CHAPTER – VI
The present study of Attitudes toward life of students is triggered by a conviction that meaning and purpose plays a powerfully generative role in development and its role has been recognized in research and practice. "Meaning" and "Purpose" could make a difference that they could motivate someone to do something and shape a person's basic choices about how to live. In this regard Frankl in his Book "Man's Search for Meaning" (1959) wrote:

Man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning. There are some authors who contend that meanings and values are "nothing but defense mechanisms, reaction formations and sublimations." But for myself, I would not be willing to live merely for the sake of my "defense mechanisms," nor would I be ready to die merely for the sake of my "reaction formations." Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values (p. 121).

It has been noticed that young students lack motivation and healthy attitudes towards life, which leads to poor performance in examination
and apathetic attitudes towards life. People somehow, have lost contact with their inner-self. They are consciously unaware of their purpose in life according to the demand of their inner self. They have little time to discover the meaning of their life, consequently, it creates conflicts and tensions. McCarthy (1980) points out “a lack of purpose in life has been described as a general indication of depression.” The entire human race may suffer from existential vacuum, if they do not find meaning and purpose in their life which demands serious consideration particularly in case of youth.

The clinical observations of Erikson and his followers demonstrate that, when young people find nothing to dedicate themselves to while growing up, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to acquire motivating belief systems later in life (Erikson, 1968, Marcia, 1980). The result is a sense of “drift” that can lead to personal as well as social disorder. Research has shown that the personal effects of purposelessness may include self-absorption, depression, additions, and a variety of psychosomatic ailments and the social effects may include deviant and destructive behavior, a lack of productivity, and an inability to sustain stable interpersonal relations (Damon, 1995).

The meaning and purpose of life are two basic dimensions of Attitudes toward life. Most of the studies of Attitudes toward life are based on
meaning and purpose in life. The most common work on purpose is a variety of studies using Crumbaugh and Maholick’s (1967) purpose in life test (PIL). The original study, conducted by the authors revealed that the PIL distinguishes significantly between psychiatric patient and non-patient populations. A consistent progression of scores was found, with graduate students scoring highest and hospitalized patients scoring lowest. This was the beginning of a trend that looked at the relation between purpose and a number of maladaptive behaviors and outcomes. Studies suggest a relation between lower scores on PIL and drug involvement (Noblijasde la Flor, 1997; Padelford, 1974), young people’s participation in risky and antisocial behaviors (Sappington & Kelley, 1995; Sayles, 1994), and alcoholism (Schlesinger, Susman & Koenigsberg, 1990, Waisberg & Porter 1994).

On the more positive side purpose in life has been related to young people’s participation in risky and antisocial action (Butler, 1968) and is a mediating factor between religiosity and happiness (French and Joseph, 1999). In a review of work on the construct, Yalom (1980, in Zika & Chamberlain 1992) found that a lack of meaning in life was associated with psychopathology, while positive life meaning was associated with strong religious beliefs, membership in groups, dedication to a cause, life values and clear goals. Lazarus and DeLongis (1983, in Zika &
Chamberlain) suggested that sources of personal meaning influence processes of stress and coping.

It is clear from above paragraphs that a number of researches on meaning & purpose in life have been conducted related to different dimensions. But no study has been conducted on Attitudes towards life of young students, related to various dimensions of personality. Thus, the present researcher has made a humble attempt to explore Attitudes towards life in relation to certain personality variables among undergraduate students.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

Every research must have some objectives to achieve. The present study aimed at achieving the following objective:

(1) To explore the relationship between dimensions of Life Attitudes and twenty Personality variables for the total sample.

(2) To assess the relationship between factors of Life Attitudes and Personality variables for the students of Science and Social Science stream.

(3) To examine the relationship between factors of Life Attitudes and Personality variables among male and female students.
(4) To determine the contribution of personality variables (independent variable) to factors of Life attitudes (dependent variable) in terms of accountable variance for the total sample.

(5) To find out the contribution of personality variables to life attitude factors in terms of accountable variance for students of science and social science stream.

(6) To determine the contribution of personality factors to dimensions of Life attitudes in terms of accountable variable among male and female students.

6.2 HYPOTHESIS

In the light of the objectives of the present investigation, following hypotheses were made. All the hypotheses were formulated in the form of Null hypotheses.

(1) There will be no significant relationship between factors of Life Attitudes and Personality variables for the total sample.

(2) No significant relationship will be reflected between Life Attitude factors and personality variables for the students of Science and Social Science streams.
(3) There exists no significant relationship between the components of Life Attitude and Personality variables among male and female students.

(4) The personality variables (Independent variable) do not contribute significantly to factors of Life Attitudes (Dependent variable) for the total sample.

(5) There will be no significant contribution of personality variables to Life Attitude components for Science and Social Science students.

(6) There will be no significant contribution of personality variables to Life Attitude factors among male and female students.

Second chapter that is “Review of related studies” covered studies related to various dimensions of attitudes towards life.

