CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

A growing body of literature is demonstrating that occupational stress is a significant issue at international level. It is generally associated with negative well-being (Cooper and Sutherland, 1992; Spielberger and Sarason, 1996). Over the past 30 years, considerable research has been conducted on the amount of stress or strain which individual experience in their work environment to the point where a substantial body of evidence has accumulated on levels of stress and on stressors the factors which contribute to strain (O’Driscoll and Cooper, 1996). However, there is a great deal of semantic confusion in the research and this makes the task of the integration of findings of this study with earlier research quite difficult. Although researches have shown relationship of stress with indicators of well-being (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Marshal and Cooper 1979; Schuler 1984; Burke, Ronald and Greenglass 2000; Tuli 1999), less is known however, about the ways in which individuals attempt to deal with the strain that they experience as a result of adverse conditions or about the association between those behaviours (typically referred to as coping behaviour or strategies), available support (social/and organizational) and different kinds of stressors. Moreover, many studies have dealt with specific stresses and emotions rather than utilizing overall and componentwise index of stress and indicators of well-being. Consequently, it is difficult to identify from the existing literature the relevant research for the variables investigated in the present study. However, every possible effort has been made to seek supportive evidence of related studies while explaining the results at appropriate points in this chapter.
6.1 Organizational Role Stress and Psychological Well-Being in respect of Coping Strategies and Organizational Support.

6.1.1 Difference on Organizational Role Stress in respect of Coping Strategies (Approach and Avoidance):

This study has revealed that avoidance coping group of technocrats reported higher organizational role stress as compared to their counterparts using approach coping. Thus the former group perceived significantly more organizational role stress than the latter group. Further, as compared to approach coping group, avoidance coping group had significantly higher mean score for inter-role distance (IRD), role isolation (RI) and self role distance (SRD). However, on role stagnation (RS), approach coping group had significantly higher mean score than their counterparts using avoidance as a dominant mode of coping. Thus it can be inferred that technocrats using avoidance as a dominant mode of coping perceive higher organizational role stress (overall) and stress related to IRD, RI, and SRD but reverse was observed in case RS (see table 5.1).

Thus the results reveal that avoidance copers experience more organizational role stresses falling in the category of linkage related stress. Preek (1993) pointed out that these stresses occur when the linkages of an organizational role becomes weak. It could be possible that technocrats using avoidance as a dominant mode of coping tend to have a weak linkage between their concept of self and the role, leading to self-role distance, with other role occupant resulting in inter-role-distance and also with other role in the role set leading to role isolation. Higher linkage related stress among the avoidance copers may be because of the lack of integration. They may not be analyzing various aspects of roles which cause self-role distance. In addition an attempt to grow into the role and make the role grow, to use the special capabilities of oneself is avoided which otherwise would have led to better integration and lesser stress related to self-role distance. The higher role isolation in the avoidance copers in the present study may be due to
the reason that technocrats tend to play his own role efficiently and avoid interactions. Pareek (1993) reported that this is the usual tendency of workers. The role occupant in this situation tends to confine himself to his own role. He voluntarily agrees to be bound by the role. This strategy aims at avoiding possible conflict. Pareek (1993) reported individual executives and managers who are highly efficient in their own roles but whose linkages with other roles are very weak do not take on corporate responsibilities. They derive satisfaction out of playing the individual role effectively and efficiently, but do not contribute as much as they could have towards the overall responsibility to the organization. The individual withdraws into a kind of isolated efficiency. This is a dysfunctional strategy leading to higher stress. Self role distance among the avoidance copers in the present study was higher than the approach copers. Pareek (1993) observed that many role occupants who experience a conflict between their concept of self and role they occupy in the organization, may play that role in a routine way to earn their living. They reject their roles and take no interest in it. On the other hand, some other individuals may seriously occupy their roles and in due course of time, completely forget their self-concept and play the role effectively, but reject their self. Both these approaches are avoidance approaches and are dysfunctional. It is further argued that if an individual rejects the role he is likely to be ineffective in the organization. However, if he rejects the self he is likely to lose his effectiveness as an individual which in turn will adversely affect his mental health. With regard to role stagnation, in the present study, approach copers reported higher role stagnation than the avoidance copers. Role stagnation is a common stress within organization. Individuals who acquire new roles as a result of promotion or taking over a more challenging roles may feel apprehensive, because the role is new and requires skills which the role occupant may not have. As Himachal Pradesh Electricity Board is a public sector organization and little effort is made to provide anticipatory socialization of newer role, in
spite of approaching the new role challenges role occupant gets stuck and in such situation as Pareek (1993) observed individual’s usual response is to continue as in the previous roles about which individual is sure and has been doing successfully. These factors taken together could be the possible reason for higher role stagnation stress among technocrats using approach a dominant coping strategy.

Relation of individual differences in coping in relation to stress has received prominent attention. Coping is viewed as a stabilizing factor that may help individuals during stressful periods (Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Moos and Billing 1982). O’Driscoll and Copper (1996) reported in their study that most frequently used coping strategy by the organizational workers is action oriented or in Lazarus and Folkman’s terminology, “problem-focused”.

Earlier, Newton and Keenen (1985) concluded that coping by withdrawal was less likely in supportive environment, whereas Parkes (1986) observed overall coping is related to adverse stressful work condition. Several investigations have also reported coping mechanisms to be associated with organizational stress (Ogus 1992; Wright 1990; Monnier and Stone 1998; Harenstan et al. 2000). Deluga (1989) examined coping mechanism associated with role conflict and role ambiguity and reported, the use of coping strategies by employees was significantly related to the rising level of conflicts. Earlier, Moos and Billings (1982) too argued that coping resources are relatively stable characteristics of people’s dispositions and environments and refer to what is available to them when they develop their coping strategies.

