inventory, five (5) out of 29 items of the Reactions to Stress Inventory, three (3) out of 32 items of the Coping Approaches Inventory, and only one (1) out of eight (8) coping dimensions. These differences are very few and not sufficient to reject the second hypothesis.
Significantly more of the older, Grade 9 children reported that 'not receiving due encouragement when doing some good/important work', 'theft or burglary of house', 'being not able to work autonomously', 'illness of a family member', and 'sudden illness of a family member' were the most stressful life situations for them. In case of the younger, Grade 7 children stressful situations were: 'having absurd thoughts', 'insulted by someone', 'not getting love and sympathy', and 'poor financial condition of the family'. The five items on which the Grades differed in the Reactions to Stress Inventory, the greater percentages of the younger, Grade 7 children reported that 'feeling depressed', 'dryness of mouth and throat', 'feeling like crying', 'frequent tendency to urinate', and 'feeling of dizziness/fainting' were their more frequent reactions.

The more frequently used coping approaches of the older, Grade 9 children were: 'prioritising tasks before addressing them systematically', 'trying to please all', and 'viewing the situation according to one's own belief'. The older, Grade 9 children of the Tribal and Rural areas were found to use more 'acceptance' and 'relaxation' types of coping behaviours compared to their younger, Grade 7 counterparts. But in the Urban group, the older children had lower 'acceptance' and 'relaxation' mean scores than the younger. The older, Grade 9 Rural children showed the highest 'Self-control' mean scores; but the reverse trend was found in case of Urban and Tribal children, younger children scoring higher.
Given the above findings, it is difficult to say anything clearly about developmental changes in stress and coping. Probably, an average age-gap of about two years particularly during adolescence was not wide enough to show developmental changes in stress and coping clearly and prominently. At best, it is strongly felt that without further investigations involving more age-groups, with wider age-gaps, and preferably using longitudinal designs; no clear-cut conclusions can be drawn from the empirical findings of this thesis with regard to developmental changes in children's stress and coping.

**Sex Differences**

The results showed that the Boys and Girls of this study differed statistically in case of five (5) out of 34 items of the Stressful Situations Inventory, two (2) out of 29 items of the Reactions to Stress Inventory, four (4) out of 32 items of the Coping Approaches Inventory, and four (4) out of eight (8) coping clusters.

While the 'birth of a new baby in the family' was considered very stressful by Boys; 'being forced to work against one's will', 'being accused as guilty without any fault', 'not receiving love and sympathy at the time of sorrows and sufferings', and 'not loved by parents and teachers' were considered very stressful by more Girls than boys.
The more frequently encountered/experienced stressful situations of the Girls were: 'not getting love and affection' and 'poor financial condition of the family'; and those of the boys were: 'having absurd thoughts', 'being accused as guilty', 'insulted by someone', 'not getting encouragement', and 'sudden illness of a family member'. In a critical life situation 'Feeling like crying' reaction was experienced more by the Girls; whereas the Boys scored more of 'scolding and criticizing others' behaviour.

In the Coping Approaches Inventory, only in case of four out of 32 items, significant differences between Boys and Girls were obtained, which suggested that: (1) 'helping others to forget self', as a coping behaviour, was found to be more common with Girls than Boys; and (2) 'arguing a lot with others', 'trying to control the event by means of anger', and 'trying to control the event by changing the subject matter' were found to be relatively more used by Boys than Girls. Thus, the results of significant Sex effects revealed that, the Girls reported to be using 'Acceptance' type of coping more than the Boys, but in the other three types coping approaches (Aggression, Distraction, Reality-distortion) the Boys showed higher scores than the Girls.

These significant differences between boys and girls, though very few in number, seem meaningful and as expected. The differential child-rearing experiences, gender-role models, and socio-cultural expectations seem to be responsible for these
differences. These results also partially support the earlier research findings that females are more stress-resistant and emotionally reactive, and use more non-confrontive ways of coping.

