

Effect of Perceived Leadership and Organizational Commitment on Turnover Intention of Semi-Skilled Workers in Small Scale Industries

Vikas Yadav¹, Nishi Misra²

¹Department of Psychology, Delhi University South Campus, Delhi, India

²Defence Institute of Psychological Research, Defence R&D Organisation, Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

Small scale industries are an important part of Indian economy. Most of the workers are semi-skilled and are prone to leave their organisations. The present study investigated the effect of perceived leadership and organisational commitment on turnover intention of 51 workers of small scale industries. Among leadership and organisational commitment, transformational leadership had the strongest negative correlation with turnover intention followed by normative commitment which had the second strongest negative correlation with turnover intention. Normative commitment correlated positively with transformational leadership. The study partially supports the model that leadership affects organisational commitment which then in an additive fashion along with transformational leadership behaviours affects turnover intention.

Keywords: Small Scale Industries, Semi-Skilled Workers, Organisational Commitment, Perceived Leadership, Turnover Intention.

INTRODUCTION

Developing countries around the world have traditionally been dependent on agriculture as their source of national income and employment. In India, the total share of agriculture & allied sectors is about 13.9 per cent of the GDP, but it employs almost 60% of the working population. Thus, per capita income generation is very low. It is in this scenario that the Government of India has been pushing for the growth of small scale industries. These are industries which are much more localized, are employee intensive and have better per capita income generation capacity.

One of the major problems facing the small scale industries is the man power crunch. Skilled labor is hard to come by and for whatever limited skilled human resource is available there is competition among employers to “cut” each other’s employees. This has resulted in increased job hopping. It is in this context that the present study was conducted to understand how organizational commitment and perceived leadership affects turnover intention among semi-skilled workers in small scale industries.

Small Scale Industries

Presently, in India, a small scale enterprise or industry is one “where the investment in plant and machinery is more than 25 lakhs but does not exceed five crore rupees” (India, 2006). While the investment may not seem large relatively, small scale industries are one of the major vehicles to increase employment and decrease poverty. This is thought to be so because small scale industries are usually labor intensive and are better suited and adapted to the local environmental and social conditions than large scale industries (Garg, 1996). The importance of this sector can also be gauged by the fact that now there are 12.3 million. Small Scale Industrial (SSI) units which contribute 40 %

**Address for correspondence:*

nishi.nishi067@gmail.com

of the total industrial production and 35 % of the total exports from India. It employs more than 29.5 million people and produces 8000 different products.

One of the major problems faced by SSIs today, among others, is the “labor problem” (Mohan, 2014). There is a severe shortage of skilled labor in the industry which is fostering a job-hopping culture which invariably affects quality, organizational culture and real losses in revenue and production. This job-hopping may well be an industry specific phenomenon but this still cannot explain all the variance in voluntary turnover. It is reasonably possible that important factors like organizational commitment and Perceived leadership may be affecting turnover and seen from other side, helping curbing it too.

Organizational Commitment

Greenberg & Baron (2010) defines organizational commitment as “the extent to which an individual identifies and is involved with his or her organization and/or is unwilling to leave it.”

Meyer & Allen (1991) offer the following definition of their three types of organizational commitment: Affective commitment refers to employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement with the organization.

Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization.

Normative commitment reflects_a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization.”

Factors influencing organizational commitment are related to job such as promotional opportunities, responsibility; employment opportunities; personal characteristics such as age, tenure, gender; positive relationships with co-workers, supervisors etc.; organizational structure; and management style. It is generally argued that higher organizational commitment leads to lessening of withdrawal behavior.

“Leadership is the process whereby one individual influences other group members toward the attainment of defined group or organizational goals” (Yukl, 2002).

Hersey & Blanchard’s (1977) Situational Leadership Theory postulates that leadership behaviors fall into two dimensions: (a) leader’s concern with the task (structuring or task orientation), and (b) leader’s concern with the relationship (socio-emotional support or relationship orientation).Fiedler’s (1967) Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) Model offers another way to distinguish between leadership behaviors that are *relations-oriented* versus *task-oriented*(Brown, 2003).