Studies on gender differences in coping reported women coped differently with stress than men in different contexts. Harenstan et al. (2000) reported that women used high level of covert coping style in comparison to men. The study also reported that women using this style of coping showed strong association with coronary heart disease. Investigation also attempted
to study women working at managerial position indicated that these women were found to be engaged in higher adaptive and disengagement coping (Parasuraman and Cleck, 1984; Long and Schutz, 1995). Olsson et al. (1990) reported despite of experiencing high stress nurses used more active cognitive style. Greenglass et al. (1990) and Torestad et al. (1991) however, observed that females are better able to cope with stressful situation than males. In their study on postal employees, Monnier and Stone (1998) found that women used pro-social coping than their male counterparts. Erikson and Ursin (1998) reported that postal service employees with high demand and low coping had most health problems, those with low demands and high coping had lowest level of health problems and those with high demands and high coping reported high job stress. Bedell, Gervery and Drawing (1996) argued that out of two frequently used styles of coping e.g. appraisal focused coping in the form of cognitive avoidance or emotion focused coping and other frequently used technique problem focused coping, it is not possible to state which pattern of coping is optimal. Nevertheless it would appear that variety of coping styles used is adaptive and positive. Also the balance between ignoring stressors and taking action or confronting them may prove to be effective.

In India researchers have dealt with occupation related differences in the perception of stressfulness of work environment. Occupational/organizational stress has been observed to be higher in technocrats (Sharma and Sharma 1987; Sharma and Acharya, 1989; Singh, 1993; Tharakan, 1992) in female clerks than their teacher counterparts (Vagrechar and Mishra, 1990), executives and their physician counterparts (Ghosh, 2000), in male executives than their female counterparts (Aditya and Sen, 1993).

Kumari (1988) reported that medicos with external locus of control report higher organizational role stress than those having internal locus of control. Pestonjee (1992) and Sharma (1988) reviewed stress research in
India and argued that coping competence is a critical process required to alleviate stress. Ahmed, Bhatt and Ahmad (1990) studied stress and coping strategies among executive technocrats to examine the difference in the coping styles of male and female technocrats. The results indicated that total sample scores were higher for approach style than for the avoidance style. The executive technocrat used intropersistive style as the dominant style for coping followed by defensive style and extra positive styles. A difference was also observed in the coping styles of male and female technocrat while men used defensive style more often than women and females largely used approach style of coping. However, earlier Ghadially and Kumari (1989) and Thakur (1989), reported female professionals using avoidances as a dominant mode of coping experience more occupational/organizational stress than their counterparts using approach as dominant mode of coping. Srivastava and Singh (1987) reported that approach coping group of industrial supervisors had better mental health than their avoidance coping counterparts. Later in a study on non-executive sample, Mishra (1991) observed that coping style to be contingent upon the perception of physical well-being of the subjects.

6.1.2 Difference on Negative Indicators of Psychological Well-Being in respect of Coping Strategies (Approach and Avoidance).

Another finding in the present study is that the avoidance coping group had significantly higher anger-out, anger-in and lesser anger control than their approach coping counterparts. Thus it is evident that technocrats using avoidance coping tended to cope with their angry feelings by greater use of anger-out and anger-in dimensions of anger expression. However, technocrats using approach as dominant mode of coping tended to make greater use of anger control than their avoidance coping counterparts. Moreover, the avoidance coping group scored significantly higher on trait-anxiety than their approach coping counterparts thereby showing that
former group was higher on anxiety proneness and perceived a wide range
of situation as threatening and responded to these with differential
elevations in state anxiety. Further, the study also revealed that avoidance
coping group of technocrats had significantly higher mean score on
depression than the approach coping group. Thus former group perceived
greater depression than the latter (see Table 5.2).

There is hardly any study, which examined anger expression vis-a­
vis personal and social coping strategies. Relationship of anger expression
and coping styles has received less attention but there is strong reason to
believe that people differing in anger expression will also show difference in
patterns of coping. Evans and Moran (1987) found that among both males
and females suppressed anger was associated with a vigilant, predictability
seeking coping style. Also, among engineers in India, Sharma and Acharya
(1989) examined the dominant stress-coping strategy and anger expression
and reported that technocrats who used avoidance coping reported higher
suppressed anger but those with greater expressed anger and anger-
control used approach as a dominant mode of coping than their
counterparts with dysfunctional avoidance as their dominants mode of
coping Rawat (1996) reported in her study on school teachers that,
teachers using avoidance as a dominant coping style had significantly
higher anger-out than their approach coping counterparts. In lines with
these considerations, Diong and Bishop (1999) hypothesized that anger
expression would relate to coping styles, with individual higher on anger
expression being less likely to engage in active problem focused coping
strategy. Based on a sample of 268 Singaporean the findings of this recent
study indicated that higher levels of anger expression were associated with
higher levels of stress and lower use of active coping. Active coping was in
turn positively related to psychological well-being.

In earlier research, suppressed anger and/or avoidance mode of
coping have been demonstrated to be related to lower
physical/psychological well-being (e.g. Diamond 1982; Dimsdale et al. 1986; Spielberger, 1982). Negative impact of anger and hostility on emotional well-being has been demonstrated in several studies (e.g. Carmody, Crossn, and Wilenis, 1989; Mook, Vander, Ploeg and Kleign, 1990). Friedman and Rosenman 1974) observed that type-A individuals cope with stress in a manner reflective of their aggressive behaviour pattern. Friedmann and Rosenmann further suggested that type-A disposition refers to an action emotion syndrome characterized by extreme intensity of anger as an emotional state and individual difference in anger proneness.

In the present study technocrats using approach mode of coping experienced lesser trait-anxiety than their counterparts using avoidance coping. Anxiety as reported earlier is often used as an important sign of inadequate coping and its psychological concomitants are thought to have negative effect on bodily process (Marshall and Cooper, 1978). Anxiety has frequently had a key place in occupational stress model. Beehr and McGrath (1992) argued that anxiety would be part of individual’s psychological response to some stress producing environmental conditions (SPEC). Trait anxiety considered as an enduring (if not permanent) and trans-situational characteristics of individual which also reflects in individual difference in anxiety proneness (Spielberger, 1983) may have implication for how an individual copes with high levels of job demands.

