CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND
IMPLICATIONS
SUMMARY

In the present investigation, an attempt has been made to study the role of locus of control, role conflict and quality of life in the relationship of stressful life events with anxiety, and general well-being in employed women, and housewives of middle and lower socio-economic status. On the basis of review of literature, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypotheses:

I. Stress would have a positive relationship with anxiety.

II. Stress would have a negative relationship with general well-being.

III. The relationship of stress with anxiety would be moderated by (a) quality of life, and (b) locus of control in non-working women; and in case of working women, besides locus of control and quality of life it would also be moderated by (c) role conflict.

IV. The relationship of stress with general well-being would be moderated by (a) quality of life, and (b) locus of control in non-working women; and in case of working women, besides quality of life and locus of control it would also be moderated by (c) role conflict.

Besides, the study also aimed to find out whether there were any differences between working and non-working women of middle and lower class on quality of life, locus of control, anxiety, and general well-being. The study also aimed to find whether middle and lower class women differ on role conflict.

For the purpose of investigation, 150 married working and 150 married non-working women (age range 25-40 years) staying at Chandigarh
with their husbands, and having children up to the age of 12 years were taken. Out of 150 working and 150 non-working women, 75 each were taken from middle and lower class. Middle class working women comprised clerical staff of government institutions whereas, the lower class working women were the peons, sweepers, household helpers, etc. who worked from morning till evening.

Women were contacted personally and were administered Rotter’s locus of control scale (Kumar and Srivastva, 1985), anxiety scale (Aatam Mulayankan Prashanvali; Spielberger et al., 1973) and quality of life scale (Moudgil et al., 1986) on one day, and stressful life events scale (Presumptive stressful life events scale; Singh et al., 1984), role conflict scale (self-constructed), and general well-being scale (PGI general well-being measure; Verma and Verma, 1989) on another day.

Moderator regression analysis, two way analysis of variance, and ‘t’ test were applied on the different variables. To see whether the relationship between stress and anxiety; and stress and general well-being is moderated by quality of life, role conflict and locus of control, moderated regression analysis was applied. Then high and low groups on moderator variables in working as well as non-working women were formed and comparisons between these groups were made on anxiety and general well-being. Different analyses revealed the following results:

1. Relationship between stress and anxiety was significantly positive (though low) in working women in some of the stress dimensions, i.e., negative stress last year, total stress last year, positive stress anytime; with total stress anytime, the correlation just missed the 0.05 level of significance. In case of non-working women, none of the correlations between anxiety and different dimensions of stress were significant.
2. General well-being significantly positively correlated with all but one (negative stress last year) dimensions of stress in working women. However, none of the correlations between stress and general well-being were significant in non-working women.

3. Quality of life was found to be a significant moderator in the relationship of stress and anxiety, but not in the relationship of stress and general well-being.

4. In both working as well as non-working groups, women with high quality of life experienced less of anxiety and had better general well-being.

5. Role conflict was found to be a significant moderator in the relationship between stress and anxiety (except positive stress last year and positive stress anytime).

6. Role conflict emerged as a significant moderator in the relationship of stress (all sub-categories except positive stress last year) and general well-being.

7. In high role conflict group, women experienced more anxiety than low role conflict group.

8. There was no significant difference between high and low role conflict groups on general well-being.

9. Locus of control was a significant moderator in the relationship of stress and anxiety in working women but not in non-working women.

10. Locus of control was a significant moderator in the relationship of stress (only negative stress last year) and general well-being in working women, and in case of non-working women also, it significantly moderated the relationship between stress (negative and total stress anytime) and general well-being.
11. In non-working women, externals were high on anxiety and had lower general well-being. The trend was same in working women, though not significant.

12. Working women were higher on stress than non-working women.

13. The difference between working and non-working women on stress was there in the middle class but not in the lower class.

14. Middle class women experienced more negative as well as total stress anytime than lower class women.

15. Middle class women were more external than the lower class women.

16. Quality of life was better in the lower class women as compared to the middle class women.

17. The difference between working and non-working women on quality of life was significant in the lower class (with working women showing better quality of life than non-working women) but not in the middle class.