General Discussion

I: The Theoretical Perspective

Developmental Contributions of PCLS

Disadvantage, stress, frustration, conflict, and crisis are not specific characteristics/ conditions/ states of a human individual or group. Rather, these need to be considered as universally encountered, hierarchically ordered Psychologically Critical Life Situations (PCLS), normally distributed in the human population and randomly occurring over a life-span. This state arises when there is an imbalance or mis-match between the individual's internal resources/ assets/ competencies and external demands/pressures of life. The criticalness of the situation is dependent upon the extent to which the person's life-needs get satisfied and the intensity with which the individual experiences the particular event. Encountering a PCLS is a normal, inevitable, and unavoidable part of our existence. The PCLS are normally distributed in the population and may be found in the lives of individuals as well as groups. Young, old, men, women, rich, poor - all are susceptible to the pain and suffering resulting from the PCLS - the nature and degrees of
individual suffering may vary. The PCLS may occur at any period during a person's life-span depending upon the nature, form, intensity of the human existence (e.g. material, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual). At present, all over the world, a normal human being is driven by the newer needs created by a commercial society that emphasises only economic and material development as the main aim of life. This creates endless desires and material-attachments - *Raga*, according to the *Yoga Sutra*. *Raga* causes *Dwesha*, as hostility accumulates due to continuous confrontation and competition with others. "*Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesha, and Avinivesha*" cause/constitute *Klesha* or afflictions, leading to pain, which is the basic property of the PCLS. Therefore, a PCLS needs to be viewed as an inevitable, unavoidable part of normal human life-experience. Never the less, without these PCLS, there would be no upward movement or full unfolding of the human spirit, no ambition, no creative innovation, and no charm in life. Life would become dull, static, pathologically homogeneous, and unnaturally uniform. Research and other evidences seem to suggest that familiarity with these PCLS are to some extent essential/necessary to develop the required resiliency level, to draw out the best and excellent of the real self or character of a human being. According to *Rutter*, "*Resistance to stress is relative, not absolute; the bases of resistances are both environmental and constitutional; and the degree of resistance is not a fixed quality - rather it varies over time and according to the circumstances*" (1985).
Research done on different types/aspects of PCLS like disadvantage or poverty or stress generally agree that all the factors that cause a PCLS may be grouped into three categories: (a) Adhyatimika factors - relating to physical imbalances, mental attachment, feeling of helplessness, and meaninglessness and emptiness within oneself; (b) Adhibhautika factors - relating to external environmental (physical, inter-personal/social, economic and technological, cultural and political, etc.) reasons; and (c) Adhidaivika factors - relating to unpredictable natural/super-natural calamities and disasters. The causes of the different PCLS may vary, but the resultant subjective experience of all PCLS is pain.

There is research evidence indicating that PCLS have both negative effects and positive contributions towards the development of a person. Wide individual differences in reactions to and actions (i.e., coping efforts) under stress or any other PCLS have been documented. These actions and reactions seem to be greatly influenced by cultural, educational, experiential, and environmental factors. So, the people who cope successfully with difficulties at one point in their life, may not cope successfully with other similar stressors at a different time or situation. The responses vary among individuals, over time, across situations, and with fluctuations in will. The actions and reactions in a given PCLS are within the individual, which can only be recognised when there arises some problem in any level of existence - physiological (bodily tension), behavioural
(changes in the activities and performance), emotional (grief, frustration, anger), cognitive (helplessness, low self esteem), and spiritual (meaninglessness of existence). These are the natural outlets of the PCLS, when blocked or the coping/defending/experiencing processes have failed; the PCLS becomes harmful for the individual. The immediate negative response to a PCLS is the loss of control—absence of an appropriate or adequate reaction to the given situation, refusal to react, and acceptance of the state of helplessness. But these extreme reactions can be avoided and controlled by proper and thorough experiencing of the negative aspects of PCLS like grief, sadness, frustration, disappointment, etc.; which stimulates the development of the will—the will to understand the meaning of pain and suffering; while, also, nurturing effective coping, adaptability, competencies, invulnerability, and building up an integrally (i.e., physically, mentally, and spiritually) healthy person. Research findings show that stress and disadvantage contribute positively towards developing certain competencies, coping skills, and resiliencies; giving rise to invulnerability or invincibility which has been defined as the "self-righting tendencies within a children that produce normal or even superior development under all but most persistently adverse circumstances" (Werner & Smith, 1982; Werner, 1988). While some children get adversely affected, succumb to, disintegrate, and perish under the pressures of these PCLS; others boldly confront, withstand, overcome, and bounce back after an initial suffering, grow up normally, and develop into healthy, happy, competent
persons. These invulnerable children develop normally, continuously acquiring competent behaviours, effective coping styles, and creative experiencing. Undeniable evidences exist that demonstrate how for some people a PCLS has been found to have positive, beneficial effects. As PCLS is a function of the interaction between the individual's needs and internal assets/competencies, the prevailing external conditions and behavioural options available, and the objective consequences; it has been found that simultaneous occurrence of multiple stressors or a series of unresolved stresses with no available protective resources had the most deleterious outcomes for children's long term adjustment. However, when the PCLSs outweigh the available protective factors, the most resilient, invulnerable child can develop problems.

