CHAPTER – V
DISCUSSION

The study examined the latent constructs involved in the emotions of fear, anxiety, depression, and anger in normal children. It was further explored how the identified dimensions relate to well researched temperamental traits; higher-order factors of negative emotions and temperament were also at the focus of study. The findings of the study, in general, provide ample support to most of the hypotheses and pertinent theoretical formulations.

As hypothesized, there are clear sex differences in some of the negative emotions, specifically the fears of various kinds. Girls have shown persistently high degree of fears than boys relating to failure and criticism, injury and animals, medical fear, fear of unknown, danger and death. Although boys are also afraid of unknown and injury and animals, girls at younger age show more fears (Stewart et al., 1985). In many of the earlier studies, like present one, gender differences in fear and anxiety appear to follow a general pattern. Beidel et al. (2000) and Ollendick and King (1991) also observed higher prevalence and intensity of fears and anxiety in girls than boys. Consistent to the finding, Makini et al. (1996) observed greater number of excessive fears among girls than boys. But at the same time a few studies have indicated higher rates of specific anxiety disorders in boys than girls (e.g., Chorpita, Yim et al., 2000).

Depression was not a source of much difference between boys and girls at this age. However, boys have shown greater degree of depressive feelings of ineffectiveness in the present data. Gender differences, if any, in depression are generally attributed to different sex soles and expectations. Still today in many societies boys and girls are not treated equal in respect of
role expectations. Many variables influencing differences in depression have been researched. For example, developmental factors (boy & girls don't grow alike), social pressure to conform to gender discrimination, biological differences, and differential pattern of stress response and coping (Nolen-Hockxema, 2001). Some of the aspects of anger such as anger reaction and trait anger were found to be higher among girls than boys. Theoretical literature regarding anger has traditionally postulated that substantial gender differences exist in the experience and expression of this emotion (Sharkin, 1993).

Most part of these differences is attributable to gender role socialization. In many societies women have traditionally been socialized to be more generally expressive regarding their emotions than men, with the exception of anger (Newman et al., 1999). Sharkin also believed that men tend to be less emotionally expressive than women in a general sense. But the issue relating gender differences in anger needs further explorations as some of the empirical studies point to equivocal inferences. For example, Deffenbacher et al., (1996) opined that, within the limits of methodologies employed, men and women are angered by similar things and to similar degrees, express themselves in similar ways, and suffer similar consequences.

Like some of the earlier studies (e.g., Costa et al., 2001; Else-Quest, 2006), gender differences in childhood temperament clearly surfaced in the present data. Boys tend to keep a high tempo of performing activities and have ability to react adequately in situations demanding long lasting activity (Endurance). They also have the tendency to continue and to repeat behaviour after termination of stimuli evoking said behaviour (i.e. Perseverance). Girls were found to be high in tendency to react to sensory stimuli of low simulative value (Sensor Sensitivity). They are more emotionally reactive than boys; hence tend to react intensively to emotion
generating stimuli, expressed in high emotional sensitivity and in low emotional endurance (Emotional Reactivity).

Therefore, the data obtained in present study confirm Hypotheses 2. But the hypothesis stating no gender differences in endurance has been rejected. Similar observations had been reported by Shiner and Caspi (2003) that boys tend to be higher in emotional volatility and activity, but girls may develop the ability to manage their emotional responses earlier than boys. Gender differences in temperament relate directly to biological basis of temperament. Most theorists consider temperament as a set of biologically rooted early appearing (Costa, McCrae, 2001; Rothbart & Bates, 1998). But there are indications of technical and substantive grounds for doubting the direction of difference. As whitely et al. (1999) pointed out that such conflicting findings are attributable to cultural differences and differences in the measuring tools used in different studies.

Results of correlational analysis provide an evidence of low to modest degree relationship between different negative emotions sampled in the study. Low degree association between fear, anxiety, depression and anger points to some degree of discriminability and heterogeneity between these emotions. However, considerable degree of positive correlation between some of the components of negative emotions is highly probable. Substantial positive correlations between different components of fear and anxiety corroborate Blumberg and Izard’s (1986) finding which posits that fear is the key emotional component in anxiety. Phenomenologically, anxiety is centered on the emotion of fear, and involves feelings of worry, apprehension and dread (Watson & Kendall, 1989). It has been observed that children who are high in trait anxiety have a tendency to perceive wider range of circumstances as dangerous or threatening. Fears some time also become potential sense of anxiety because by nature anxiety is a state of
apprehension, uncertainty and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event.

The findings of low degree association between fear and depression offers an evidence of psychological distinction between these two components of negative emotions. Although this low degree relationship is observed between fear and depression among normal children, there exists relatively strong relationship between fear and depression among clinical cases. Kessler et al. (1999), for example, found that strong associations exist between lifetime social phobia and major depressive disorder. Social phobia taking place at early age predicts subsequent onset of mood disorders, with population at risk in proportions of 10 to 15 percent. Heightened state of fear is also associated with severity and persistence of comorbid mood disorders.

Present data have yielded modest positive relationship between anxiety and depression, which is highly expected. Different models conceptualising pattern of correspondence between these two constructs also confirm this kind of association. Both are recognized to be strong markers of the general negative affect (Tellegen, 1985). No doubt anxiety and depression are phenomenologically distinct from one another; it has been difficult to distinguish these constructs empirically (Clark & Watson, 1991). Clark and Wastson considered both anxiety and depression as components of negative affect. Therefore, positive correlation between them is well understandable.