Turnover Intention

“Turnover is a behavior which describes the process of leaving or replacing employees in an organization” (Currivan, 1999). Lacity, Iyer and Rudramuniyaiah (2008) defined turnover intention as “... the extent to which an employee plans to leave the organization”

In a meta-analysis done by Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner (2000) which included more than 500 correlation and 42 studies since 1990s, the researchers concluded that proximal precursors in the turnover process were among the best predictors of turnover. These predictors include organizational commitment, quit intentions among other predictors such as job satisfaction. They also report that organizational commitment {variance of 29% using the Meyer & Allen scale (1990) } predicted turnover better than what overall job satisfaction does.

In testing the organizational commitment and its relation to turnover intention, Hussain & Asif (2012) studied 230 Pakistani “telecom employees”. They reported a negative correlation of “-.697” between

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organizational commitment and turnover intention. For perceived organizational support they reported a negative correlation of “-.687”. 49.4% variance in employees’ turnover intention is explained by organizational commitment and perceived organizational support. Jehanzeb, Rasheed, & Rasheed (2013) studied 251 employees from different industries such as banking, retail and fast food located in Saudi Arabia. They suggested that training affects organizational commitment which then has a significant relationship with turnover intention. There was a significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and turnover intention (“-0.483” at alpha level 0.01).

Waldman, Carter, & Hom (2011) studied “connection between leadership and follower turnover by investigating the effects of group-level transformational leadership on the withdrawal process.” In their findings they reveal that transformational leadership and quit intentions share a negative relationship ($\gamma = -.60, p < .001$). On further analysis they found that quit intentions mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and actual voluntary turnover. To supplement these results the researchers argue that transformational leadership may lead to lesser turnover as it may help foster high quality relationship with followers, identification with the collective mission, and optimistic expectations about their future prospects in the organization. Most studies reviewed above do testify to the idea that leadership affects organizational commitment in important and significant ways which then collectively affects turnover intention, which is often considered the final cognition before actual voluntary turnover. Having said that, it is not to say that other important variables such as availability of jobs, familial environment and commitments etc do not affect the final decision. In fact, there is a huge amount of research which does support their mediating role, but these factors are often outside the organizations’ control, on the other hand leadership and organizational commitment can be actively modified by the organization in question.

Small Scale Industries have been a major source of reliable employment in the country. Researchers have found that among other problems, “labor related” problems have been a major source of hindrance in their growth and development. It is in this context that the present research aims to study how leadership (supervisors) and organizational commitment affects turnover intention of the employees. The need of the study was also felt because although many researches suggest that there is a shortage as well as high turnover of skilled labor there isn’t much research to suggest why. It is difficult to study workers at lower echelons of the organization as they are not always educated, thus standard western English paper and pencil tests fail to register their opinions. Thus, the present study first translated the two of the most widely used leadership and organizational measurements tools to Hindi to conduct the present study.

On the basis of literature review four hypotheses were formed:

- H1: Transformational Leadership will have a positive correlation with affective commitment.
- H2: Transformational leadership will have a negative relationship with turnover intention.
- H3: Transactional leadership will have a negative relationship with turnover intention.
- H4: Organisational commitment will have a negative relationship with turnover intention.

METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study included 51 semi-skilled workers employed in small scale industries who varied in terms of age, marital status, number of children, tenure and work experience. Purposive sampling was employed for selection of sample. The sample was drawn from three different organisations located in and around Greater Noida and Noida industrial parks. Of the three organisations, two of them were involved in manufacturing of soft toys and home furnishings and one manufactured corrugated boxes.

This study was conducted using three separate instruments:

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 6S, Northouse, 2001), developed by Bass & Avolio in 1994. It has 21 items and seven subscales: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward, management by exception, laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration. Transactional leadership includes: contingent reward and management by exception passive. The internal consistency of the items range from .72 to .93.

Meyer & Allen’s (1997) Organisational Commitment questionnaire containing 18 items (6 for each subscale of affective, normative and continuance commitment) was used in the study. Responses to each item were rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Allen & Meyer (1990) reported reliability coefficients of .87 for affective, .75 for continuance and .79 for normative commitment.