Long (1990) reported in his study that the degree of anxiety felt had an impact on the choice of coping strategy. Torestad and Mangnussion (1989) observed that both trait-anxiety and frequency of stressful event experienced were positively related to escape coping strategies. Later, Torestad et al. (1990) in another study reported that in a highly anxiety prone situation, girls seemed to use more escape solution than did boys. Endler and Parker (1990) observed that while the use of emotion oriented coping was generally related to higher levels of state and trait-anxiety, the
relationship of avoidance coping was not equivocal and that it was dependent on situational circumstances as well as the specific problem. Studies have considered trait anxiety as an outcome variable rather than as an antecedent variable (Beehr and McGrath, 1992). Krohne, Hock and Kohlman (1992) observed that anxious individuals were heavily stressed by both uncertainty and by accompanying emotional arousal eliciting unstable coping behaviour. In turning away from the stressors (i.e. avoiding) to reduce anxiety, they increased stress. Sharma and Acharya (1991) reported in their study on technocrats that irrespective of job hierarchy/position, engineers with higher job anxiety (a situation-specific negative emotion) exhibited a greater proportion of avoidance coping relative to total coping efforts or the avoidance group of engineers had higher job anxiety than approach coping counterparts. Srivastava and Singh (1988) in a study of health consequences of coping strategies had shown a positive association between coping and psychological distress among industrial supervisors in India. Srivastava (1991) found approach coping contributes to immediate perceived stress but in the long run reduces anxiety.

As reported earlier depression at work setting is a common phenomena (Bretton, 1987; Kahill, 1988). Mitchell, Cronkite and Moos (1983) showed that the proportion of problem focused coping relative to total coping efforts was associated with reduced depression. Rawat (1996) in her study on school teachers reported teachers using avoidance as dominant mode of coping had higher mean score on depression than their counterparts using approach as dominant mode of coping. Studies have also shown that depressives used more emotion focused coping than did non depressives (Billings and Moos, 1984; 1985). Holahan and Moos (1985, 1986) also reported that individuals who adapted to stress with little physical and psychological strain were less inclined to rely on avoidance coping than were people who showed psychological dysfunction under
stress. The results are consistent with those of the present study where technocrats with avoidance coping strategies had higher depression while their counterparts with approach had lower depression.

6.1.3 Difference on Positive Indicators of Psychological Well-Being in respect of Coping Strategies (Approach and Avoidance).

The findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference on positive indicators of psychological well-being, namely, on-the-job and off-the-job satisfaction between technocrats using either approach or avoidance as dominant coping strategies (see table 5.2).

These non-significant results may be seen in the context of studies conducted on groups of younger people who are more being reared through seeking positive reinforcement, while the positive impact of approach coping may not only be reflected in alleviating positive affectivity but also on enhancing job and general life satisfaction.

6.1.4 Difference on Organizational Role Stress in respect of High and Low Organizational Support.

The study revealed that the technocrats having high organizational support reported high organizational role stress than their counterparts having low organizational support. The high organizational support group reported significantly higher mean score for role erosion (RE), role overload (RO), role isolation (RIn.), and resource inadequacy (RIn). Thus it can be inferred that technocrats having high organizational support experienced higher organizational role stress (overall) and stresses related to role erosion (RE), role overload (RO) and resource inadequacy (RIn.) than their counterparts having low organizational support.

Social/organizational support has been considered as an important situational variable that has frequently been suggested as a moderator in stress and well-being research (Sharma, 1999). Eisenberger et al. (1986), suggested that employees form a general perception concerning the extent
to which their contributions and cares about their well-being. Such perceived organizational support (POS) may be encouraged by employee’s tendency to ascribe human like traits or characteristics to organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986). During last two decades, the predominant paradigm in social support literature examines it as an exogenous variable enhancing well-being levels that not only depend on SPECs but also on available social resources at work namely, supervisors and colleagues (Sharma, 1999; McGrath and Beehr 1992). Several studies have been conducted to investigate social/organizational support as a moderator of stress (Sarason et al. 1996; Sharma 1985; 1999; Kumari 1988; Noor, 1995; Vitkovic and Kaslow, 1994; Hugihara and Akihito, 1998; Benerjee and Gupta, 1996; Sud, 1999; Hobfall and Stone 2000; Bansal, et al. 2000).

The findings have been that available support (support of supervisor, colleagues, family etc.) tends to alleviate perceived stresses reduced perceived strain (dissatisfaction, irritation depression and anxiety, etc.) and ameliorate somatic symptoms (Caplan et al 1975; Kumari and Sharma 1990; Dormann and Zapf 1999; Cohen and Will, 1985). However, other group of researchers argued that buffering effect of social support may be gender specific, involve personality characteristics and may depend on provider of support (Berkmann and Sym 1979, Sarason et al. 1996; Greenglass, Pantoy, and Burke 1988). Berkman and Syme (1979) concluded that social support has more evident moderating effect for women than for men. Earlier, House and Wills (1977) found that supervisors’ support had more positive influence on job distress than did co-worker support.

The nature of the effect of social support on strain is however ambiguous (See Thoits, 1982 for review). Research has shown that social and emotional support available to the person helps him to effectively cope with stress. Social support includes both material support (providing resources) and emotional support (listening to person and encouraging
him). However, studies have also shown that unsolicited support may have negative consequences (Pareek, 1993; Sharma, 1998; Greenglass 1996; Sarason et al. 1996). Earlier, Gamester, Fusillier and Mayer (1986) examined the role of social support in the experience of work stress. No evidence emerged demonstrating any buffering effect for social support. Rajala (1988) found that teachers resorted to social support reported more negatively toned emotion and teaching difficulties and in the long run teachers counteracted poor adaptation. This lack of clarity has implications for the development and refinement of models of the phenomenon of stress in different occupational groups. Moreover, there are studies that have reported what might be termed opposite buffering effects. That is, social support appeared to exacerbate the effects of stressors on strains (e.g. Beehr, 1976; Abdel-Halim, 1982; Kobasa and Puccetti, 1982). It can be concluded that the research in this context is unclear about the generality of a buffering effect of social support and stress.

6.1.5 Differences on Negative and Positive Indicators of Psychological Well-Being in respect of High and Low Organizational Support Group.

The findings in the present study indicate that the technocrats receiving high organizational support reported significantly lesser anger-out and anger-in than their counterparts receiving low organizational support. However, the former group of technocrats reported significantly higher anger-control. Thus it can be inferred from the results that, while high support group of technocrats manage their anger either by more suppressing and engaging in aggressive behaviour when motivated by angry feelings, while the low support group of technocrats however manage their angry feelings by controlling the outward expression of angry feelings.