Third chapter was devoted to “Design and Methodology”. Which includes sampling, tools, procedure and data analysis. In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, two measures were employed.

For measuring Life Attitudes of undergraduate students “Life Attitude Profile” (LAP) was used, which is designed to assess the degree of existential meaning and purpose in life. The Life Attitude Profile (LAP) is constituted of seven factors namely – Life Purpose, Existential vacuum,
Life Control, Death Acceptance, Will to Meaning, Goal Seeking and Future Meaning to Fulfill.

The personality of the students was measured by using the Multi-dimensional Assessment of Personality (MAP) test (Form A). The test measure 20 dimensions covering Adaptability, Achievement motivation, Boldness, Competition, Enthusiasm, General ability, Guiltproneness, Imagination, Innovation, Leadership, Maturity, Mental health, Morality, Self-control, Sensitivity, Shrewdness, Self-Sufficiency, Suspiciousness, Social warmth and Tension.

The data on all the measures was collected from 400 undergraduate students of Science and Social Science streams studying at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

The data in this study was analyzed by Pearson’s Product moment correlation coefficient and by stepwise multiple regression analysis. The analysis was carried out on total sample as well as on different groups separately.

The results of the analysis along with necessary tables and its interpretations were presented in the fourth chapter, however the fifth chapter covered the discussion of results.
6.3 FINDINGS

In order to ascertain the effect of independent variable viz. twenty personality variables on the dependent variable i.e. Attitudes towards life, the multiple regression technique has been applied on total sample and different groups. Regression analysis revealed following results on total sample:

- Leadership and enthusiasm were found to contribute significantly to life purpose, a component of Life Attitude Profile (LAP) in total sample. Leadership contributed positively, however, enthusiasm made a negative contribution to life purpose.

- Tension as an independent variable affected the existential vacuum positively in total sample. Tension along with general ability also contributed significantly, but the contribution of general ability is negative.

- Adaptability has been found to contribute significantly and negatively to life control in total sample.

- On the measure of death acceptance leadership, tension and general ability have been identified as significant potential variables. Leadership and general ability are affecting death acceptance
positively while tension contributed negatively to death acceptance in total sample.

- Guiltproneness as a personality variable emerged as the single potential predictor of will to meaning in total sample. Guiltproneness contributed positively to will to meaning of total sample.

- For goal seeking dimension of life attitude profile three personality variables guiltproneness, leadership and maturity have been found as potential determiners in total sample. Guiltproneness and leadership contributed positively. Maturity, however contributed negatively to goal seeking.

- None of the personality variables affected significantly future meaning to fulfill in total sample.

A perusal of results of total sample, reveal that leadership and Guiltproneness play an important role in determining life attitudes.

When multiple regression analysis was conducted on students of science stream, following results were obtained:

- Maturity, tension and sensitivity were identified as potential predictors affecting total scores of life attitude profile. All these
variables contributed negatively to composite life attitude scores among science students.

- Sensitivity among science students contributed significantly and negatively to life purpose dimension of life attitudes profile.

- Achievement motivation of science students affected negatively to existential vacuum.

- Enthusiasm, mental health and innovation as independent variables contributed significantly on the measure of life control of science students. Enthusiasm and mental health contributed negatively to life control, however the effect of innovation on life control was positive.

- The effect of self-control and shrewdness have been found to be statistically significant on death acceptance. Self-control was found to contribute positively, while shrewdness affected death acceptance negatively in case of science students.

- Guiltproneness, sensitivity and self-sufficiency were found to contribute significantly to goal seeking among students of science stream. Guiltproneness affected goal seeking positively, but a negative contribution was made by sensitivity and self-sufficiency.
• In case of science students maturity affected future meaning to fulfill negatively, whereas, boldness was found to contribute positively to future meaning to fulfill.

Students of social science stream show quite different results than science students. The findings are very interesting as those personality variables which contributed significantly to life attitudes and its components in science students did not affect significantly among social science students. The findings related to students of social science stream are presented in following paragraphs.

• Leadership, Guiltproneness and self-sufficiency were found to be the most significant predictors of life attitudes as a whole among social science students. These variables predicts life attitudes of students positively that is students with high leadership quality, high guiltproneness and high self-sufficiency have high attitudes towards life.

• Leadership and sensitivity were identified as two potential predictors which contribute significantly and positively to life purpose in social science students.
• It was found that tension, guiltproneness and general ability contributed significantly and positively on the measure of existential vacuum among social science students.

• None of the personality variables contributed significantly to life control among social science students.

• The effect of general ability and tension were found to be statistically significant on death acceptance. General ability affected death acceptance positively, while tension contributed negatively in case of social science students.

• Leadership and Guiltproneness contributed positively to will to meaning in case of social science students.

• Leadership, morality and guiltproneness appeared to be the most contributing variables to goal seeking in social science students. These variables contributed positively on the dimension of goal seeking.

• Effect of self-sufficiency and adaptability were found to be significant and positive on the measure of future meaning to fulfill.

Regression analysis revealed following results on male students.