When confronted with extreme PCLS, after an initial period of crisis and strain, most persons show resiliency and learn to respond reasonably and effectively to meet such challenges. Sometimes this makes a person to be more confident and handle the situation more successfully. It is natural and healthy to maintain optimal levels of stress. So, to learn and develop effective coping mechanism, psychological resiliency, invulnerability, and to bring out the best that is inherent in the human being, an individual needs to have some amount of criticalness in early life. It has been claimed that stress is "the leading stimulus of life-assertation, creativity, and development" (Ushakova & Ushakova, 1977).
Stress and happiness both are essential for personality development, because sometimes misery teaches more valuable lessons than happiness. Stress and disadvantage are associated with suffering and pain - all this is real, true, essential, desirable, and complimentary to happiness or joy. Together, they maintain a continuum, balance the outcomes, and harmoniously integrate the total functioning of a human being. So, it is difficult and even undesirable to get rid of the PCLS altogether. However, with perseverance and practice, one can control, reduce, manage and/or convert to positive direction - the effects of the PCLS by various ways, such as: healthy living, having a strong social support network, positive thinking, adapting and accepting, relaxing adequately, experiencing creatively, aging gracefully, living meaningfully (Logotherapy), harmoniously (Morita therapy), and integrally (Yoga therapy) - which have been described in detail under IMPLICATIONS. Considered together with the review of research on defending, coping, experiencing, etc. given earlier in this thesis; these methods of handling the PCLS should be justifiably called a comprehensive package of practical guidelines on stress resistance and coping.

Empirical as well as intuitive testimonies show that the PCLS are not always detrimental or harmful. Experiencing the PCLS creatively helps in promoting growth and maintaining a harmonious life. Creative experiencing leads to a more meaningful, more essential, and more ideal life; and helps in reconstructing the
self and restructuring one's life again and again. The PCLS need to be viewed as positive and vital forces having the potentiality to transform ordinary normal human existence into something special and exceptional. Therefore, it may be argued that an optimal degree of criticalness in life situations might help children to become adaptive and assertive, more competent and confident, and self-reliant and invulnerable. The PCLS like disadvantage, stress, frustration, conflict, and crisis are real, inevitable, painful, and unavoidable. They are immanent in all human activities and associations. Our mind-set or world-view needs to be restructured to incorporate the alternative perspective that the PCLS contain lessons for and positive contributions towards life as a whole. They become meaningful when they are viewed as essential for self-development and self-realisation.

II: The Empirical Perspective

Advantages of Disadvantages: The Concept of Invulnerability

Indian studies of invulnerable children began in 1980's under the leadership and supervision of A. S. Dash of Centre of Advanced Studies in Psychology, Utkal University. The major line of approach of this group of studies, of which the present research is also a part, was "from disadvantages, through competence and coping, towards invulnerability". Five studies (Acharya, 1995; Choudhury, 1991; Hariharan, 1991; Nanda, 1994; Panda, 1995) are reviewed here which were based on almost similar
objectives and research designs. They aimed at identifying invulnerable children from normal population of high school children and investigating into their personality, motivational and cognitive characteristics, environmental conditions, competence and coping styles. All the studies identified four categories of children: advantaged-competent, advantaged-incompetent, disadvantaged-competent (or invulnerables), and disadvantaged- incompetent (or vulnerables) from larger normal population of school children by means of peer nomination technique. Later, they verified and substantiated the peer nominations by dichotomous cross classifications of children's competence and environmental disadvantages scores, and individually found that peer nomination is an useful and effective technique of identifying invulnerable children. The studies then proceeded to compare and contrast the four categories of children with regard to their personal characteristics, and environmental conditions and support.

The studies found that despite socio-economic deprivations and multiple stresses, the invulnerable children had above average competence, had a mental set to face problems, had more personal control over the critical life situations, employed relatively more confrontive coping styles, and were able to shift their aspirations more frequently and re-adjusted their goals continuously.