Turnover Intention Scale (Shore & Martin, 1989): is a 6 item scale wherein participants were asked about a series of statements to which they were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree along a 5 point Likert response scale. Lee (2008) reports reliability coefficients as high as .92.

Data collection for the study followed an interview based survey format as many of the employees had to answer to questions while they were working or were not familiar even with Hindi.

Data analysis was done using SPSS 20. This involved calculating descriptive statistics for the demographic data and Pearson product moment correlation between the perceived leadership, organisational commitment and scores from the turnover intention subscale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected on a sample of 51 semi-skilled workers were analysed for demographic details and correlation coefficient computed for studying relationship between perceived leadership style, organizational commitment and turnover intention.

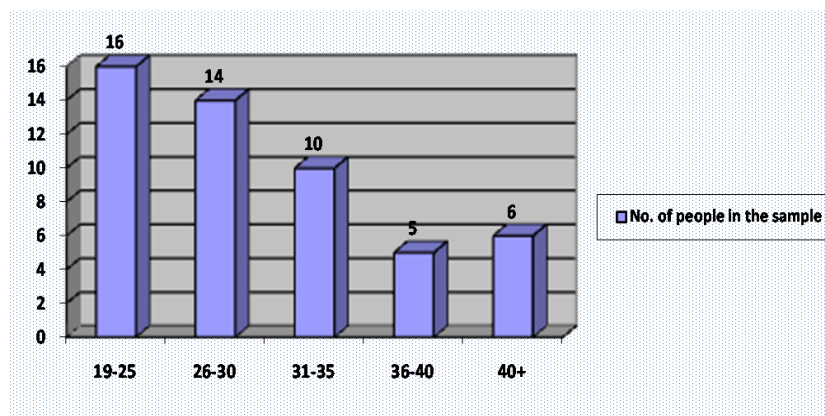


Figure1. Age-Distribution of the Sample

In terms of age, 31.4% of the sampled population was between 19-25 years of age, coming a close second was the category 26-30, which had 27.5% of the sampled population. 19.5% of the people were aged between 31-35. 9.8% of the sample was aged between 36-40 and only meagre 11.8% of the sample was aged 40+. This shows that most of the sample was quite young.

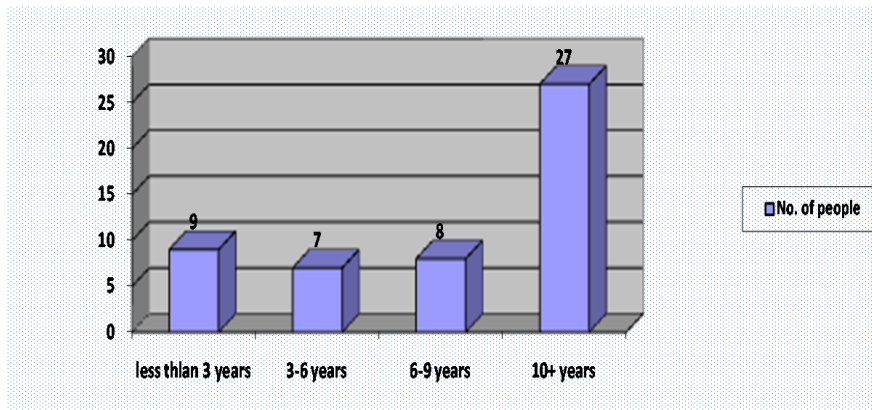


Figure 2. Number of Workers with various range of work experience

In terms of number of years of work experience, 17.6% of the sampled population had been in some form of pecuniary work arrangement for less than 3 years, another 13.7% had been working for more than 3 years but less than 6 years. 15.7% of the sampled population had been working for more than 6 years but less than 9 years and a major chunk of the sampled population i.e. 52.9% had been working for more than 10 years.

