CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.3 SUGGESTIONS
5.1 SUMMARY

This chapter contains brief summary of present study, namely, stress, coping resources, and some related factors amongst serving combat veterans. Present chapter includes summary of methodology, statistical analyses, results, limitations, suggestions, and future directions in stress research on military personnel.

Objectives of the study:

The present study addressed itself to following research objectives:

1. To find out whether serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat differ with respect to stress in routine military life, coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception.

2. To find out whether serving military personnel from range 0-10 years of military service and serving military personnel from range 11-20 years of military service differ with respect to stress in routine military life, coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception.

3. To find out whether military personnel from officer rank differ from personnel below officer rank (PBOR) with respect to stress in routine military life, coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception.

4. To find relationship between stress and coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception amongst serving combat veterans.
Hypotheses formulated were as follows:

1. Serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat differ on stress in routine military life.
   
   1a. Serving combat veterans injured in battle perceive lesser stress in routine military life as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.
   
   1b. Serving combat veterans uninjured in battle perceive lesser stress in routine military life as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.
   
   1c. Serving combat veterans injured in battle perceive lesser stress in routine military life as compared to serving combat veterans uninjured in battle.

2. Serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat differ on coping resources.
   
   2a. Serving combat veterans injured in battle have better coping resources as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.
2b. Serving combat veterans uninjured in battle have better coping resources as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

2c. Serving combat veterans injured in battle have better coping resources as compared to serving combat veterans uninjured in battle.

3. Serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat differ on altruism.

3a. Serving combat veterans injured in battle are more altruistic as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

3b. Serving combat veterans uninjured in battle are more altruistic as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

3c. Serving combat veterans injured in battle are more altruistic as compared to serving combat veterans uninjured in battle.

4. Serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat differ on religiosity.
4a. Serving combat veterans injured in battle display more religiosity as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

4b. Serving combat veterans uninjured in battle display more religiosity as compared to other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

4c. Serving combat veterans injured in battle display more religiosity as compared to serving combat veterans uninjured in battle.

5. There is no difference in self-perception of serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat.

6. There is a negative correlation between stress and coping resources amongst serving combat veterans.

7. There is a negative correlation between stress and altruism amongst serving combat veterans.

8. There is a positive correlation between stress and religiosity amongst serving combat veterans.

9. There is a negative correlation between stress and self-perception amongst serving combat veterans.

Additional analyses have also been carried out by considering number of years of military service (0-10 and 11-20 years respectively) and rank status
(officer and personnel below officer rank) with respect to measured variables, namely, stress in routine military life, coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception.

**Sample:**

Total sample for present research constitutes 360 serving armed forces personnel. The sample includes 120 serving combat veterans injured in battle, 120 serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and 120 serving non-combat veterans. Each group has a further split of 60 personnel from range 0-10 years of military service and 60 personnel from range 11-20 years of military service. In each sub group, 30 officers and 30 personnel below officer rank are included in equal numbers.

**Tools used:**

A personal data sheet has been developed to obtain basic demographic information of respondents. It also facilitates in categorizing serving armed forces personnel into different groups according to their combat experiences including injury in battle, number of years of military service, and rank status.

Following tools have been used to measure variables under study:

- Stress measurement scale (developed by present researcher).
- Coping resource inventory (Hammer & Marting, 1988).
- Altruism test (Jain, 1989).
- Religiosity scale (Bhushan, 1990).
• Self-perception inventory (Martin, 1968).
• Personal data sheet (developed by present researcher).

Procedure:

Data have been collected from 360 serving armed forces personnel, all posted in Pune city. Rapport has been established with individuals and before administration of tests; their consent to voluntarily participate has been confirmed. Importance of their sincere and honest responses has been stressed upon to all individuals.

On the basis of information obtained from personal data sheet and as per control variables of types of military personnel with respect to combat experience, number of years of military service and rank status, suitability of military personnel for the present study has been confirmed. For standardized tests, respondents have been given instructions as stated in manual along with examples regarding how to answer. All doubts have been clarified personally by the researcher and it has been ensured that instructions were clear and have been understood by one and all.

Data analyses:

Quantitative analyses

The present study involves testing differences and relationships. This necessitates use of certain statistical techniques that have been applied accordingly for analyses of data.
Three way (3 x 2 x 2) multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) and subsequent multiple univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) have been implemented to study differences between types of military personnel with respect to combat experience (serving combat veterans injured in battle, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle, and other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat), number of years of military service (0-10 years and 11-20 years), and rank status (officer rank and personnel below officer rank) with respect to measured variables.

Product moment correlation coefficients have been calculated to examine relationship between stress and measured variables for serving combat veterans.

Chi-square has been calculated to find differences in alcohol consumption and smoking habits of serving armed forces personnel.

Cronbach’s alpha reliability analysis has been implemented to calculate reliability co-efficient for tools on local sample.

**Qualitative analyses**

In qualitative analyses, two case studies have been considered to understand experiences and perceptions of serving combat veterans in greater detail.
5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The research study considered illustrates positive aspects of combat experiences. Most of the other studies have been unable to uncover positive outcomes of combat experience and on the contrary, give negative outcomes like depression, PTSD, combat stress reactions, and acts of uncivilized behavior. Importance of the study is to show that where all these negative outcomes of combat experience do exist and cannot be wished away, there is hope of some positive outcomes as well which gives a sense of worth and meaning to life to combat veterans after experiencing threat of death and destruction.

The present investigation examined perceptions of combat veterans on variables of the study. For the same, perceptions of combat veterans have been compared with those other serving armed forces personnel not initiated as yet into combat. The present research also explored differences in military personnel with respect to number of years of military service and rank status of an individual on variables selected in the study.