The effect of emotion of anger on the physical and psychological well-being of individuals has been extensively dealt with. Research in this domain has provided some compelling evidence of the relationship between
negative emotions and vascular diseases such as essential hypertension (Ghosh and Sharma, 1998; Wadhwa 1999) myocardial infarction coronary heart disease (Kop, 1997; Fukunsh and Hittori, 1997; Lisspers, Nygren and Soderman 1998) and non vascular illness such as headaches (Martin and Teoch, 1999) respiratory disorders and asthma (Lisspen, Nygren and Soderman, 1998) and psychological well-being (Spielberger and Sarason, 1996).

Several studies have reported anger-in to be related with negative well-being (Sharma, 1996; Julkunen, 1996). However, other group of studies reported anger-out to be higher in patient group than their control counterparts (Duckro, Chibnall and Tomazic, 1995; Neiberding, 1994; Spielberger and Sarason 1996). Smith (1992) argued although research evidence suggest anger/hostility seem to be at increased risk for negative well-being and other life threatening illness, critical conceptual and methodological issues need to be addressed. Especially important among the empirical issue that requires more intensive scrutiny is the social context of the relationship between hostility and health. Julkunen and Korhonen (1993) studied 351 women in a health promotion program in North Karelia. It was hypothesized that the association between anger in and blood pressure (BP) would be positive and more pronounced in a setting where work place atmosphere was tense and hostile. The rational behind this hypothesis was that the consequence of any mode of anger expression would be most clearly seen in a situation where this particular behaviour was activated. The result revealed a positive and significant association between anger-in and elevated blood pressure (BP) was found only in group of women who experienced their work unit as hostile and tense. This result offers a clear example of the impact of a contextual variable (i.e. the emotional quality of perceived environment) on person well-being relationship. Christenson and Smith (1993) showed hostile subjects displayed heightened blood pressure (BP) reactively during social
interaction as compared with subjects low in hostility. Findings of both the study highlighted the fact that the perceived social environment acted as a moderator, changing the relationship between personality and well-being. Additional data suggest that the way individuals manage their anger and hostility may mediate the relationship between anger/hostility and well-being. Although culture may evoke anger in individuals in terms of obstacles to gratification, at the same time they are thought to restrain their anger. As earlier stated anger can be managed in three possible ways; keeping anger-in (AX-in), expressing anger outwardly (anger-out) and discussing angry feelings with others (Spielberger, 1988). Use of one mode in anger management does not preclude use of another.

The finding of the present study showed that technocrats with high organizational support reported high anger control. The research evidence in this context has shown that a high potential for hostility and anger, in combination with an inability to deal constructively with one's anger/hostility, may contribute to negative well-being (see Greenglass, 1996). In lines with the present findings Greenglass suggested that available social network allows the individual to control the angry feelings by discussing the source of anger and frustration with others. This may enable them to modify annoying obstacles, thus potentially lowering the anger and hostility. Supportive network may also offer individuals necessary information, practical advice, and morale boosting, all of which can be employed to modify individual's frustration by lessening their angry feelings (Greenglass, 1996).

Additional research findings have indicated that social support can function as a buffer of anger in managerial women (Greenglass, 1987). These results parallel other work that has reported higher support to be associated with lower hostility and anger (Smith and Pope, 1990; Thomas 1989). Other findings have indicated that the higher the reported family support perceived by managers, the less they used anger-in to manage
their anger (Greenglass, 1991). High hostility scores have been found to be related to low reported quality of social support (Barafoot et al. 1983).

Another finding of the present study is that technocrats with high organizational support reported higher off-the-job satisfaction. However, there was no significant difference on on-the-job satisfaction among technocrats in respect to high and low organizational support. This reflects that technocrats reflect more general life satisfaction rather than satisfaction emanating from the job situation. This raise a question whether job is a central life interest of a person or interest pertaining to seeking satisfaction in familial setting. General observation of Indian workers is that, they are more concerned with domestic happiness rather than happiness associated with occupation. Such familial personal and social preoccupation might have tilted responses more toward the off-the-job-satisfaction. However, such premise needs a further probe in order to be accepted as a valid argument in different occupational groups and job hierarchy in the same occupation while considering other socio-demographic variables.

Studies in the West as well as in Indian setting have reported social/organizational support as a moderator of stress and satisfaction (Noor, 1995; Stephem, 2000; Pandy, 1990; Akihito, 1999; Benerjee and Gupta, 1996). Considerable research has shown that social attachments can influence well-being by serving as buffer against stress or by directly improving well-being (Cohen and Wills 1985; Greenglass 1993; Hobfoll 1986; Furnham, 1995; Vitkovic and Koslow, 1994, Sud et al. 1999).

Kumari and Sharma (1990) concluded that medicos with higher social support perceive less stress in their organizational role, are less anxious, more and have better general well-being than their counterparts with lower social support.
6.2 Correlational Analysis:

6.2.1 Relationship of Dominant Coping Strategies and Organizational Support with Organizational Role Stress.

As can be referred to the result of this study, the coefficients of correlation between coping strategies (approach and avoidance) and organizational support with organizational role stresses are very week and ranged from .1156 to .1841. All such correlations under reference are statistically significant. However, in view of their relatively small magnitude, it may not be possible to make a strong statement over the merit of one style (i.e., approach) over the other (avoidance) and perceived organizational support vis-à-vis organizational stress among technocrats. It may also be stated that since coefficients of correlation do not represent causation element between variables, hence it is not possible to claim that whether coping strategy (approach and avoidance) and organizational support determine the perception of stress and vice-versa. One reason put forward to explain weak findings for the efficacy of individual coping effort in work setting is that, the constraints inherent in organizational environment limits possibilities for constructive action by individuals necessitating the use of collective forms of coping (e.g. Pearlin, Menaghan, Liberman and Mullan, 1981; Shinn, Rosario, Morch and Chestnut, 1984). Not all investigations take the view that individual coping attempts are ineffective in work settings. For instance, Osipow and Dawis (1988), stated that "high occupational stress does not in itself predict strain; only by including the degree to which coping resources exist is an adequate prediction of strain possible". In support of this argument several empirical studies have demonstrated that individual differences in coping have important implications for work-stress outcomes (e.g., Kobasa, 1982; Lattack, 1986; Parsuraman and Cleck 1984). From the foregoing nature and magnitude of correlations of this study one can say that better exercise is not to stick to
these mutual relationship with a small magnitude. A preferred approach, would be as was initially done in this study is to identify dominant coping strategies and available support (high or low) to use these to form criterion groups so as to arrive at more meaningful conclusions.