Table 1. Correlations between Perceived Leadership and Organizational Commitment subscales

		Correlations				
		Transfor	Transac	AC	NC	CC
Transfor	Pearson Correlation	1	.507**	.135	.448**	.173
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000	.172	.000	.113
	N	51	51	51	51	51
Transac	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1	.235*	.211	.133
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000		.049	.069	.176
	N	51	51	51	51	51
AC	Pearson Correlation	.135	.235*	1	.479**	.520**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.172	.049		.000	.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51
NC	Pearson Correlation	.448**	.211	.479**	1	.545**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.069	.000		.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51
CC	Pearson Correlation	.173	.133	.520**	.545**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.113	.176	.000	.000	
	N	51	51	51	51	51

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

*Transfor –Transformational leadership; Transac- Transactional Leadership; AC- Affective Commitment; NC- Normative Commitment; CC- Continuance Commitment

It can be seen from the above table that a high correlation of .448 was obtained between Transformational leadership and Normative commitment. The second highest correlation of .235 was between Transactional Leadership and Affective Commitment. No significant correlation was found between Transformational leadership and affective commitment. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was rejected. This may come as a surprise but this could well be a cultural phenomenon as suggested by Ramachandran & Krishnan, (2009), while studying the effects of transformational leadership on an Indo-China sample. He found normative commitment higher than affective commitment as a result of transformational leadership behaviours. This they argue is the result of cultural differences in individualism and collectivism. As Asian countries are more collectivistic, people in these countries feel more obligated towards people they admire. To what extent this contention is true, is still debatable and the evidence is still at best mixed, thus needs more research.

Another surprising correlation was obtained between Transactional leadership and affective commitment (a positive correlation of .235). Clinebell, Skudiene, Trijonyte, & Reardon, 2013;

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Ahmadi, Ahmadi, & Zohrabi, 2012 have obtained similar results. Probable explanations for this could be, first, both transformational and transactional leadership have some concurrence in their structure as also seen by a positive correlation of .507 and second, many researches report that the relationship between organizational commitment and leadership is moderated by factors such as personality and regulatory focus of the followers (Brown, 2003). Thus, it is likely that semi-skilled workers’ personality or some other variable may be acting as a moderating variable.

Table 2 reports correlations between perceived leadership and turnover intention. A strong negative correlation of -.628 was obtained between transformational leadership and turnover intention. Transactional leadership and turnover intention shared a negative correlation of -.251 at alpha 0.05. This result is consistent with studies reported by Dimaculangan & Aguling, (2012) that “transformational leadership directly decreases turnover intention, and indirectly reduces turnover intention through perceived ethical climate, person-organization-fit, and organizational commitment.” A probable explanation for this could be that transformational leaders inspire trust and confidence among their followers and may also be perceived as more caring and helpful. Among the Transformational leadership subscales, Idealized influence which suggests that followers idealise their leader, he/she is respected among the employees and commands strong loyalty from his/her followers, had the most strong negative correlation coefficient with turnover intention (-.552). This was closely followed by Inspirational motivation subscale (-.542) which refers to the leadership behaviours of motivating his/her followers, articulating goals clearly etcetera. The third highest correlation with TI was that of Individual consideration (IC) (“-.471”), IC refers to leadership functions in which the leader treats his/her followers with respect, he/she respects his followers’ talents and sees them as complete individuals. The least amount of correlation with TI was shared by Intellectual stimulation (IS) (“-.399”). IS measures leadership functions as to how much the leader fosters a reflective thought process about problems among his/her followers, how much is the leader an intellectual stimulator for his/her employees.