Hariharan (1991) studied the competence, environmental disadvantages, social support net-work, and coping styles of
children of co-educational schools of varied SES background/levels. The main findings of the study revealed that despite the socio-economic deprivations, the invulnerable children were found to have a healthy family psychological climate. Invulnerables were found more competent than vulnerables and were comparable to the advantaged competent children. No significant difference was noticed between the advantaged-competents and the invulnerables regarding number of stressful events experienced, but the invulnerables reported significantly higher in their anticipation of problems. The invulnerables were found using more planful problem solving and confrontive coping, but sought social support the least. The invulnerable children's emotional reactions to stress included more shame, insult, joy, and anger; and less misery, dejection, and fear. The invulnerables tended to develop a mental set to face problems squarely like 'catching the bull by the horns'. Advantaged-incompetent children showed dissatisfaction with their environment; the incompetent children of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups manifested behaviours similar to the "learned helplessness syndrome." In this experiment, it was also found that advantaged-competent and invulnerable children coped well with the artificially induced stress while the other two groups did not.

Choudhury's (1991) study of invulnerable children aimed at identifying the invulnerables from the normal population and studying their competence, social support net-work and coping behaviours/styles. The major findings of the study were -
The invulnerable children perceived themselves to be more deprived/disadvantaged in child-rearing, social, emotional, and educational environmental aspects. Inspite of the disadvantages, the invulnerables were found invariably close to the advantaged-competent group in all areas of behavioural competence. The invulnerables reported encountering or experiencing more disadvantages and problems in the past; and found to have more personal control over the problem situations than the other comparison groups. With regard to coping styles, the invulnerables were found to seek more social support for emotional catharsis while the advantaged-competents seek the least. Invulnerables were found to be better in perseverance and effort maximization, and in accepting the reality. The invulnerables felt economic needs more often followed by need for actual help/support. The disadvantaged children, in general, worked less independently; would not face more pressure and competition; had less realistic aspirations; lacked knowledge regarding their own strengths and weaknesses; did not feel good about themselves; were more unreasonable, immature, and irresponsible; did not accept criticism well; and rendered less efforts to help others. With regard to seeking and utilising social support, the competent children sought more of verbal support (e.g advice/suggestions) from the agents in the social support network than the incompetent children.

Nanda (1994) studied competence of children of English and Oriya medium, Co-educational and Uni-sex schools. The results of
the study revealed that the children of English medium schools were better in general competence and social motivational competence; whereas the children of Oriya medium schools were better in personal motivational competence and personality styles. The co-educational school children were better in general competence, personal motivational competence, and personality styles. The boys were found to be better in cognitive motivational competence, whereas the girls were found to be better in physical competence only. The teachers of the English medium schools rated their children very highly, while the teachers of Oriya medium schools rated their children comparatively lower. The family effectiveness scores suggested that the parents and the family can meet the demands of their children according to their limited capacity but they did not desire that the needs of their children be satisfied by others. However, when the family failed to satisfy the needs, the child's competence determined to what extent the child sought to satisfy her/his needs through extra-familial support. The invulnerable children, being the products of adversities, disadvantages and deprivations; guarded and maintained their self-esteem and feeling of self-worth; and actively interacted with the environmental adversities, instead of just reacting passively.

Acharya's (1995) study of invulnerable children aimed at identifying invulnerable children from a normal population of high school children and investigating their personality, motivational, and cognitive competencies. The findings of the
study revealed that the four groups (advantaged-competent, advantaged-incompetent, disadvantaged-competent, and disadvantaged-incompetent) were found to differ significantly in five (intelligence, super-ego strength, threat sensitivity, self-adequacy, and self-sentiment). The invulnerable children were found to be more or less similar to the advantaged-competent children. The vulnerables were found to be the weakest in these five primary personality factors. The invulnerables were found to be less anxious than the vulnerables as well as advantaged-incompetent children; but more anxious than the advantaged-competent. In neuroticism score, the invulnerable children ranked next to the vulnerables, whereas the advantaged-competent children showed no neurotic tendency at all. With regard to the capacity to recover from delinquency the invulnerables manifested the greatest capacity to respond to remediation or correction. The invulnerable children shifted their aspiration levels more frequently and readjusted their goals continuously compared to the others. Inspite of the environmental disadvantages/stresses/deprivations/pressures, invulnerable children have remained competent and resilient, healthly and happy, and indomitable and invincible.

