CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance. The results of any study can be generalisable only when its methodology has been designed in a sound and systematic manner. Attempt has been made in the following research to follow a sound and systematic methodology. Following is the research methodology used in the present study.

The Research Design

Pilot work

The investigation at the earlier stage was exploratory in nature as the researcher was interested in exploring certain facts about working women. A pilot work was planned to find out the relevancy of the tools, the variables and the strategy of the main investigation for the purpose of this, pilot work on twenty working women with specific characteristics as was designed for the research were located. The tools were administered with all necessary precautions on these women. Thus, the investigator was able to get an idea of the total time range required for the final investigation.

In major perspective it was a field experiment with specific controls. Within subject design was used as only those women were taken who were engaged in the
traditional jobs. Both comparative and interactional paradigms were framed on the basis of sub-groups study. The study included both factorial (ANOVA) and comparative statistics.

The variable

The identification of the independent, dependent and control variable is the most important task confronting the researcher. The goal of all experimental research is to determine the influence of independent variable upon the dependent variable. Thus, the researcher varies the independent variable to ascertain its effect upon the dependent variable and controls all the potential relevant variables. The independent variables with their sub-categories formed on the basis of relative perspective were as following:

Life style

(a) Dominantly positive
(b) Average that is partially positive and partially negative
(c) Dominantly negative

Stress

(a) Psychosocial stress (Familial stress and life events stress)
(b) Occupational stress

Stress was also varied as follows:

(a) High level stress
(b) Average level stress
(c) Low level stress
The dependent variable

Coping behaviour is treated as the dependent variable. Emphasis was given to the functional coping behaviour and two kinds of coping strategies were included.

(a) Emotion focused coping

(b) Problem focused coping

The constant variables

The variables held constant to obtain accuracy is the results were as following.

(a) Working women (engaged in traditional jobs).

(b) Married women with upper age limit of thirty-six plus years (to avoid habituation).

(c) Marital status duration - three to six plus years (to avoid habituation).
TABLE 3.1
THE VARIABLES USED IN THE DESIGN FOR PROBING PURPOSE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Variables</th>
<th>The Rubrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Type of family</td>
<td>(a) Single (b) Joint family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of children</td>
<td>(a) One or two children (b) More than two children (c) No issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spousal relationship</td>
<td>(a) Higher marital quality (b) Lower marital quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Level of education</td>
<td>(a) up to intermediate (b) Above intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Family network support</td>
<td>(a) Husband’s support (c) Family member’s support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sample
Initially two hundred and twenty working women were located for the research work from a few cities of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Uttarakhand. First of all demographical data sheet was administered to all the candidates. Out of two hundred and twenty sheets ten data sheets were rejected on account of insufficient or inaccurate data. After getting the demographical records the investigator did random sampling through random number index and thus one hundred and fifty working women were left with the researcher. After administering all the tools it was found that out of one hundred and fifty subjects seventeen women showed certain sickness symptoms indicating dysfunctional aspects of coping. Therefore, these seventeen women were deleted from the sample and ultimately the investigator was left with the exact size of one hundred and thirty three working women. Hypothesis testing was done on these sampled subjects.

A categorical representation of the demographical data of the working women is shown in the Table 3.2
### TABLE 3.2

**A CATEGORICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA OF WORKING WOMEN N=133**

**Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean age</th>
<th>Age limit</th>
<th>Socio economic status</th>
<th>Literacy level</th>
<th>Professional status</th>
<th>Family structure</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Spousal Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
<td>30.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age limit</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 – 29 years</td>
<td>42.10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 – 36+ years</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio economic status</td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle income group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy level</td>
<td></td>
<td>up to intermediate</td>
<td>7.52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>above intermediate</td>
<td>92.48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>36.09%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post graduate</td>
<td>56.39%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional status</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>63.16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other clerical jobs</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family structure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint family</td>
<td>51.88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single family</td>
<td>48.12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td></td>
<td>up to two children</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>more than two children</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No issue</td>
<td>12.78%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spousal Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher marital quality</td>
<td>84.21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower marital quality</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Tools**

The following tools were administered upon the sampled subjects:

1. **Demographical data**

   (a) **General information:** Respondent’s name, age, qualification, profession, family income was gathered.
(b) **Marital status:** information regarding current marital status was noted.

(c) **Spouse’s information:** name, age, profession, qualification, spousal, relationship (higher / lower marital quality) were gathered.

(d) **Family structure:** Information regarding the kind of family those women were living in namely joint or single, the no. of children they had, children’s age, sex, qualification was also noted.

**The ICMR Psycho-Social Stress Scale**

For the purpose of measuring the psychosocial stress ICMR Psychosocial Stress Scale developed by Srivastava and Pestonjee was used. The Questionnaire altogether consisted of 40 items representing seven categories of social situations of stress. Familial stress was assessed on the basis of the following items.

1. Five items related to time or strained interpersonal relationship.
2. Eight items related to economic constraints; extra economic burden.
3. Five items related to excessive/demanding responsibilities and liabilities and expectations of others.
4. Four items pertaining to marriage related problems (of own/and family member or near relations).
5. Three items pertaining to health related problems (of own/and family member or near relations).
6. Ten items related to adverse social situations, legal property related to disputes or problems.
7. Five items related to perceived or imagined threats to social and economic status or prestige.
In addition to the questionnaire consisting of the routine or chronic situation of psychological stress, a short measure of the psycho-social stress arising from crucial life events taken place in the respondents life in last one year was also taken. This inventory of stressful life events comprised of 13 crucial events which generally take place in the social life of people.