• For the male students three personality variables viz enthusiasm, leadership and guiltproneness significantly affected total scores of
life attitude profile. Enthusiasm affected life attitudes negatively, however positive contributions were made by leadership and guiltproneness.

- Enthusiasm, morality and leadership quality of male students contributed significantly to life purpose. Enthusiasm appeared to affect negatively on the measure of life purpose also, on the other hand morality and leadership influenced life purpose positively.

- Tension and mental health were identified as two potential predictors determining the existential vacuum of male students. These predictors contributed significantly and positively to existential vacuum.

- None of the personality variables have been found to effect the life control of male students.

- The effect of competitiveness and general ability was found to be significant and positive on the measure of death acceptance of male students.

- Guiltproneness emerged as single personality variable predicting will to meaning positively among males.
• Guiltproneness was identified as the most potential predictor also
  on the measure of goal seeking. Guiltproneness along with
  leadership contributed positively to goal seeking among males.

• Enthusiasm appeared to be the single predictor variable
  determining the future meaning to fulfill negatively in case of male
  students.

Results of regression analysis conducted on female students reveal the
following results:

• Mental health appeared to be the single personality variable
  determining life attitudes scores of female students. Mental health
  was found to affect composite life attitude scores negatively.

• Leadership was found to be the best predictor of life purpose
  among females. Leadership in combination with achievement
  motivation influenced life purpose positively.

• Maturity was found to be significant but negative predictor of
  existential vacuum and goal seeking among female students.

• Mental health was identified as the negative predictor of life
  control and future meaning to fulfill in case of female students.

• Leadership emerged as single predictor of death acceptance among
  females. Leadership contributed positively to death acceptance.
• None of the personality variables appeared to contribute significantly towards the will meaning dimension of life attitudes among female students.

• Mental health contributed negatively to future meaning to fulfill among female students.

6.4 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Knowledge is a prerequisite for all kind of success in life. Education should prepare the youth to understand existential problems. Which in a great way is associated with value oriented education – an education which (takes care of) is based on the philosophy of sound mind, sound body including sound spirit. This is the demand of the day.

Personal striving, which refers to goals that individuals try to achieve in every day behavior, have emerged as a new topic of empirical inquiry (Emmons, 1986). Similarly, meaning and purpose in life have become an empirical focus in gerontological research (Reker, Peacock & Wong, 1987). Moreover, as Waterman (1984) has stressed, realizing one’s goals or purpose in life is not always easy it requires effort and discipline which may at times be at odds with short-term happiness.

Moral or ethical issues are central to our life. Today there is concern about a growing incivility and an apparent decrease in level of caring for
each other. Morality among students has become an area of major concern in psychology and social science researches. Frankl provide evidence of decline in level of morality among youth. The education commission (1964-66) while recommending the education of moral values in schools highlighted the importance of a proper value-orientation to our educational system (p. 19). Later the National Policy of Education (1986) voiced the growing concern over erosion of essential values and the increasing cynicism in society and stressed the need for readjustments in curriculum to make education a forceful tool for cultivation of social and moral values. The result of the present study show a positive relationship between morality and life attitudes so the increase in moral values leads students to have positive attitudes towards life.

Mental health is an inseparable part of education. In education, sound mental health is necessary. Learning and retaining knowledge depend on sound mental health. Goldenson (1994) defined mental health as a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, relative freedom and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the demands and stress of life.

The finding of the present research that mental health contributed negatively to existential vacuum is an important implication. Existential vacuum can enhance frustrations and leads to incapability in handling the
stresses of life. Therefore, a proper grounding on a proper training in enhancement of existential meaning and guidance in mental health will help students to a great extent.

Guilt proneness contributes positively and significantly to different dimensions of attitudes towards life e.g. meaning will to meaning, goal seeking and composite scores of life attitude profile. This finding also has important implications. The training of the youths for assuming responsibility and guilt over being irresponsible is very necessary for the development of a healthy society.

Leadership emerged as a very important predictor to different dimensions of Life attitudes. Leadership contributed positively to life purpose, death acceptance, goal seeking and composite life attitude scores. Every nation needs good leaders. So training in leadership qualities makes a person more understanding towards his existence.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Researches and explorations are not the end results but these always open the way for future investigations. Similarly, the present work is not the end in this area. In fact, all the variables can never be studied in a single research. So the present study is confined to study the attitudes towards
life and certain personality variables only. The results of the present investigation led to certain possibilities for further researches.

Further researches may be conducted on attitudes towards life of students in relation to other personality dimensions which were not included in the present study. Moreover, demographic variables could give some interesting findings. This type of study may also be conducted in cross-cultural context.

It is suggested that further studies in this area may compare students of Arts and Commerce stream also. This will enable to find out the difference of attitudes towards life between different groups.

Larger sample provide better results, but the present research work is confined to only 400 undergraduate students. Thus it cannot claim for its comprehensiveness. Future researches may be conducted on even much larger sample. The results may provide greater insight for students and teachers.