6.2.2 Relationship of Dominant Coping Strategies and Organizational Support with Negative Indicators of Psychological Well-Being:

6.2.2(i) Relationship of Dominant Coping Strategies with Negative Indicators of Psychological Well-Being.

In case of the technocrats using approach as a dominant coping style, approach coping was significantly and negatively related to anger-out, anger in, trait, anxiety and depression. In contrast in case of avoidance coping there was a change in directions of association between avoidance coping and negative indicators of psychological well-being. Stated otherwise the avoidance coping significantly and positively related to anger-out, anger-in, trait-anxiety and depression (see Table 5.6).

The preceding findings demonstrated that use of approach (functional) and avoidance (dysfunctional) coping strategies markedly altered the strength and/or direction of the association between coping style and negative indicators of psychological well-being (anger-expression, trait-anxiety and depression). In addition a negative and significant relationship was observed between avoidance coping and anger control.

Relationship of anger expression and coping style has received less attention. As reported earlier, people differing in anger will also cope with anger expression with differential styles of coping. Research evidence has shown that there is a strong relationship between anger and well being (Spielberger, Sarason, 1996; Ghosh and Sharma 1998; Wadhwa 1999). Earlier, Vander Ploeg et al. (1985) studying executives in Netherlands reported that hypertensions avoided showing anger or suppressed anger. Evans and Moran (1987) found that among both males and females,
suppressed anger was associated with vigilant, predictability-seeking coping style. In the present study group of technocrats using avoidance or dysfunctional coping tended to have higher relationship with anger-out, anger-in and anger-control. It may be noted that in this case we are dealing with a non-clinical group of technocrats and not patient groups. Since type-A behaviour pattern has anger as an important component, findings of these studies relating to anger and health outcomes justify the use of anger as an index of well-being in the present study.

Diong and Bishop (1999) studied 268 Singaporeans and found that higher levels of anger expression were associated with high levels of stress and lower use of active coping was in turn positively related to psychological well-being. In India, Sharma and Acharya (1989) examined the stress coping strategies and anger expression among engineers. The overall coping strategy used by engineers was determined by the personality disposition in terms of one important component of type-A personality i.e., anger-expression. The engineers with suppressed anger made greater use of avoidance coping but those with expressed anger or greater anger-control utilized approach coping as a dominant mode to deal with stress. Rawat (1996) studied coping strategies, anger expression and organizational stress among school teachers and observed that teachers using avoidance or dysfunctional coping strategies reported strong relationship between organizational role stress and anger-out, anger-in, and anger-control. Pestonjee and Singh (1988) studied moderating effect of type-A pattern of behavioural disposition on relationship between role stress and anger. The findings revealed type-A behaviour moderated the form of relationship between stress and anger. In the present study anger expression an indicator of well-being has been considered as an outcome variable, though it has been suggested by Pestonjee and Singh (1988), that anger can also be considered as a moderation.
Another finding of this study revealed that in technocrats using approach as a dominant mode of coping, there was a negative and significant relationship between approach coping and trait anxiety. However, avoidance coping related positively with trait anxiety. This indicates that high the approach coping lesser is the trait anxiety and higher the avoidance coping higher is the trait anxiety and vice-versa.

Research evidence shows that anxiety has been seen as an important sign of inadequate coping (Marshall and Cooper, 1988) and as important symptom of work related strain (Gold and Michael, 1985; Kahill, 1988). Endler and Parker (1990) reported that emotion oriented (maladaptive) coping strategy was positively related to both trait and state anxiety. Wearing and Hart (1996) studied work and non-work coping strategies, their relation to personality appraisal and life domain among 330 police officers and found that neuroticism correlated significantly with emotion focused coping in both work (r = .30) and non-work (r = .33) domains. While no relationship with problem focused coping in either situation was observed. They suggested personal characteristics affect coping strategy selection. Terry, Callan and Sartori (1996) opined that coping resources are relatively stable characteristics of people’s dispositions and environments, and refer to what is available to them when they develop their coping strategies (Moos and Billings, 1983). At the dispositional level, negative affect is regarded as the key enduring personality characteristics that needs to be considered in studies of adjustment to work stress. Individuals high in negative affectively have a tendency to experience high levels of distress – a tendency associated with measures of trait anxiety and neuroticism (Watsen and Pannebaker, 1989). People high in neuroticism are particularly likely to be affected adversely by work stress (Parker, 1990) and to rely more on emotion-focused strategies and less on problem focused strategies than individuals who have low levels of neuroticism (Bolger, 1990; Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, 1989).
In line with the findings of the present study several investigations have found anxiety to be associated with dysfunctional coping style. Olah, Torestad and Magnusson (1989) studied coping strategies (constructive, passive and escape) and anxiety reaction and individual’s frequency of experience of anxiety. The results indicated that both anxiety and frequency of stressful experience were related positively to escape strategies (avoidance) and negatively to constructive solutions (approach). Lobel, Gilat and Endler (1993) reported individuals using emotion oriented coping more frequently experienced more state-anxiety.