Findings of present study reported following conclusions:

1. Serving combat veterans perceive lesser stress in routine military life as compared to serving non-combat veterans. It is observed that serving combat veterans injured in battle reported significantly lesser stress in routine military life as compared to other military personnel. Findings of the study indicate that military personnel with 11-20 years of military service perceive lesser stress than
military personnel with 0-10 years of military service. Also, officers have lesser stress as compared to personnel below officer rank.

2 There is no significant difference between serving combat veterans and serving non-combat veterans on coping resources. Findings of the study indicate that military personnel with 11-20 years of service have better coping resources than military personnel with 0-10 years of service. Also, officers have better coping resources as compared to personnel below officer rank.

3 Serving combat veterans are more altruistic as compared to serving non-combat veterans. Findings of the present study indicate that military personnel with 11-20 years of service are more altruistic than military personnel with 0-10 years of service. Also, personnel below officer rank are more altruistic as compared to officers.

4 Serving combat veterans display more religiosity as compared to non-combat veterans. Findings of the study indicate that military personnel with 11-20 years of service are more religious than military personnel with 0-10 years of service. Also, personnel below officer rank display more religiosity as compared to officers.

5 Serving combat veterans have better perception of self as compared to serving non-combat veterans with respect to adjustment. However, serving combat veterans uninjured in battle display least maladjustment as compared to serving combat veterans injured in battle and serving non-combat veterans.
Besides, military personnel with 11-20 years of service have better perception of self as compared to military personnel with 0-10 years of service. Also, officers have better perception of self as compared to personnel below officer rank.

**Limitations of the study:**

The study does not consider intensity, multiplicity, and duration of combat experience of serving combat veterans. Further research could include these aspects.

Armed forces personnel with recent exposure to combat experience are posted in ‘live’ combat zone in Jammu and Kashmir as well as Manipur. However, this study is conducted in Pune city where the research has been carried out. The sample has not been taken from a ‘live’ combat zone which is a limitation of the study.

Like in most studies, methodology of data collection with exclusive use of self-report inventories has been a limiting factor in present study. Besides, rigorous controls exercised for getting precise results have placed a few restrictions in selection of the sample. These are:

a) Study is limited to serving armed forces personnel from army only and does not include serving personnel from navy or air force.

b) Study does not include females although they are also serving in armed forces.
c) Study has been limited to serving armed forces personnel posted in military cantonment of Pune city only.

d) Study includes only serving armed forces personnel and does not include retired armed forces personnel.

e) Study includes only those serving armed forces personnel who have less than 20 years of military service. Serving armed forces personnel with more than 20 years of military service have not been considered for present study despite the fact that they have plenty of combat experience, especially in higher ranks in officer cadre.

Besides, research on other variables like leadership, morale, and motivation is also important but present research has focused only on stress, coping resources, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception amongst serving combat veterans.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

Limitations and findings obtained in the present study give certain directions that future research is recommended on following lines:

1. Present study considered only few personality variables, namely, altruism, religiosity, and self-perception. Several other relevant variables like Type A behavior, self-esteem, self-concept, self-confidence, achievement motivation,
hardiness, and leadership styles may be studied in relation to serving armed forces personnel.

2. Further research may consider socio-demographic variables like family environment, social support, education, type of combat or logistic arm, childhood experience, age at time of enrolment, number of siblings, birth order, and type of family that may influence serving armed forces personnel.

3. The present study reflects perceptions of armed forces personnel while they are still in service. It seems extremely probable that perceptions of serving soldiers will undergo considerable transformation when the soldiers retire. While in service, the soldier is buttressed by military discipline and sustained by sense of solidarity with other military personnel. Lack of these things will produce corresponding reactions among veterans. The soldier is likewise protected from certain unpleasant realities by rationalizations which, however, are adequate to their task as long as soldier remains in army, since everyone refrains from questioning them. Likewise, the soldier is isolated from many aspects of communication and shielded from competition. Such protective devices no longer function when the soldier retires and becomes a civilian. For these reasons, studies of perceptions of serving soldiers are useful only insofar as they can be evaluated in the light of probable changes which will occur after release from the armed forces. Hence, it is imperative to study retired military personnel as well.
4. Further research could be done to identify substantial individual and group characteristics critical to combat. This may lead to improvements in training to enhance combat readiness and performance among individuals and unit or sub-unit. It may also provide necessary directions for better recruitment, selection and training programs.

Longitudinal studies need to be carried out on serving armed forces personnel before they are inducted into battle and follow up studies done to determine perceptual and behavioral changes amongst armed forces personnel due to combat.

The findings of this study offer insight into the role of coping resources and few related factors in dealing with stress in the military environment, however, several questions remain. Specifically, what other psychological and social resources could assist a soldier in continuing a mission while experiencing extreme stress in combat.

Extension of the study:

With extensive data available, research in future is proposed to be extended on following lines:

1. The present study considered responses of military personnel under study only, further research may consider other supplementary information from members of the military family to include spouse, parents, and children.
2. The present research has studied stress in routine military life. Further, research may include analysis indicating contribution of each dimension of stress independently, namely, cognitive, occupational, physical, emotional, social, and personal stress.

3. The present research has studied coping resources of military personnel. Further research may include analysis indicating contribution of each dimension of coping resource independently, namely, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical coping resources.

4. The present research has studied general adjustment and general maladjustment dimensions of self-perception of military personnel. Further research may explore dimensions of general adjustment, namely, consistency, self-actualization, and supervision. Additional research may also be done on dimensions of general maladjustment, namely, rigidity-dogmatism, uncommon response, authoritarianism, anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

5. It is recommended that qualitative work and case studies of combat veterans who have been conferred with gallantry award in recognition of their bravery should be done. Such information will assist in developing strategies in proper selection and recruitment in armed forces as well as facilitate training and development of future military personnel.