The study confirms that anger and depression correlate with each other to a considerable degree. Both classic psychoanalytic theory and more contemporary theories have postulated that a relationship exists between anger turned against oneself and depression (Clay et al., 1993). A considerable number of studies have documented correlation between child self-report measures of depression and anger (e.g., Saylor et al., 1984). Painuly et al. (2005) also observed that anger attacks have been found
playing important role in depression. The oversimplified concept of depression as anger directed inward was a commonly held belief over many years, particularly in psychiatry (Bush, 2009). In the realm of psychoanalytic theories anger is believed to be a significant source of conflict for people prove to depression, triggering intense guilt and self-criticism. But in cognitive-behavioural approaches anger may be a symptom of depression to be dealt with, but is not seen as axiological.

Compared to fear-anxiety relationship, the relationship between various kinds of fears and state-trait anger is lower. Since origin of these emotions is linked to different kind of situations, they tend to relate with each other to a lower degree. Anger clearly involves a kind of irritation or annoyance to intense fury and rage. It occurs in response to real or imagined frustration, threat or perceived injustice (Daffenbacher, 1995). Fear is experienced on account of perceived threat to our existence or safety. It’s a more specific reaction to threatening situation, whereas, anger involves some kind of frustration. Some of the earlier researches also reported relatively low correlations between various kinds of fears and anger (e.g., Muris et al., 2001). It shows that fear may not be a compelling source of anger. However, considerable degree of anxiety may surely cause anger. Data of the study also support relatively strong linkage between anxiety and anger. In overall, the findings support hypothesis 4.

The predicted positive correlation between negative emotions and temperamental traits of negative connotation like sensory sensitivity, emotional reactivity has been confirmed, however, the obtained coefficients were rather modest. Since Allport (1937), differential psychologists have consistently been referring temperament to emotional characteristics of behavior. There is widespread agreement among temperament theorists (Eysenck, 1970; Thomas & Chess, 1977; Strelau, 1998) that emotional
experience and emotional regulation are intrinsic to the concept of temperament. This study confirms that temperamental traits of emotional reactivity and sensory sensitivity are the constructs which may be compared with emotionality as understood by Buss and Plomin (1984) and Strelau and Zawadzki (1995). In tune with hypothesis 5 temperamental traits of Briskness, Endurance, and Activity have shown negative correlations with many of the components of emotions, though the correlations are not quite strong. In other studies also (e.g., Strelau & Zawadzki, 1995) briskness showed moderate negative correlations with emotionality characteristics and anxiety. In Strelau’s initial work (Strelau et al., 1990) also it was established that Endurance which is directly related to strength of excitation has shown modest association (inverse) with neuroticism and emotionality, which are themselves negative emotions. Likewise, temperamental trait Activity is a kind of action-oriented trait and represents positive mood.

The findings of structural analysis of negative emotions provide an evidence for psychological distinction and discriminability of depression, fear/anxiety and anger. These results extend the earlier findings on adult population to young children. Principal components analysis of nineteen measures of negative emotions located three clearly distinguishable constructs which were defined as depression, fear/anxiety, and anger. These findings may be viewed in the light of earlier researches on the lines of Clark and Watson (1991) and Barlow et al. (1996) who arrived at slightly different but three-factor structure. Though the study is not directly comparable either with Watson and Clark’s (1984) tripartite model or Barlow et al’s (1996) three-factor solution, findings point to a common inference relating the structure of negative emotions. Apart from depression, fear, and anxiety, the current study has employed the components of anger, hence a different factor of anger. A narrower factor IV was also located with only two marker
variables Anger Control and Anger Expression. It is simply a consequence of partitioning the variance on the part of anger control from general anger factor.

Identification of three second-order factors rules that the emotions tapped by depression, fear, anxiety, and anger are not mutually inclusive; rather seem to be representing distinct latent constructs. Since the study did not sample the measures of stress or distress, only two of the three factors of Watson and Clark's model could be located. With minor departure the factor solution in the present study appears to be more akin to Barlow et al's three-factor solution. Findings differ only in that Barlow et al. conceptualized anxiety as distinct from autonomic arousal. This difference is not unusual, Inclusion of anger as another emotion, which stands distinct to other emotions, made a way for fear and anxiety to go together as interrelated constructs. Not only this, minor departure from these prior solutions may be due to marked differences in the emotions of adults and young children. These results support Hypothesis 7 and suggest concluding that three distinct constructs underlie an array of negative emotions among children.

Conjoint analysis of four second-order factors of emotions and six temperamental traits provided an evidence of communality between the broader factors of emotions and temperamental traits. Structural analysis of this level indentified higher-order temperamental traits with strong loadings of negative emotions. A factor defined as reactive temperament was located with three of the four factors of negative emotions as its markers. The structure of this higher-order factor clearly suggests that reactive temperament shares much of its variance with depression, fear, and anger. Factor II of higher-order analysis brought together both the factors of anger-general anger and anger coping, suggesting that higher the level of anger higher is the possibility of efforts toward its control. Factor III can be
interpreted as Energetic Temperament, which is characterised by highest loading of temperamental trait Activity. Expectedly, depression loads inversely on this factor of temperament. These three higher-order factors are in support of Strelau and Zawadzki's (1995) observations relating nature of temperamental traits and Barlow et al's (1996) conceptualization of three factor model of negative emotions.