In Indian context, coping and well-being have been systematically reviewed and analysed by Pestonjee (1992) and Sharma (1988). Studying coping with anxiety among engineers. Sharma and Acharya (1991) reported that engineers using avoidance as a dominant mode of coping strategy experienced more anxiety than the approach coping group. Rawat (1996) in a study of school teachers found that organizational role stress was strongly and positively related to anxiety in case of avoidance copers. However, a highly significant reversal was observed for the relationship of organizational stress with measures of trait-anxiety in case of approach copers. Earlier, Singh (1988) conducted a study to examine the modifying effects of coping strategies (avoidance and approach), which employees adopt to deal with their organizational role stress on the relationship between perceived role stress and mental health. The efficacy (magnitude as well as direction) of the two models of coping in modifying the effect of perceived role stress was also tested. The results indicate that employees experienced stress arising from various inadequacies in their job role had an adverse effect on their mental health. Employees who experienced high role stress manifested more symptoms of free floating anxiety, obsessive neurosis, neurotic depression, hysterical neurosis, phobic anxiety and somatic concomitants of anxiety. Although, coping with anxiety in work setting is a core concept, empirical studies of coping related to anxiety in
the work setting are relatively small in number. Additionally differential coping with anxiety provoking situation need to be explored in the Indian context.

Another finding of the study revealed that there was a significant and negative relationship between approach coping and depression. However, a positive and significant relationship was observed between avoidance coping and depression. This means that higher the approach coping, lesser is the depression and higher the avoidance coping higher is the depression and vice-versa (see Table 5.6).

Individuals with the intention of reducing the effects of stress e.g. anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness etc adopt coping strategies. In this context a number of researches have made the distinction between problem and emotion focused coping strategy (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Billings and Moss 1981). Problem focused strategies are directed towards the management of the problem, whereas emotion-focused strategies involve a failure to face the problem, dealing instead with the associated level of emotional distress. Because problem focused strategies are directed towards the management of the problem, they are generally thought to have positive effects on adjustment. In contrast, emotion-focused strategies concentrate not on the problem but deal with the concomitant level of distress which may lead to depression thereby meaning that this type of coping in most instances impair adjustment to stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Mitchell et al. (1983) reported that proposition of problem focused coping effort relative to total coping effort has been associated with reduced depression. Several other investigators have also observed that depressives engage in more emotion-focused coping or avoidance coping than did non-depressives (e.g., Folkman and Lazarus, 1986; Billings and Moos, 1984; Mitchell et al. 1983). Mosley, et al., (1999) studied medical students and found that coping efforts classified by engagement strategies were associated with fewer depressive symptoms, while coping efforts
classified by disengagement strategies were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms (Kaiser and Berndt, 1985; Motowidlo, Pack and Manning, 1986). Rawat (1996) reported a strong and negative relationship between organizational role stress and depression in case of school teachers using avoidance as a dominant mode of coping. However, a reversal was observed for the relationship between organizational role stress and depression in case of approach copers. The foregoing discussion referring studies dealing with negative indicators of psychological well-being attest to the lack of relevant research in this field particularly in India.

6.2.3 Relationship of Organizational Support with Negative Indicators of Psychological Well-Being.

The result of the present study revealed that there was a negative and significant relationship observed between organizational support and anger-out, anger-in, and anger-control. This indicates that higher the organizational support lower is the frequency that angry feelings expressed in aggressive behaviour directed towards other people or objects in the environment, are suppressed and lower attempt is made to control the outward expression of angry feelings.

Research evidence is lacking on providing a comprehensive understanding of organizational support and anger expression as an indicator of well-being in work setting. Negative consequences of anger-in in well being has been demonstrated in several investigation by Indian and Western researchers (see Spielberger and Sarason 1996; Schwen Kmozger and Hank, 1996; Ghosh and Sharma, 1998; Sharma, Ghosh and Spielberger, 1996). Research evidence reveals that decrements the health-damaging effects of isolation from social support. Caplan, Berkman and Breslow (1983) in a longitudinal study reported that those with fewer social ties had higher death rates than those who were more closely connected to
other people and to group. Considerable research has shown that social support attachments can influence well-being by serving as a buffer against stress/strain or by directly improving well-being (Cohen and Wills, 1985; Greenglass, 1993; Hobfoll, 1986). In addition, social support has been reported to function as a buffer of anger in managerial women (Greenglass, 1987). Several other investigations have also reported that higher support to be associated with lower hostility and anger (Smith and Pope, 1990; Thomas, 1989). Greenglass (1991) in a study on managers indicated that the higher the reported family support perceived by managers, the less they used anger-in to manage their anger. Barefoot et al. (1983) reported high hostility score have been found to be related to low reported quality of social support. Later, Greenglass (1996) in a study of CHD patients observed that respondents with high scores on cynical distrust and anger-in reported receiving less support from familial members and reported less trust in their close relationships. Kumari (1988) in a study of medicos observed that medicos higher on organization role. Stress experienced higher anger-in, anger-out and perceived less support from their colleagues, friends and subordinates. Lack of adequate research evidence on organizational support and anger expression in work setting in Indian context calls for further research in this area.

6.2.4 Relationship of Coping Strategies and Organizational Support with Positive Indicators of Well-Being.

The finding regarding coping strategies used by the technocrats and organizational support in relation to positive indicators of psychological well-being reveal a weak magnitude (ranging from r = .0289 to r = .1193).

One possible reason could be that Himachal Pradesh Electricity Board is undergoing a series of restructuring in the wake of privatization and opening to multination. Circles and divisions are merged together. Due to such organizational changes a state of uncertainty and confusion
prevailing in the organization. The technocrats might be experiencing certain unspecified changes in their roles hence may be unable to appraise the positive indicators of well-being. Therefore these findings should be further probed considering these factors for valid generalization.

It can be concluded from the foregoing discussion that coping efforts/style and perceived organizational support did not correlate strongly with organizational role stress. However, coping strategies and organizational support did reveal a strong relationship with indicators of psychological well-being. One possible reason could be that in the technocrats of hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh stress reactions are more manifested in indicators of psychological well-being. Cultural anthropologists have also demonstrated that Indian culture predominantly is reactive one (Rao et al. 1994). It appears that technocrats in this remote part have a strong tendency to react to their environment rather than act upon them while studies from Western culture show more proactive tendency. Keeping these factors in view and as per the requirements of the problem of this study, on one hand, an expectation that different types of coping strategies and organizational support might still produce some prediction of organizational role stress and psychological well-being among technocrats because of a possible synergetic interaction among all these variables, the data was further subjected to stepwise multiple regression analysis. Sharma (1998) suggested significant advances in the understanding of support-health relationships will occur only if future studies focus on the process by which support is linked to well-being. It must be asked whether the effects of social support on health and well-being are mediated by behavioural change, psychological change, perceptual change, or some combination of these three.
6.3 Regression Analysis:

6.3.1 Coping Strategies (Avoidance and Approach) and Organizational Support as Predictors of Organizational Role Stress.

Coping strategies, namely, avoidance mode of coping and approach mode of coping along with organizational support emerged as significant predictors of different indicators of organizational role stress (ORS) as well as total organizational role stress (ORS) either individually or in combination with each others. It may be observed from table 5.8, that avoidance mode of coping explained 1.98 percent of variance in role ambiguity (RA) and 1.94 percent of variance in resource inadequacy indicators of organizational role stress. Also approach mode of coping explained 3.39 percent variance in inter-role-distance (IRD), 1.82 percent variance in role stagnation (RS), 1.78 percent variance in role expectation conflicts (REC), 2.38 percent variance in personal inadequacy (PI) and 2.10 percent variance in self role distance (SRD) indicators of organizational role stress.

It may also be mentioned that approach mode of coping in combination with organizational support explained 3.63 percent variance in role erosion, (approach coping explaining 1.44 percent and organizational support explaining 2.81 percent variance individually), and 3.80 percent variance in role isolation (approach coping explaining 1.97 percent and organizational support explaining 1.83 percent variance individually).

Further avoidance mode of coping in combination with organizational support explained 4.97 percent of variance in role overload (avoidance coping explaining 2.27 percent and organizational support explaining 2.70 percent of variance individually) and 6.74 percent of variance in total organizational support (avoidance coping explaining 4.10 percent and organizational support explaining 2.64 percent of variance individually).

It is noteworthy that organizational support did not emerge as an independent predictor of any of the indicators of organizational role stress.
as well as total organizational role stress. Moreover all the three variables in combination with each other did not emerge as significant predictors of organizational role stress.

The predictive efficacy of coping strategies and organizational support in explaining organizational role stress did not turn out to be quite high, as the variance explained remained less than 7 percent. These results are to be seen in the context of significant but week relationship of coping strategies and organizational support with various dimensions of organizational role stress and total organizational role stress.

These results are indicative of the fact that coping strategies, either avoidance or approach, seem to be predicting different indicators of organizational role stress; namely inter role distance (IRD), role stagnation (RS), role expectation conflict (REC), personal inadequacy (PI), self role distance (SRD), role ambiguity (RA) and resource inadequacy (Rln.) independently and in case of indicators, namely, role erosion (RE), role overload (RO), role isolation (RI) as well as organizational role stress (ORS) in combination with organizational support. In other words, organizational support only in combination with either approach or avoidance coping strategies emerged as significant predictor of dimensions of organizational role stress (ORS) i.e. role erosion (RE), role overload (RO), role isolation (RI) as well as total organizational role stress.

These results may be seen in context of research evidence pertaining to prediction of organizational role stress and its indicators.

Srivastava and Singh (1988) in study of coping strategies and stress among technical supervisors have reported that the approach group perceived more role stress than the avoidance group. Further it has been found that the use of avoidance mode of coping intensifies and use of approach coping strategies attenuates the adverse effect of role stress on mental health. In an earlier, study by Rajagopalan and Khandelwal (1988) on role stress and coping styles of public sector managers, it has been
found that total role stress was significantly and negatively correlated with approach style and vice-versa. These results directly or indirectly are in consistency with some earlier research evidences (Singh and Mathas 1991; Beehr and Gupta 1979; Surti 1982 and Sen 1982). Such results corroborating the findings of the present study provide an indication that encouragement and establishment of persistive function task oriented coping such as approach mode of coping need to be given due emphasis in work environment.

6.3.2 Coping Strategies (Avoidance and Approach) and Organizational Support as Predictors of Negative Indicators (Ax-Out, Ax-In, Ax-Cont., Trait-Anxiety and Depression) and Positive Indicators (Job Satisfaction, On-The-Job and Off-The-Job Satisfaction) of Psychological Well-Being.

Coping strategies namely avoidance mode of coping and approach mode of coping along with organizational support emerged as significant predictors of different dimensions of negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being. It may observed from the table 5.9, that avoidance mode of coping explained 1.45 percent of variance in on-the-job satisfaction dimension of job satisfaction. Also organizational support explained 8.33 percent of variance in anger control (AX-cont.) and explained 1.42 variance in off-the-job satisfaction.

It may also be mentioned that avoidance mode of coping in combination with organizational support explained 23.88 percent of variance in anger-out (AX-out) dimension of anger expression (avoidance coping explaining 7.16 percent of variance and organizational support explaining 16.66 percent of variance individually).

Further approach mode of coping in combination with avoidance mode of coping and organizational support explained 23.47 percent of variance in anger-in (AX-in) dimension of anger expression (approach coping explaining 1.52 percent variance, avoidance coping explaining 4.00
percent variance and organizational support explaining 17.94 percent of variance individually); 8.91 percent of variance in trait-anxiety (approach coping explaining 5.28 percent of variance, avoidance coping explaining 1.79 percent of variance and organizational support explaining 1.83 percent of variance individually); and 20.68 percent of variance in depression (approach coping explaining 14.39 percent of variance, avoidance coping explaining 4.15 percent of variance and organizational support explaining 2.14 percent of variance individually).

It is noteworthy that approach mode of coping did not emerge as an independent predictor of any of the indicators of negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being, although in combination it explained 5.28 percent out of 8.91 percent of variance in explaining trait anxiety, and in case of depression its individual contribution being 14.39 percent out of 20.68 percent of variance. Moreover, all the three variables in combination with each other did not emerge as significant predictors in anger-out (Ax-out), anger-control (Ax-cont.), off-the-job satisfaction and on-the-job satisfaction.