All the above studies were based on the assumption that invulnerability is normally distributed in the population, but drew the invulnerable as well as other comparison groups from the normal population using peer nomination method. The characteristics of these groups were then compared and
contrasted in order to have an understanding of the most invulnerables and their qualities. In contrast, the study by Panda (1995) attempted to study invulnerability as a normally distributed characteristic of children. Such an approach emphasizes study of invulnerability as it occurs in the broad spectrum of normal population and envisions much broader implications of the knowledge gained in the field. Since the continuum of vulnerability-invulnerability is studied in the normal population, it was hoped that the results would have broader implications and would apply to the entire population thereby providing a much better scope for promotion of invulnerability in the entire normal population when a stable body of knowledge develops in the field. In addition to this, like the studies reviewed above, Panda's study also used environmental disadvantage/support and competence indices to conceptualise, identify, and study invulnerability.

Panda's study was supported by a review of relevant research, designed to find out children's cognitive, personality, motivational, and academic competencies contributing to development of 'invulnerability', - operationally defined as "competence amidst disadvantages". The study sample, consisting of children of Co-educational High schools; was administered the Children's Environmental Stimulation and Support/Deprivation and Disadvantage Scale, the Competence Check-list, the Draw-A-Man intelligence test, a Story writing test measuring language ability, the Similes Preference test, the Obscure Figures test,
the Stroop Test, the Risk Taking tests, and the Task Persistence test. Their school examination marks were the indices of their academic achievement. Statistical analyses of the data showed that competence assessments, particularly by the child's peers, were found suitable, useful, and effective in measuring children's general competence and identifying the invulnerables. The invulnerable children were viewed as more competent, though disadvantaged, by themselves as well as their peers, parents, and teachers. They performed relatively better academically, showed superior language ability, and were found to be more innovative, imaginative, creative, displaying higher abstraction ability.

III : The Applied/Practical Perspective

Preventing Stress through Optimal Care and Education

The accumulated theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge of the entire mankind certainly can provide certain sound guidelines for effective, growth-promoting, stress-preventive child-rearing/parenting and education. On the basis of the review of studies and the obtained findings, the following points are worth discussing.

(a) Caring : Satisfying Children's Basic Needs:

There can be little disagreement about the following basic physical needs without which life itself cannot continue : (1) fresh water, air, and sunlight; (2) shelter and protective care, (3) adequate and appropriate balanced diet; (4) clothing for
warming, protection, socialisation; (5) activity and rest - vigorous and quiet states; (6) prevention and treatment of illness and injury; and (7) training in habits and skills necessary for maintenance and growth of life. In addition to these, a human child cannot attain self-reliance, good relationships with others around, and contentment in life; unless the following psychological needs are also satisfied adequately:

(1) a healthy genetic endowment; (2) planned motherhood, preparatory prenatal care, loving parents, and continuity of one-to-one care; (3) a home and a family which provide a safe, secure, personal space - a place of her/his own; and promote sense of security, feeling of belongingness, sense of personal identity, dignity as a human being, self-respect, and stable personal relationships, in a familiar, predictable, and stimulating environment; (4) a daily plan that allows her/him active as well as quiet activities allowing time for exercise as well as rest; (5) time and opportunity for self-absorbing, imaginative, and/or socialising play; motivating materials to encourage active involvement in the learning process, (6) opportunity, guidance, and modelling to develop habits for healthy living and to learn from experience, to explore, discover, and organise knowledge, (7) a child-friendly, safe, and stimulating neighbourhood, society, and culture to move around freely and confidently, with the feeling of being valued as a member of the community. (8) experiences and opportunities : to achieve success and excellence in some field of endeavour however small, to take responsibility - however slight, to be of service
to others, to be wanted by and useful to others, to talk about personal matters, friends, school, teacher, games, etc., to express feelings and feel understood, to feel autonomous and independent, and to learn about the world; (9) assistance and guidance in studies, career/life planning, taking decisions, solving problems, and achieving independence in personal, vocational, academic, and financial areas.

