Chapter V

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

- Objectives of the study; Method; Major findings; Tenability of the hypotheses; Implications of the study; Limitations of the Study; Suggestions for Further Research; Conclusion
This chapter describes a summary of the research work, major findings the research reached at, the tenability of the hypotheses in the light of these findings, implications of the study and finally some suggestions for further research.

Mental health intervention in prison population is a dire need of the time. Many agencies working at international as well as international levels on human rights, correctional reforms, criminal justice system and mental health promotion have reiterated this issue. Fortunately, India, being a signatory to several historically important UN covenants on prisoners has initiated some bold steps in this regard. The formulation and implementation of the prison manual at the national level is a tell-tale instance. At state levels also, such positive measures in correctional perspectives have been taken. Moreover, prison reform has become a serious agenda for administrators as well as legislators in India. To cap it all, the advent of judicial activism on the part of judiciary deterred the perpetrators of authoritarian atrocities in prisons in the country. This does not at all mean that the Aegean stable has been cleansed.

The Indian as well as international correctional scenarios remind us that much has to be done towards the fulfillment of basic objectives of correctional component of the criminal justice system. Recidivism, high rate of mental morbidity in among serving prisoners and zombification resulting in living dead ex-convicts are some of the grave problems as the sporadic reports point out. No authentic research is done in any aspect of prison life in the country. Let alone the research on psychological aspect of imprisonment.
Going through the literature regarding correction, correctional psychology and correctional mental health research, the investigator came to a conclusion that poor mental health among the prisoners was a main barrier to correctional success. Effectiveness of correction relies on its main prerequisite, mental health of the convicts on whom the correctional measures administered. Correctional activity *per se* is a psychological process since it involves learning and de-learning process. Optimum level of mental health is necessary for the learner to be ready and motivated for the learning. The lower the mental health status of convicts, the weaker the correctional influences are upon them. This underscores the primacy of mental health intervention in prisons. Such an intervention will indeed support and supplement the diathetical remolding aimed at by the correctional mission.

The interviews with correctional officials at various levels and prison visits in person convinced the investigator that there were different forms of mental health promotion programs in prisons such as yoga, meditation, vipassana and anti-drug counseling. Admittedly, they have proved themselves to be capable of enhancing the mental health status of the target population. But, they apparently focus on the neuro-endocrinal aspects of mind. The psychological aspect of the mind matters when mental health promotion is concerned. Further, any mental health promotion program in prison must go with the correctional practices being implemented there. So, there is a need for a multi-pronged program for mental health enhancement among convicts.

Psycho-education is thought to be potential in raising one’s psychological well-being. Its basic assumption is that one’s awareness or knowledge influences one’s thinking and thereby one’s behavior and emotions. Psycho-education aims at
imparting psychological literacy that helps one to be aware of the basic factors regarding the mental process. This knowledge enables one to understand the behavioral pattern of oneself and others. Psycho-education also provides training in skills that keep one mentally healthy. It led to a thinking that if psycho-education tailored to the specific needs of correctional settings would be more advantageous. Hence, the present correctional psycho-education. As it took a trans-theoretical approach in using concepts and devices, it was described as integrative. On the basis of these convictions, the researcher made an integrative correctional psych-education package with a view to enhance mental health among convicted prisoners, who suffer the psychological ill-effects of imprisonment much more than any other sections of the prison population. The researcher aspired to conduct an investigation into the efficacy of the package in prison setting. With objectives determined and hypotheses formulated, a research proposal to conduct a mental health intervention study in the Thiruvananthapuram Central Prison was submitted to the Home Ministry, Government of Kerala. Upon getting the sanction from the government for a period of 6 months, the researcher garnered adequate background knowledge on the central prison in particular and correctional programs in general by interviewing the top-brass officers as well as the ones in the lower rungs.

The study started after having prepared the modules and other materials related to the study package. The screening test had already been conducted on 307 willing convicts and a sample of 50 convicts who scored least in the test had been selected through inclusion and exclusion criteria. The sample was divided into the experimental group and the control group with equal number randomly. All the
sample elements had also been subjected to a structured interview for preparing a
detailed socio-demographic data sheet and profiling.

