CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUSIONS
The foregoing chapters have documented the planning, execution and outcome of a programme planned to treat patients in their own home surroundings. The following conclusions emerge from the study:

1. Home treatment for schizophrenic patients is feasible, practical and economical.

2. The patients treated at home show advantages over the patients treated in the hospital in the sphere of clinical improvement and their social functioning ability.

3. The burden placed on the families of the patients reduces significantly more in the group of patients treated at home.

4. Attitudes of relatives toward mental illness show slight improvement in the group of patients kept in the home.

5. The parameters of clinical severity, social functioning and burden of family show a very high correlation.

These conclusions lead one to advocate home treatment of the mentally ill persons with regular visits by a nurse. However, it is worthwhile being cautious about certain factors. A small number of patients
could not complete the treatment successfully. The analysis of their symptoms and socio-cultural backgrounds reveal that patients who exhibit suicidal and destructive behaviour are difficult to be managed entirely by family members. Similarly, patients prone to aimless wandering tend to be lost if the family cannot provide adequate supervision. In this context, it is essential that the family has enough potential to supervise the patients' activities. There should be at least one member, who could assume this responsibility. In cases where such support may not be possible, it may be advisable to admit the patient to a hospital.

The present study also indicates certain socio-cultural characteristics associated with successful outcome on home treatment, such as nuclear family status, higher age group etc. This opens new avenues for further research. Systematic efforts at identifying the particular social factors associated with successful outcome of home treatment may enable one to develop a criteria as a basis for decision making regarding whether a patient can be treated at home or he needs hospitalization. It may also be interesting to find out the level of pathology that can be tolerated by the families when the treatment is to be instituted at home.
Furthermore, a probe into relative importance of various dimensions of pathology that exert burden on the families could also throw light on such issues as what makes a family to insist on a patients' admission in a hospital. It may also be worthwhile to carry out a proper cost-benefit study which may take into consideration the psychological and social dimensions of costs and benefits.