CHAPTER 3
RATIONALE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

As Iranian cultural heritage directs one to make efforts towards rehabilitation of the downtrodden and the traumatized, the present study focused on the war-handicapped and how their rehabilitation could be planned. One of the objectives was to study the prevalence of State Anxiety, Depression, Psychological Well-Being, and Self-Esteem among the war-handicapped. Another was to study the effect of Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy on State Anxiety, Depression, Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem.

The 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war inflicted enormous human costs as each side sustained thousands of causalities. It also resulted in high rates of medical morbidity and psychological distress to an estimated 60,000 Iranian soldiers (Hashemian et al., 2006). The negative consequences of war linger long after the war has ended. It is like bringing the war home. More and more human rights activists are reiterating on the need to care and focus on rehabilitation of the victims of the war.

The present study focused on the disabled war-handicapped who were afflicted with physical, emotional and psychic hurt. On the other hand, it investigated whether CBGT was an effective intervention for the war-handicapped, who were suffering from PTSD symptoms, which were the result of multiple war-related traumatic events, rather than a single traumatic incident. Unfortunately, numerous barriers prevent the war-handicapped with mental health difficulties from accessing mainstream mental health services (Ehntholt et al., 2005). Disability in soldiers creates disturbances in their families also. Studies in Iran (Khodayarifard 2004; Radfar et al., 2004; and Refahi, 2004), done on the war-handicapped and their children reported prevalence of affective imbalance, panic disorder, loss of hedonism, feeling of pity, suspicion and sympathy among both the war-handicapped and their children. A large scale occurrence of inadequate coping skills and emotional problems were also reported among the war-handicapped and their children.

There have been very few studies which tried to focus on mental health problems among the war-handicapped and suggest interventions which can help in their
rehabilitation. Still fewer studies exist to check the efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy (non-pharmacological strategies) to treat anxiety and depression. The approach of using Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy as opposed to individual Cognitive Behavior Therapy was an innovative feature of the present study. Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy was used as an intervention based on the assumption that sharing experiences with peers who have gone through the same traumatic experiences may be a more meaningful strategy of treatment. It was also assumed that Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy may yield lower relapse rate of treated illnesses compared to pharmacological treatment alone. Therefore, Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy are appropriate for reducing Mental Health Problems (Anxiety, Depression etc.) (Curry and Wells, 2001; Kwon and Oei, 2003; Mohan and Boroumand, 2003; Mohan and Vaziri, 2005; Silverman, et al., 2008; Marchand et al., 2009; Lilliecreutz et al., 2010; and Hâland et al., 2010.). Also researches indicate that these therapies help in promotion in positive psychological components (Self-Esteem, Psychological Well-Being etc.) (Hall and Tarrier, 2003; Morrel et al., 2003; Hyun et al., 2005; Proudfoot et al., 2009; Rufer et al., 2010; and Noice et al., 2010.).

Considering the fewer researches done in this area so far, it was very important to study the efficacy of Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy (CBGT) on State Anxiety, Depression, Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem. Given the importance of rehabilitation of the war handicapped in Iran and prevalence of mental disorders among veterans, the following were the objectives of the present investigation.

1. To study the prevalence of state anxiety and depression among the war-handicapped.
2. To study the prevalence of psychological well-being and self-esteem among the war-handicapped.
3. To administer Cognitive Behavior Group therapy to the chosen sample of the war-handicapped.
4. To study the efficacy of Cognitive Behavior Group therapy and Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique (before and after the design) on scores of state anxiety, depression, psychological well-being and self-esteem among the war-handicapped.
HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. It was expected that Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy would be more effective in reducing state anxiety among the war-handicapped than the Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique.

2. It was expected that Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy would be more effective in reducing depression among the war-handicapped than the Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique.

3. It was expected that Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy would prove more effective in enhancing psychological well-being among the war-handicapped than the Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique.

4. It was expected that Cognitive Behavior Group Therapy would enhance self-esteem among the war-handicapped much more than the Jacobson’s Progressive Muscle Relaxation technique.