(b) Parenting/Child-rearing

Parents who wish to bring up children who are highly moral but not highly vulnerable to guilt and anxiety can do so. There are two main goals: maximizing the degree to which children come to see socialization demands as reasonable and appropriate, and minimizing the degree to which they become vulnerable to guilt and anxiety. Maximizing the degree to which children see socialization demands as reasonable and appropriate, is accomplished by: (1) Making sure that socialization demands are reasonable and appropriate in the first place, (2) Keeping them flexible and open to discussion and changing them as the children change, (3) Taking care to provide explanations and rationales, so that the children see reasons for the demands, and (4) Consistently treating children with positive expectations communicating the idea that they are or are trying to be good persons doing what is right. Minimizing vulnerability to anxiety and guilt, is accomplished by: (1) Treating lapses as stemming from ignorance, carelessness, or forgetfulness, but not from evil intentions, deliberate defiance, or other underlying qualities
that would imply that the child is an evil person; (2) Discussing the details and situational factors which qualify the morality of specific situations, as opposed to ticking off lists of overly generalized and unrealistically labelled "sins" thus helping the children learn other perspectives and develop a moral sense based upon the Golden Rule rather than upon inappropriately rigid ideas about good vs. evil; (3) Minimising the use of punishment by using it as a last resort when explanation and persuasion have not worked, and making it clear that it is being used only to underscore the seriousness of parental intent to enforce rules, not as parental indulgence in sadism, revenge, egoism, and so forth; (4) Stressing commitment to positive ideals, showing determination to live up to them, and reaffirming the implications of behaviour (including requiring children to make restitution in situations where this is appropriate), but avoiding inducing unnecessary shame or guilt or causing children to feel that they are filled with powerful impulses and negative emotions could go out of control at any moment.

In general, children become highly vulnerable when they develop ideas or desires that they believe to be evil. Sometimes the conflict is purely internal, in that the ideas or desires would not be considered evil by most other people. Given below are some sound suggestions for all for developing stress-tolerance and invulnerability in children.

Accept and respect children as they are, for what they are. Love unconditionally and abundantly. Help your child to give,
receive, understand, and reciprocate love. Discipline constructively, consistently, and fairly. Be benevolent, authoritative, but nurturant. Discipline is teaching children, not hurting them. Punishment creates barriers in communication and sometimes ruins the parent-child relationship. It makes children resentful. Physical punishment or spanking is still worse. It makes the child humiliated. It hurts her/him physically and emotionally. Hit a pillow instead. Spanking is ineffective as teaching method. Anger needs to be expressed and channeled into constructive communication and joint creative activities. Angry name-calling damages the child's self-image, self-esteem, and self-worth. It hurts her/his feelings. Adopt a positive approach to life, teach right from wrong, search for and nurture strengths instead of hammering on weaknesses, and use more "do"s than "don't"s. Take time to relax together with your children. Spend time together. Work, play, have fun, share a joke, or take a walk together. Be your child's friend, philosopher, guide, companion, and counsellor. Children need your company more than your money. They need and like to interact and communicate with you.

When the child needs your help for something which s/he cannot handle her/himself, demonstrate and explain as you solve the problem for the first time; but let her/him do it henceforth to build up the skill. If the problem is such that s/he can solve by him/herself with instructions and/or help, let her/him do as much of it s/he can and wants to do. Stimulate your child to try things and challenge her/him to
push ahead, but donot impose yourself when s/he does not want either your help or even you. They need responsible direction and challenge to do their best, free choice giving form and substance to their capabilities, practice in decision making, and help in determining the limits or boundaries of their behaviours. Pay attention and call children's attention to (a) develop a scientific temper and attitude towards cause-and-effect relationships in natural and social happenings around us; and in our own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours; and (b) develop their inherent, inner talents and competencies in order to reach the limits of their potentialities.

Every one commits mistakes and mistakes are not sins or crimes. Acknowledge your mistakes before asking your child to admit her/his mistakes. No child is worthless because s/he errs, the crime is in being human. But do teach them by modelling how errors, mistakes can be corrected and prevented. Let them know that parents also commit mistakes and that we can learn from our mistakes. There is a sublime bliss in losing to your child - in a game of just-for-fun, or in an argument, or even in a real game of life. Losing is sometimes far more educative and entertaining than winning. Moreover, children are no opponents, competitors, or enemies.

Children know much more than that we think they know. They do understand a lot - but, according to their own levels of understanding. Their perspectives are just different from adults. Given opportunities and choices, they can learn to
think and decide for themselves. Let your children guide you in matters of their maturity and readiness; their growth and development. Appreciate their roles as pets, peace-makers, scape-goats, and ambassadors of the family. Try to learn from your child.