18. Non-working women experienced more anxiety than working women.

19. Middle class women were more anxious than lower class women.

20. Working women had better general well-being than non-working women.

21. Lower class women were higher on general well-being than middle class women.

22. Lower class women were significantly higher on role conflict than their middle class counterparts.

**CONCLUSIONS**

An overview of the obtained findings would lead one to conclude that the working women perceive more stress in life events (both positive and negative) compared with the non-working women. It is more so in the middle class.
class than in the lower class. However, it is interesting to note that the working women, in-spite of being under more stress, have a higher general well-being as compared with non-working women. It is possible that these women have evolved certain coping strategies which help them combat the stress perceived by them. The feelings of self-worth due to their being earning members of the family may be helping them overcome the effects of perceived stress. Also they are able to leave the stressful thoughts aside after a while due to their involvement and preoccupation with the work-place assignments. The working women are also less anxious compared with non-working women. Again, it could be due to the buffer effects of employment. These women would be interacting more with people outside home which may help them in releasing their anxiety.

Another conclusion, one can draw on the basis of the present findings is that in working women, the relationship of stress (especially negative) with anxiety is moderated by quality of life, role conflict, and locus of control. Women, who have better quality of life, lesser role conflict and are internal, have lower anxiety. With regard to general well-being, locus of control and role conflict would moderate the effects of stress in working women. In the non-working women, quality of life moderates the stress-anxiety relationship, whereas internality reduces the impact of stress on general well-being.

As regards socio economic status, one can, on the basis of the present findings, conclude that middle class women, are more external and anxious compared with those from the lower class. Interestingly, the lower class
women have been found to have better general well-being and quality of life (especially working women). The concepts of general well-being and quality of life refer to the subjective feelings and perceptions of the individual. To a large extent, these depend upon the person's expectations in life, self satisfaction, social satisfaction, and satisfaction from life achievements, contentment, and so on. The same situation / achievement would be evaluated differently by the different individuals. The lower class people, though have meager means, yet they may find satisfaction in their kinship relationships and small little achievements in life. Their aspirations, by and large, are low and they are contented with what they have. They also accept things more easily, thinking that such is their lot. In the middle class, on the other hand, the quest for upward mobility seems to be never-ending. Their lust for more and more possessions would reduce their general well-being and the perceived quality of life. In short, one would tend to conclude that general well-being and quality of life do not emanate from money or materialistic possessions. The above reasoning would also explain the conclusion that the middle class women are more anxious than the lower class women.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have certain implications for the families and psychologists. The same are listed below:

Working women should be helped in not developing role conflict so that the effects of stress on their general well-being and anxiety could be reduced. For this, workshops involving both spouses would be of great value. In these workshops, an attempt should be made to change the rigid and traditional attitudes towards women. They should be given the information about how to deal effectively with the changing scenario, where
women go out for work along side the husband. The working women should be helped in minimizing the role conflict so that they could have better general well-being and lesser anxiety. Husbands should be made to realize that their help in the household chores, encouragement and emotional support is very essential for their wives - especially if they go out of home for work.

Young parents' participation in workshops pertaining to the upbringing of boys and girls may also be fruitful. The benefits of changing sex roles and androgyny should be discussed at length so that they become ready to teach both boys and girls to participate equally in the household chores and respect each other's roles. Mass education programs can be organized. This would help the future husbands to be more supportive and the wives having minimum role conflict.

Programs can be chalked out where women are enlightened about the benefits of looking into themselves and realize that they should accept responsibility for the various contingencies rather than putting the blame on others. This would help them to be stronger to face various situations. More their locus of control becomes internal, better would be their general well-being and lesser would be their anxiety, in the event of same amount of perceived stress. Counselling sessions would be of great importance in this regard.

There is a need to emphasize the role of quality of life to minimize the effects of stress on anxiety. Women must learn to perceive the positive side of the life circumstances and be contented and satisfied.

It may here be pointed out that the above mentioned approaches do not grant a sudden change in the condition of women, but are the steps in the direction of preparing the younger generation to cope with advancements and bridging the gap between the traditional and modern life.
styles, and eventually building a nation with happy, contented women who are the creators of the generations to come.