The experimental group was exposed to intervention for 6 months, strictly
following a work schedule. The prison superintendent and his colleagues whole-
heartedly gave the investigator all the support and timely directions with regard to
conduct of the study in the prison premises. The investigator was allowed a separate,
convenient room for counseling the experiment subjects and conducting the
interventional classes. Moreover, some warders were engaged to assist the study. The
integrative correctional intervention package contained programs such as crisis
intervention counseling (individual and group), interactive and multimedia-based
psycho-education sessions aimed at psychological literacy and basic skills training in
emotional intelligence, life skills and stress management. The intervention was
arranged in such a way that it did not come in conflict with the subjects’ prison duties.
Suitable andragogical strategies were planned and implemented in order to make the
classes effective. As the intervention proceeded, the subjects grew more adjusted to
the program. Their responses made the investigator convinced that the subjects were
improving their mental health and prison life adjustment. When the intervention was
about to terminate, feedback of the participants was collected. After one week of the
termination, the posttest was administered to both the experimental group and the
control group, using the same tool as in the pre-test.

The data collected through pre- and posttests were put to statistical analysis
that involved both descriptive as well as inferential measures such as mean,
percentage, standard deviation, frequency, independent sample t-test, paired sample t-
test and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. A follow-up observation of
the participants was not possible as the request in that respect was turned down by the
authorities concerned citing security issues.

However, the investigator strongly believes that the study has fulfilled its
objectives. The hypotheses were tested on the basis of the following findings arrived
at through statistical analysis and interpretation of the data.

METHOD

The present study was an attempt to examine the efficacy of an integrative
correctional psycho education package in enhancing the mental health status of the
convict prisoners. The sample for the study was selected through a screening test on
mental health status. The screening test was administered to 307 willing convicts
undergoing incarceration in Thiruvananthapuram Central Prison. Using purposive
sampling technique, 50 testees who scored lowest in the test were selected for the
sample with their informed consent. The total sample was divided into the
experimental group and the control group through randomization. Both the groups
were found matched on the basis of mental health status and prison life adjustment.
The screening test scores obtained by the sample were considered as the pre – test
scores. The experiment group was exposed to the integrative psycho-education
package for six months. After a week of the termination of the intervention, the tests
were again administered on both groups and data were collected. The collected data
were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods with the help of SPSS 15.0
version.
The main statistical techniques employed include.

1. Frequency and Percentage.
2. Mean and Standard Deviation
3. Independent sample t – test
4. Paired sample t – test
5. Person correlation co-efficient

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were:

1. To formulate an integrative psycho-educational package specially-suitied to the correctional purposes.
2. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to enhance the mental health status of the convicts in a prison setting.
3. To develop a convicts’ prison adjustment inventory to assess the impacts of imprisonment on the psychological well-being of convicts.
4. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in attitude towards self among convicts.
5. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in self–actualization among convicts.
6. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in integration among convicts.
7. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in autonomy among convicts.
8. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in perception of reality among convicts.
9. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant rise in environmental mastery among convicts

10. To measure the effectiveness of integrative correctional psycho-education to bring about a significant positive change in prison life adjustment among convicts

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The integrative correctional psycho education package developed by the investigator for the purpose of the present study was found to be effective in enhancing the mental health status of the convict prisoners.

2. The convicts’ prison life adjustment inventory developed by the investigator was also found valid and reliable since its measurements were highly correlated with the mental health status measurement.

3. The package was found to be effective in bringing out a significant rise in the component – attitude towards self.

4. Integrative correctional psycho educational was found to have efficacy to bring about a significant increase in the component – self actualization.

5. The intervention was able to effect a significant increase in the component – integration. It confirms the efficacy of the intervention package.

6. The study ended with a significant positive change in autonomy among the participants. It also points to the efficacy of the package.

7. The intervention managed to effect a significant enhancement in the components – perception of reality. This asserts that the ICPE package was effective in bringing about a positive change in perception of reality.

8. The intervention study also could cause a significant rise in the component – environmental mastery. It signifies the effectiveness of the package.