The organizational support as an independent predictor contributed 8.33 percent variance to explain anger-control and only 1.24 percent in case of off-the-job satisfaction. Further organizational support in combination with both the coping strategies emerged as major contributor (17.94 percent out of 20.47 percent of variance) in explaining anger-in. On the other hand, it remained a weak predictor of trait anxiety and depression while being considered in combination with both the coping strategies. Thus it seems that organizational support is a major contributor in explaining anger-out, anger-in and anger-control, whereas approach coping has been found to be explaining trait-anxiety and depression in a significant manner and avoidance mode of coping, to some extent, explaining anger-in and depression.
These results are indicative of the fact that coping strategies and organization support seem to be predicting different indicators of negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being; namely on-the-job satisfaction, off-the-job satisfaction and anger-control (Ax/cont.) independently in case of indicators namely anger-out (Ax/out); in combination with organizational support and in case of indicator namely anger-in (AX/in), trait-anxiety, and depression in combination with all independent variables. In other words, approach coping only in combinations with either avoidance coping or organizational support, emerged as significant predictor of negative and positive indicator of psychological well-being.

These results may be seen in the context of research evidence pertaining to prediction of negative and positive indicators of psychological well-being. In a recent study by Kaplas (1996) coping in combination with organizational role stress (ORS) and job satisfaction (JS) have been found to explain only 1.61 percent out of 19.63 percent variance in trait-anxiety (as compared to 1.79 percent out 8.91 percent variance explained by avoidance coping in the present study) and coping did not emerge as a significant predictor in explaining remaining indicators of psychological well-being.

As mentioned earlier either of the coping strategies have turned out be predictor of some of the negative indicators of psychological well-being which find a support from the studies (Robin and Inkson 1994; and Rhodewalt et al. 1989). Tyler and Cushway, (1992) reported that negative mental health outcome among nurses were mainly predicted by their perception of excessive workload and adoption of avoidance coping strategies. Greenglass and Burke (1991) reported that when coping was defective in case of type-A subjects, depression and anxiety increased with increasing work stress. The results pertaining to the efficacy of organizational support in explaining negative and positive indicators of
psychological well-being either in case of anger-control and off-the-job satisfaction independently or in combination with coping strategies in case of anger, out, and anger-in (being a more significant predictor) and in case of trait-anxiety and depression (to some extent) need to be examined in the context of researches carried out on social support (Beehr and McGrath, 1992; Armeli et al., 1998). Beehr and McGrath while reporting that higher level of social support being associated with lower level of anxiety argue that such findings do not necessarily have anything at all to do with job stress. The inverse relation between presence and magnitude of social support and level of anxiety has been found to be only moderate (Jeyaratane et al., 1988; Caplan et al., 1975; House and Rizzo, 1972).

These studies provide only a glimpse of some evidence about the role of organization/social support in determining the positive and negative indicators of psychological well-being. In a recent study on job relationship, social support and trait anxiety among school teachers (Sud and Malik, 1999), it has been reported that teachers with supportive co-workers reported less problems with parents, students, administrative and others, it has been argued that lack of support from supervisors can become anxiety provoking for the teachers and also the reassurance of worth can act as a catalyst in reduction of anxiety and stress among teachers. Further it has been suggested that attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, guidance and supervisors support need to be given due emphasis in providing support to the teacher for anxiety reduction among teachers.

Banerjee and Gupta (1996) also reported that social support can moderate the relationship between occupation stress and strains, though the relationship of social support with stress-strain relation were of low magnitude. To conclude it seems worthwhile to point out that organizations play an important social role in employee life and satisfying socio-emotional needs by the communication of respect, caring and approval have the potential of markedly increasing employees’ performance. The role of
organizational support has immense possibilities to decrease negative feelings of well-being and enhancing positive feelings of well-beings, thereby leading to reduce stress feelings and adaptation of action functional strategy in their work life. Sharma (1999) has also highlighted that:

"three major issues that need to be addressed in understanding the link between individual coping effects and well being are: (i) causal directionality; (ii) additive versus interactive mechanisms underlying coping effects, and (iii) the effect of perceived efficacy on the relation between coping strategies and well-being (Aldwin and Revenson, 1987).

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research:

1) As observed earlier, the term social support has been used as an umbrella term that covers a variety of diverse phenomena. Review of literature revealed that people with satisfying levels of support seem to cope better with stress, are healthier and recover from illness more quickly, are better adjusted and perform better. Thus in many ways, perceived social support functions as an individual difference variable. It remain stable over-time, even during periods of developmental transition (Sarason and Sarason 1996). Since there are individual differences and group differences in support needs, the variables like age, gender, social class, job levels etc.; need to be built in the design of all such research (Sarason, Sarason and Shearin, 1986).

2) The aspect of organizational stress which contribute to the incidence of negative well-being along with its personal and situational moderators have not adequately been studied in Indian setting. More meaningful research in this respect across different occupational group, gender, job levels is needed.
3) Studies are needed that consider both individual characteristics and work demands as combined predictors of negative well-being including psychological burnout (Richardson, Burke and Leiter (1992). The determination of the extent of burnout phenomenon in out society is also important for understanding whether this is a uniquely Western phenomenon related to cultural values such as work ethics or is prevalent in other societies that are dissimilar or are similar only at the surface level (Sharma, 1999).

4) Relationships between perceptions of the work environment and self report of mental and physical health are widely documented. Much of the research in this area is cross sectional and consequently does not allow causal influence. Longitudinal studies based on observation of the same group over an external period of time are needed to follow the sequence of transformation that link delayed stressor effects to personal health and well-being. Longitudinal researches are also needed to pin point risk zones and developing effective socio-psychological intervention that can correct any emerging negative tendencies.

5) Prospective studies are required to clarity whether organizational stress is antecedent of etiological significance in negative and positive well-being or is the result of the disabling well-being itself.

6) Little is known about how combination of response patterns and constellation-influence well-being over a broad range of work/life settings (Caplan, Naidu and Tripathi, 1984). As such future research is required to determine the extent to which different combinations of coping and defense aid exacerbate or prevent negative well-being and enhance positive well-being.
7) The combined influence of coping strategies, available support and personality features on negative and positive indicators of well-being across different occupation, organizations (Public and Private) gender, age, social class etc. needed to be studied.

8) Much of the evidence relating coping strategies to affective and behavioural responses to stress comes from the life stress literature. Researchers are need to address much more specific issues of coping with work related stress.

9) Besides psychometric problems in measurement of coping strategies, the issues of causal directionality additive versus interaction mechanism underlying coping effects and the effect of perceived coping efficacy on the relation between coping strategies and well-being need to be investigated.