(c) **Modelling Mental Health:**

It has been found that mentally healthy parents bring up mentally healthy children. So, parents, first of all, need to attend to their own mental health; and become imitable examples or models of healthy, meaningful, productive, satisfying, and useful living for their children. What we know so far suggests that a mentally healthy person strives towards a balanced, integrative, and harmonious development of physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of individuality; and intellectual, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of personality. A mentally healthy person also strives to maintain a sound physical health remaining active, dynamic, flexible, and adaptive - getting rid off of tendencies of over- or under-reaction. A mentally healthy person shows curiosity and interest in fellow human beings, capacity to enter into mature, warm, intimate, inter-personal relationships with willingness to trust others, and capacity to derive joy from life, love, learning, work, and leisure. A mentally healthy person strives to achieve freedom from anxiety, stress, tension, conflict, diffidence, and inferiority; develops a plan of life with ordered sequences of goals and priorities for the present and future; maintains
adequate and appropriate self-confidence; develops an attitude of positive thinking, reasonable optimism, and realistic aspiration; strives for a balance between objective, analytical, critical as well as reflective, appreciative, intuitive abilities to understand, appreciate, interpret own and others' behaviours; and evolves a philosophy of life.

Inner qualities such as sincerity, honesty, truthfulness, straight-forwardness, courage, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control, self-mastery, search for truth, harmony, liberty, etc. are taught infinitely better by modelling or through example than by beautiful speeches. These qualities develop infinitely better by the natural incidents and tests of daily life than by any artificial situations or examination systems. These qualities can be judged infinitely better by a living participation in the child's or student's inward growth, by inner contact, by inner psychological understanding, empathy and sympathy, comprehension - than by any outer criteria or by sitting upon the seat of judgement.

Build frustration tolerance and persistence by modelling i.e., setting as well as citing examples. Reinforce the idea that patience and determination pay off, that problems find their solutions, that hurdles can be overcome by strengthening the will, that skills improve with practice, and that tough times do not last long, but tough persons do.
The **Kothari Commission** candidly pointed out that India's future is shaped in its classrooms. Therefore, education needs to be considered as a non-negotiable national priority. However, the history of Indian education system since independence may be described as a history of commissions and omissions. The prevalent education system of the country does not show that the planners and policy makers as well as the practitioners (i.e., teachers and administrators) and parents give due importance to the crucial role of education in shaping the minds of children. The education system that exists in India today does not really attend to, care for, or nurture the 'whole' child - encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual developments. Millions of children, under the tyranny of teachers and parents, and due to the callousness of the government as well as the community; are forced to go through the painful and meaningless ordeal of coping with an excessively heavy and mostly unnecessary curriculum, outdated rigid rules and regulations, and rote learning and boring routines. Today's Indian education process does not reflect even slightly our culture and heritage or the educational philosophies of our great thinkers and seers. "Sa vidya ya vimuktaye" (education liberates the mind). Education is a man-making process, said **Swami Vivekananda**. To **Mahatma Gandhi**, education is the process of 'bringing out the best' of an individual's body, mind, and spirit. None of these seems to be reflected in the present education system. Instead of being broad, continuous, life-long process synonymous with experience; it is becoming
specified, restricted, degree oriented. This has created an ineffective, monotonous, stressful, and unhealthy social-emotional environment for children. Socialisation or child-rearing is a collective responsibility, not of the parents alone, but together with the extended family and the neighbourhood community, the school and the teachers, and the larger society and the state. Therefore, all must collectively participate to evolve an education system which will be meaningful, attainable, flexible, and integrated to encourage the children to be creative, imaginative, constructive, and self-reliant. Here are few suggestions, which might help in reducing the educational load and tension of children by making the school attractive and pleasant, and making learning a meaningful, active, productive, and satisfying process.

1. The home and the school need to be made safe, secure, stimulating, and caring environments that can nurture and promote children's all-round development and total health. The home is the first school and the parents are the first teachers. Our tradition also regards the teacher as one parent and equates them to god. Next to parents (sometimes, even greater), teachers play very important functions in shaping children's minds. Somehow, may be due to very large classes or noninvolved teachers, our schools' climates have become emotionally dull, impersonal. There is very little mutual trust, open communication, or willingness to understand each other in teacher-child relationships. A smiling child eagerly going to school has become a myth.
2. The curriculum should be made suitable, meaningful, appropriate, and interesting by incorporating appropriate teaching techniques for different age and interest groups. Teaching through play, recreation, modeling, humour, story telling, music etc. makes education simpler, smoother, and interesting.

