CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The overall conclusions derived from hypotheses testing and deeper analysis are as following:

1. **Life style and stress interact significantly with each other for coping behaviour of working women** was the first hypothesis. The results of the investigation show that there exists an interaction between life style and stress on coping behaviour of working women. Life style has emerged out as a more prominent factor in comparison to stress regarding coping behaviour of working women.

2. **The second hypothesis, ‘Life style differences make significant differences in coping behaviour of working women’, has also been accepted.** A significant difference regarding coping behaviour of dominantly positive, average and dominantly negative life style was found. Moreover, working women in the dominantly positive life style group have been found to use problem focused coping more than emotion focused coping.

Four life style themes namely, challenger, amiable, flexible and artless has emerged out as the pertinent themes regarding coping behaviour. It has been confirmed that working women who are active, energetic, who accept the challenges of life are deeply and sincerely committed to work have a sense of
belongingness are flexible and not manipulative can cope more in a stressful situation than women who have no commitments to life, are cautious, and have a self-protective non-challenging, passive dependent life style.

3. ‘Stress level differences create significant difference in coping behaviour of working women’ was the third hypothesis and it could not be maintained. In this connection influence of three factors namely, number of children, literacy level of working women have been found and time of stress was investigated by the researcher. Number of children has found to influence stress and coping behaviour. More the number of children more the stress hence more efforts to cope and vice-versa. It is interesting to note that as the literacy level of these women increased, coping behaviour also enhanced. It seems that women in the low literacy group are either not aware of the stress as threatening or they are not capable or resourceful enough to face the stressful events of life. As far as time of stress is concerned most of working women have reported stress in the morning hours, which indicates that these women have to go through the morning hours with heavier work loads and stress related to household, childcare and anxieties due to occupational demands than other part of the day.

4. The next hypothesis, ‘Occupational stress is significantly more than the familial stress for working women’, has also been accepted. Working women have reported occupational stress five times more than the familial stress. To compromise and adjust with the family is a social norm for Indian women and thus most of them have to yield even in the adverse situations. But as far as
occupation is concerned things are quiet different and therefore they are more stresses at the workplace than the family.

Among the familial stressors namely economic constraints, perceived imagined threats, excessive responsibility, interpersonal relations, adverse social situation, marriage related problems and health related problems, economic constraints has been reported as the main cause of familial stress than others. Among the various occupational stressors, maximum stress has been reported due to role overload followed by role conflict under participation and unreasonable group and political pressures. Women have reported lower stress regarding other occupational stressors namely powerlessness, intrinsic impoverishment, role ambiguity poor peer relations, responsibility for person's stressful working conditions and least stress regarding low status and unpredictability.

5. 'Stress level is significantly higher in working women who are living in joint families than those living in single families', was another hypothesis tested. The null hypothesis was maintained as no significant differences were found between working women living in joint families and those living in single families. Moreover, no difference could be seen in the stress level of working women as a function of family structure regarding occupational and psychosocial stress (family and life events stress). Women living in a single family who have no issue have reported more stress than women living in a joint family. But if the size of the family is large, these women reported more stress than in a single family. The results suggests that women having a
dominantly positive life style have to face more stress. But if they are living in a joint family and have a dominantly negative life style, the stress level is increased than those who are living in a single family. As far as the influence of family network support levels is concerned, husband’s support is no doubt very important for working women but it is all the more important for those working women living a single family than living in a joint family.

6. The next hypothesis, ‘Higher marital quality support makes a significant difference in coping behaviour of working women’ has also been accepted. Women who have less marital quality support (couple’s relationship) are more vulnerable to stress hence require more coping. Moreover, in comparison to conventional couples, those who are having symmetrical relationships have little to cope as husbands support act as a buffer on coping behaviour of these dual workers.

7. Another hypothesis tested in the study was, ‘Family network support levels make a significant difference in coping behaviour of working women’. The null hypothesis was maintained as no significant difference was found in the coping behaviour in the context of family network support level.

Husband’s support plays a very important role in coping behaviour of especially in the case of working women. In the context of psychosocial stress working women who have support from both the husband and family members have reported minimum stress and also lesser degree of coping than those who have only husband’s support. No doubt husband’s support is
important but family members too along with husband play a beneficial impact upon the stress and coping behaviour of women. Occupational stress has been shown to have no important influence on coping behaviour inspite of the fact that it was reported much more than the familial stress.

8. ‘Problem focused coping behaviour is significantly higher than the emotion focused one in working women of this category’ was the last hypothesis taken up by the investigator which has also been accepted. The results indicate that the maximum use of cognitive approach strategy was made by the working women and minimum use of cognitive avoidance strategy. It is quiet evident that more than one coping strategy may be used in any stressful situations. It seems that in circumstances where these women have to deal with a situation rationally they seem to change their cognitive structure more than their behavioural part. But in situations which are too demanding and where they are forced to adapt as they have no other choice, out of sheer desperation they do change their behavioural part, though temporality but do not change their cognitive structure. Among the three pertinent variables influencing the coping behaviour of working women namely dominantly positive life style, two or less than two children and a family network support levels (husband and family members) positive life style has found to be the most important variable related to the cognitive approach strategy. More positive the life style, more frequently the use of problem focused strategy of coping.
Implications/ Suggestions

Recently there has been an increased interest in the psychosocial clinical aspects of stress and coping behaviour regarding women involved in multiple roles. Numerous implications can be derived from the results of this investigation for providing help to the women and society at large.

(a) Preparation has become a watchword. All women should prepare themselves to deal with stressful situations. Psychic preparation is required for successful coping and quality of life. Psycho-social skills must be developed for handling stress constructively and effectively.

(b) Creating awareness among women involved in multiple roles about adaptational coping strategies through media, magazine, social contacts, telephone help lines and computer networking.

II. The Recommendation for Policy Makers.
(a) To develop an action oriented insight among clinicians, social workers and women health centers to establish counseling cells for the management of stress especially for those married women who face stress due to multiple roles during the initial phase.

(b) To create support groups, motivate assistance programs, family support services and other crisis intervention programs for working women.
(c) To provide worthwhile contents concerning the management of stress to the section of human resource development of the government in policy making, centering on prophylactic, diagnostic and therapeutic measures. To further motivate the policy makers to arrange programs for the management of stress of work place.

III. Limitations of the Present Research and Suggestions for Future Research.

(A) Every behavioural research report has certain limitations and this study is no exception

1. Prospective longitudinal monitoring of stress is relation to coping among the working women at various stages of their life is needed which will help to clarify the natural course of stress and coping behaviour. Findings of such study would be more meaningful in stress management. It will also inform us of the pre-morbid factors including mental health acceptation that may contribute to the development of current stressor the prevalence and nature of stress and the influence of previous traumatic stressful events on current coping behaviour of these women

2. The researcher has used only the within group design. It world have been better if between group design was used for example traditional versus non-traditional, working versus non-working, more versus less wage
earning women, higher versus lower cadre working both etc., hence the research would have been more beneficial for the understanding of the dynamics of stress and coping and providing self help to the distressed women.

3. For future research extended forms of families should have been taken into consideration especially found in the rural areas. This would enrich the work and give a true picture about Indian working women regarding their stress and coping behaviour.