The topic of the present research investigation is "Social intimacy and religiosity as moderators of the psychological impact of prolonged stress": The damage which accrues both at the physical and psychological level as a consequence of stress is well understood and we find contemporary psychological research focusing itself in a very committed way towards understanding stress. The problem becomes more grave if stress is uninterrupted and human beings have to suffer stress for a prolonged period of time. Situations of prolonged stress are likely to cause deep psychological damage perhaps even at the level of core psychological structures.

Depersonalization and hopelessness were hypothesized to be two important consequences of prolonged stress. Depersonalization is a condition in which the person's perception or the experience of the self is disconcertingly and disruptively altered. Hopelessness refers to a feeling of irretrievable helplessness, it is a concept which conceives of a state which is beyond helplessness. It was further conjectured that certain characteristics within the individual may protect him/her from the impact of prolonged stress. On the basis of empirical evidence and theoretical feasibility, social intimacy and religiosity were identified as the two moderator variables that could buffer the impact of prolonged.

In order to study certain behaviour in prolonged stress condition it was necessary to have for study two levels of the variable, that is, a condition of prolonged stress and a condition of non-prolonged stress. Since this variable can not be actively manipulated, it was manipulated
by selection. The investigator selected two areas of Kashmir for study - prolonged stress area and non-prolonged stress area.

The prolonged stress zone was identified in terms of area having unabated insurgencies for the last twelve years whereas areas in which there were lesser, sporadic or occasional incidents was selected as the non-prolonged stress zone. Individuals residing in the first type of localities constituted the sample of subjects exposed to consequences of prolonged stress and others not subjected to prolonged stress.

Thirteen research questions were formulated. Questions relating to gender, family system and age had subquestions in terms of groups under each variable.

The sample of the present study consists of 150 subjects, 75 drawn from the prolonged stress area and 75 from non-prolonged stress area. Purposive sampling was utilized to draw out the sample. Social intimacy was measured by social intimacy scale developed by Miller and Lefcourt in 1982. Religiosity scale developed by Deka and Broota (1985) was administered to assess religiosity. To measure depersonalization, no appropriate scale was available, therefore the investigator developed a questionnaire type measure, using the rational-theoretical approach. Hopelessness was measured through scale prepared by Beck and his colleagues (1974).

The questionnaires were administered individually in two or three sittings depending upon time which subjects could spare at a particular
moment. t-test was used to test the significance of difference between means.

A brief recapitulation of the results obtained points to the fact that the central contention which the researcher began with has been borne out in the present study. It was found that factor of living in prolonged stress condition leads to certain negative psychological outcomes viz. depersonalization and hopelessness. The results revealed that individuals living in prolonged stress conditions are higher in terms of depersonalization and hopelessness than individuals living in NPSC. The moderating and buffering effect of social intimacy and religiosity was also studied. It was found that both social intimacy and religiosity, moderated the effects of prolonged stress on depersonalization but not on hopelessness. Gender, family status also showed some difference when the two groups were compared on depersonalization and hopelessness. On the whole age was not a significant factor as far as the experience of depersonalization and hopelessness was concerned.

On the basis of experience obtained by the researcher during the work done, it is suggested that studies in which the phenomenological world of the individual is explored, the meaning which he assigns to the stress and trauma being experienced is understood, should be undertaken. The constructivist approach would contribute immensely to understanding of the phenomena.