3. Education should be flexible, so that a child can learn everywhere naturally and spontaneously, as rigidity in teaching-learning process is stress-producing.

4. Study should not be confined or restricted in a small room, but can be expanded through periodical educational tours to different places (e.g., forest, market, farm, museum, station etc.) where there is something to learning.

5. The present exclusive emphasis on passive and rote learning requiring only written examination/evaluation of performance generates higher stress and test-anxiety. Children are rarely trained to do 'Shravana, manana, and nidhidhyasana' meaning listening, reflecting, and contemplating. There is very little scope or support for self-initiated, involved, active, or participatory learning - learning by doing or experiencing. Child-centered education is rarely practised. Children are never encouraged to talk freely, act spontaneously, or think and decide independently. This trend must change.

6. Highly ambitious parents with unrealistically high expectations, affectively unresponsive and impersonal teachers,
heavy load of textbooks and home-works involving only writing, and lack of proper career-orientation counselling/training - are not only taxing children's capabilities, but also generating a lot of anxiety, stress, frustration, and negative self-appraisal among them. School children's mental health is still an ignored area of research or public concern.

7. Acquiring personally meaningful knowledge, attitudes, and skills that would help to develop personality and one's worldview to shape one's life needs to incorporated into the education process. Emphasis should not be given only on the completion of the specified courses or lessons, but on the extent to which each child benefits from these. Care must be taken to provide special support or help where necessary. Children must be given opportunity to take decision and select their career according to their interest, ability, and developmental level.

8. The methods adopted by parents and teachers to discipline and control children are often the sources of anxiety and stress for them. Harsh/cruel punishments, negative attributions, self-degrading criticisms, and unnecessary unhealthy comparisons dampen a child's motivation to improve and are never effective. Respecting the child as a 'full' ("Purnam idam ...") human being with a positive mind-set to discover and nurture the best of any child's physical, mental, and spiritual potentialities will not only reduce the unnecessary burden of stress on children, but shall certainly make our education and child-rearing more humane.
CONCLUSION

This thesis reports the investigator's empirical and theoretical studies undertaken to understand the developmental significance or relevance of pain and suffering associated with the PCLS like disadvantage, stress, frustration, conflict, and crisis. The empirical study aimed at investigating developmentally the nature of stressful life situations, the resultant psycho-physical reactions, and the positive coping actions of adolescent Tribal, Rural, and Urban boys and girls of Orissa, India. Based on a thorough review of research, three research instruments were specially constructed and used. The results revealed that irrespective of area, age, and sex; all adolescents encounter some sorts of PCLS which may be caused by self, others in the environment, or due to unknown factors. All children naturally react to, act upon, and cope varingly with these PCLS in the process of development. Not much developmental differences surfaced significantly in children's encounters with stressful life situations, reactions to and coping approaches in these situations; which might have been due to the short two-year age gap between the two groups.

The theoretical investigation resulted in developing an integrated comprehensive theory of pain and suffering associated with PCLS, and in formulating a set of guidelines for preventing, controlling/managing, and/or conquering/over-coming stress and suffering. The proposed theory is in line with the approaches of
Indian schools of philosophy emphasising the four-part analysis of pain such as, *Heya-Hetu-Hana-Hanopaya*; broadly referring to the nature, causes, effects, and ways of controlling pain and suffering. This theory states that (a) the PCLS are immanent with life are randomly/normally distributed in the human population and over an individual's life-span; (b) the PCLS are caused by *Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika, and Adhidaivika* factors; (c) the PCLS have both positive contributions and negative effects on development and life, though the ideal state is to go beyond the dichotomies/ dualities/ opposites, and (d) there are ways to defend against, cope with, overcome, and/or transform the tragedy into a triumph. The overall conclusion emerging from this theory is that early encounters with the PCLS seem to have certain innoculating/immunising effects in developing competence, effective coping styles, and invulnerability in children. A PCLS, viewed with a positive mind-set, confronted actively and boldly, and experienced creatively can have significant contributions towards development of invulnerability, reconstruction of the self, and shaping of life.

While most of the Western research on this topic have not gone beyond controlling/ managing/ coping with stressful PCLS, a synthesis of Eastern and Western knowledge can provide a set of comprehensive guidelines for experiencing stress creatively, living the PCLS harmoniously, suffering meaningfully, and completely overcoming pain through Yoga, Morita therapy, Logotherapy, etc.; which have been presented in detail in the following (IMPLICATIONS) chapter.