**Scoring**

In order to indicate the frequency or amount of stress experienced by the respondent each item in two measures of psycho-social stress was to be rated by the respondent on a 4 point scale, that is, not at all, mild or sometimes, moderate or many times or often (corresponding numerical scores from 0 to 3, respectively).

Content validity of the questionnaire ranged from .18 to .56 with a median value of .35. Reliability of the stress questionnaire ranged from .64 to .81.

**The Occupational Stress Index**

To measure the extent of stress the employees perceive from various constituent and conditions of their job. The occupational stress index was used which has been developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981). The occupational stress index consists of 46 items to be rated on a five point scale. Out of 43 items, 28 are ‘true-keyed’ and rest 18 are ‘false keyed’. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which cause stress in some way or the other, such as role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, powerlessness and poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability.
Scoring

Since the questionnaire consists of both the true keyed and false keyed items two different patterns of scoring have been adopted for two types of items. Scoring was done in the following manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of response</th>
<th>True Keyed Item</th>
<th>False Keyed Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never/ Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom/ Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes/ Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly/ Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always/ Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reliability obtained for the total index is .93 and for the subscales the range was .45 to .79. The validity range is .40 to .59.

Scoring was done according to the manual and norms were taken on the basis of the maximum and the minimum scores the investigator got from the sample. Thus, high average and low levels of stress was measured on the total scores obtained on psychosocial and occupational stress index scales.

Life Style Inventory

To assess the life style of the respondents, the life style inventory recently developed by Verma and Vohra (2000) on the basis of Basis A inventory developed by Wheeler et al (1993) has been used in this investigation. The life style inventory measures twelve life style themes, each reflecting a different way of approaching the
problems of life. These themes were used to understand the life style. A person with a high score on a theme would typically have certain strengths and possible problem areas in life tasks and person with a low score on some themes may have certain weaknesses though she may have certain strengths. The combination of themes provides an understanding of an individual's life style.

Response Format

Life style inventory had 48 items each statement had five probable answers. The respondents were asked to give responses on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each statement had to be given only one response.

Scoring

Each life style theme had four items which were characteristic of that theme. The total raw score obtained for each life theme was measured on the basis of the percentile norms. One thirty three women were classified into three levels of life style namely dominantly positive, average and dominantly negative.

(A) Dominantly positive life style: To assess the dominantly positive life style scores were assessed of these women. Only those women were taken into this category whose scores were above 70th percentile but the condition was that they should have such scores on more than 50% of the themes i.e. at least six out of twelve themes. Another condition was that the positive themes were included among there six themes. (Primary themes namely. Challenger, Self Dependent, Responsibility Conscious, Rational, Relaxed, Amiable).

(B) Average life style: To assess the average life style again the scores were assessed of that woman. Only those women were taken into this category whose scores
were falling between 40th and 70th percentile, but the condition was that they should have such scores on more than 50% of the themes.

(C) Dominantly negative life style: To assess the dominantly negative life style the scores were again assessed of those women. Only those women were taken with this category whose scores were falling belong the 40th percentile, but the condition was that they should have such scores on more than 50% of the themes.

Coping Strategies Scale

Coping strategies scale developed by Srivastava (2001) was used to measure the coping behaviour of the respondents. The scale comprised of 50 items to be rated on five point scale describing two main features of coping behaviours.

• Problem Focused Coping.
• Emotion Focused Coping.

To assess the problem focused coping 29 items were used and for emotion focused 21 items were used.

Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Categories</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sometimes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Most of the times</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Always</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability of the scale is .97.
Interview Schedule

For the purpose of probing an interview schedule was used. It consisted of questions related to family structure, stressful concerns due to spousal relationship, support network system, family network, support, marital quality support, time of stress, habituation of stress etc. The schedule had both open and closed type of responses and evaluations was done accordingly. The information was noted in the already framed vital categories of responses made by the investigator. Responses were entered in the master sheet and classified. The frequency of responses was noted down and finally for the purpose of analysis converted into percentages.

The Procedure

The procedure was conducted in two sessions.

Session One

During the first session demographical data sheet, psychosocial stress scale and occupational stress index were administrated on the sampled subjects.

Session Two

After a gap of one day, data concerning life style inventory, coping behaviour and interview schedule were gathered.

After the completion of the second session the schedules were checked and edited, errors and omissions were corrected through re-interviewing. The entire tools were administered or filled individually by the client to avoid the connected possible errors of lasting. Finally, the individual scores were noted down in the master sheet to
make the data approachable for analysis. All the data was organized and appropriate tabulation was done for the purpose of analysis of data.

**Statistical Techniques Used**

After collecting the data scoring was done as per instruction given in the manual of the instruments. The raw scores were tabulated into the frequency tables, descriptive statistics like mean and S.D. was computed. Cross tabulation was done to see the pattern of data. To test various hypotheses, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and factorial design was used. For comparison of means 't' test was used.