9. The ICPE package was also found efficacious in significantly enhancing the prison life adjustment of the convicts.

10. The control group registered a further fall on mental health and prison life adjustment in its performance in the post-test. It shows that deterioration of mental well – being due to a psychological impacts of imprisonment. Prison
mental health and prison life adjustments are positively correlated. An increase in mental health of convicts will result in a significant rise in their prison life adjustment.

**TENACITY OF HYPOTHESES**

Each of the hypotheses formulated for the study is tested on the basis of the statistical analysis and the resultant findings.

**Hypothesis 1**

It reads, “There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on mental health.”

The analysis of the data proved that the intervention based on integrative correctional psycho-education package significantly improved the convicts’ mental health status (M 149.84 to M 217.76). The corresponding t-value is 42.68., which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

It reads, “There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post intervention assessments of the experimental group on attitude towards self.”

The data analysis proved that the intervention based on integrative correctional psych-education package caused an increase in their attitude towards self (M 26.28 to M 39.88). The corresponding t-value is 19.84, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.
Hypothesis 3

It reads, “There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and the post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on self-actualization.”

It was found that there occurred a significant increase in the outcomes of the posttest of the experimental group in relation to that of the pre-test. It meant that the intervention was able to cause a rise in self-actualization component of mental health (M 24.68 to M 37.64). Corresponding t-value is 23.73, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 4

It reads, “There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on integration.”

It was found that the intervention was successful in increasing integration component of mental health among convicts. There was a significant difference between the outcomes of the experimental group in its pre and post intervention assessments (M 24.72 to M 36.44). The corresponding t-value is 20.25, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 5

It reads: There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on autonomy.
The analysis of the data came to an inference that there was significant significance between the means of pre and post intervention assessments of the experimental group. It led to an increase in autonomy component of mental health among the convicts (M 22.00 to M 34.04). The corresponding t-value is 16.83, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 6**

It reads: There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on perception of reality.

The analysis showed that there occurred a significant difference between the means of pre and post intervention assessments of the experimental group on perception of reality. It meant that the intervention brought about a rise in perception of reality among the convicts (M 24.72 to M 36.64). The corresponding t-value is 14.05, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 7**

It reads: There will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments of the experimental group on perception of environmental mastery.

It was inferred from the analysis that there was significant difference between the means of pre and post intervention assessments of the experimental group. It followed that the intervention realized an increase in environmental mastery among
the convicts (M27.04 to M33.12). The corresponding t-value is 8.461, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 8

It reads: there will be significant difference between the pre-intervention and post intervention assessments of the experimental group on prison life adjustment.

The difference between the means of pre and post intervention assessments was found significant. It meant that the intervention was able to bring about a significant rise in the prison life adjustment of the convicts (M 11.52 to M 22.60). The corresponding t-value is 15.18, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 9

It reads: There will be significant relationship among the various variables of the study. It was found that there was significant positive correlation among the variables of the study such as mental health and prison life adjustment. There was high positive correlation among the components of mental health such as attitude towards self, self-actualization, integration, autonomy, perception of reality and environmental mastery. The correlation found is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 10

It reads: There will be significant difference between pre-test outcomes and posttest outcomes of the control group on study variables.
It was found that there was significance difference between the control group’s outcomes in pre and post intervention assessments. It meant that there happened a decrease on all study variables since it was not exposed to the intervention and the degeneration process went on during the period of intervention, too. (M 152.32 to 144.36). The corresponding t-value is 11.13, which is significant at the 0.01 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 11

It reads: there will be significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the posttest on various study variables.

The analysis led to the inference that the experimental group performed better than the control group in the posttest. There was significant difference between the means obtained by the groups in the posttest on the study variables. It signified that the intervention was the causative factor behind the positive change happened to the experimental group. The mean obtained by the experimental group was 217.76 (SD 10.22) whereas that won by the control was 144.36 (SD 8.36). The corresponding t-value is 27.79, which is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The present study has proved that psycho-education acclimatized to the needs of correctional practices has the potential to enhance the mental health and prison life adjustment of the convicts. It implies that correctional package for
any prison must invariably include psycho-educational curriculum meant for improving convicts’ mental health and prison life adjustment.

- The present research has added knowledge to the correctional psychology by proving that integrative approach in psycho-education is successful in correctional settings. It implies that correctional psychology as an applied field can widen its spectrum of applications and prove to be more effective in alleviating the present correctional barriers to a great extent.

- It also implies that correctional system should ensure the service of a correctional psychologist to impart the psychological literacy among the prisoners so that the prison population will imbibe a psychological way of life resulting in a high level of psychological well-being. They will be able to live a life of freedom and responsibility based on the concept of love-work-play which is the basis of psychological well-being.

- Another important thing the study implies is that the mental well-being of the correctional officials is also very significant in the correctional process. So, psycho-education programs for prison staff should be chalked out.

- The study outcomes imply that integrative psycho-education is relevant to all sorts of correctional settings such as open jails, women prisons, borstal schools, juvenile homes and the like. It is also applicable for the under-trials.

- Integrative correctional psycho-education package is suitable to any situations related to corrections in schools where bullies and other deviants are treated separately.
• The current investigation points to the possibility of using integrative correctional psycho-education as a preventive intervention among students and youth in efforts to reduce criminality in society.

• Psycho-education designed for mental health can be used in any situation where low mental health has been felt a matter of concern.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has confronted with many limitations from within and without. Internal limitations stemmed from the inability of the study to include some essential aspects of captivity life in the investigational process. Externally imposed limitations mainly came from the security steps taken up by the government and the department authorities. The main limitations of the present study are enumerated below.

• The paucity of prison mental health research in India was a handicap and it affected the present study adversely to widen its background knowledge.

• Women convicts were not included in the sample.

• The sample size was not large enough.

• Integrative correctional psycho-education is supposed to be capable of producing many positive changes in the convicts. But the focus of the study was narrowed to mental health and prison life adjustment alone.

• Sample selection process was confined to a particular prison. The administrative impacts of that prison might have contributed to the prison life adjustment and the subjective well-being of its convicts. Sample should have been chosen from as many prisons as possible and intervention should have been conducted simultaneously in different prisons.
• Only intra-psychic factors of mental health improvement were taken into consideration in the study. The situational factors such as treatment behavior of the correctional personnel, salubriousness of the prison premises, food quality and recreational facilitation were overlooked.

• A mental health intervention program should follow the bio-psycho-social model. So, the study should have incorporated adequate modules on physiological literacy and sociological literacy as they are complementary to psychological literacy.

• The researcher was restricted from observing the subjects on different occasions such as dormitory behavior, work, entertainment etc.

• Some of the prisoners mistook the intervention for something with a hidden motive to jeopardize the convicts. Some warders also were under the impression that the study would turn against them in the end, criticizing their pitfalls. The investigator was not allowed to address the prisoners and the warders in general to ward off the suspicions.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In the light of the findings of the present study, the investigator would like to propose the following suggestions for the benefit of the future research in the arena of correctional psychology and psycho-education.

• A larger sample may be chosen for further investigation on the present topic.

• The effectiveness of integrative psycho-education may be tested with samples from women convicts and juvenile delinquents as target population.
A study may be conducted on the effective uses of correctional psycho-education in reducing recidivism.

The impact of correctional psycho-education on the dispositional factors such as resilience, internal locus of control, stress management, reduction of impulsivity, positive attitude, reflection etc may be investigated.

A study with focus on identifying the correctional barriers in Indian context may also be initiated.

A mental health study among convicts may be taken up with a view to bringing out its relationship with term of sentence and various socio-demographic features.

CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations inherent in and imposed on the study, the investigator is confident enough to believe that the study has ended up in proving the efficacy of correctional psycho-education in enhancing mental health and prison life adjustment among the prisoners. The study has opened up vistas of possibilities for correctional psychology to utilize several of its interventional prospects to improve correctional practices and strengthen the criminal justice system in the country and world. The investigator has a humble belief that the study has enriched the discipline of Psychology in its normative as well as positive aspects. Moreover, it has served humanity by addressing an acute problem of correctional population and thereby has catered to human quality.