Table 2. Correlations between Perceived leadership and Turnover Intention

		Correlations									
		II	IM	IS	IC	CR	ME	LF	TI	Transfor	Transac
II	Pearson Correlation	1	.552 ^{**}	.690 ^{**}	.471 ^{**}	.346 ^{**}	.278	.382 ^{**}	-.552 ^{**}	.878 ^{**}	.399 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.006	.024	.003	.000	.000	.002
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
IM	Pearson Correlation	.552 ^{**}	1	.479 ^{**}	.336 ^{**}	.643 ^{**}	-.017	.089	-.542 ^{**}	.745 ^{**}	.477 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000		.000	.008	.000	.452	.267	.000	.000	.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
IS	Pearson Correlation	.690 ^{**}	.479 ^{**}	1	.429 ^{**}	.120	.245	.404 ^{**}	-.399 ^{**}	.811 ^{**}	.213
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.200	.041	.002	.002	.000	.067
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
IC	Pearson Correlation	.471 ^{**}	.336 ^{**}	.429 ^{**}	1	.228	.639 ^{**}	.375 ^{**}	-.471 ^{**}	.712 ^{**}	.490 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.008	.001		.054	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
CR	Pearson Correlation	.346 ^{**}	.643 ^{**}	.120	.228	1	.241	-.027	-.249	.428 ^{**}	.876 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.006	.000	.200	.054		.044	.426	.039	.001	.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
ME	Pearson Correlation	.278	-.017	.245	.639 ^{**}	.241	1	.481 ^{**}	-.126	.368 ^{**}	.679 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.024	.452	.041	.000	.044		.000	.188	.004	.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
LF	Pearson Correlation	.382 ^{**}	.089	.404 ^{**}	.375 ^{**}	-.027	.481 ^{**}	1	-.153	.399 ^{**}	.219
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.003	.267	.002	.003	.426	.000		.141	.002	.061
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
TI	Pearson Correlation	-.552 ^{**}	-.542 ^{**}	-.399 ^{**}	-.471 ^{**}	-.249	-.126	-.153	1	-.628 ^{**}	-.251 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.000	.039	.188	.141		.000	.038
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
Transfor	Pearson Correlation	.878 ^{**}	.745 ^{**}	.811 ^{**}	.712 ^{**}	.428 ^{**}	.368 ^{**}	.399 ^{**}	-.628 ^{**}	1	.507 ^{**}
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.004	.002	.000		.000
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
Transac	Pearson Correlation	.399 ^{**}	.477 ^{**}	.213	.490 ^{**}	.876 ^{**}	.679 ^{**}	.219	-.251 ^{**}	.507 ^{**}	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	.000	.067	.000	.000	.000	.061	.038	.000	
	N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

*II- Idealized Influence; IM- Inspirational Motivation; IS- Intellectual Stimulation; IC- Individual Consideration; CR- Contingent Reward; ME- Management-by-Exception; LF- Laissez-faire; TI- Turnover Intention; Transfor- Transformational Leadership; Transac- Transactional Leadership

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Another important thing to note from the correlation table is that among the subscales mentioned above Idealized influence correlated most strongly with transformational leadership (“.878”). This is in line with what is traditionally thought of transformational leaders i.e. they are charismatic and have a positive strong non-coercive influence over their followers. Almost similar correlation was also shared by Intellectual stimulation (IS) with transformational leadership (“.811”).

It can be seen from the above Table that transactional leadership shared a negative correlation with turnover intention (“-.251”) that is significant at alpha level 0.05.

This result is not at all surprising because most studies on leadership and turnover intention suggest that transactional leadership does not affect turnover intention much (Dimaculangan & Aguilung,2012). Nonetheless, it should be noted that transactional leadership should not be cast away so easily because there is some evidence which suggest that in some situations transactional leadership affects turnover intention more than transformational leadership, for example, Hamstra, (2011) report that for prevention focused followers transactional leadership was a better predictor for turnover intention than transformational leadership which is a better predictor for employees with promotion focus. This is not to say that rewards are not at all important. They are to some extent important as can be seen from CR and its correlation with IM (“.643”) suggesting that, at least partially, motivation is indeed a function of rewards but it is not the sole picture. It is very likely that today’s employees are much more aware of their surrounding and thus expect more out of their workplace than just monetary rewards (Baron & Greenberg, 2008). Thus, Hypotheses 2 and 3 are accepted.

Table3.Correlations between Organizational Commitment subscales and Turnover Intention

		Correlations			
		TI	AC	NC	CC
TI	Pearson Correlation	1	.079	-.488**	-.220
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.290	.000	.060
	N	51	51	51	51
AC	Pearson Correlation	.079	1	.479**	.520**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.290		.000	.000
	N	51	51	51	51
NC	Pearson Correlation	-.488**	.479**	1	.545**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	51	51	51	51
CC	Pearson Correlation	-.220	.520**	.545**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.060	.000	.000	
	N	51	51	51	51

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

It can be seen from the above table that among the different types of organizational commitments and turnover intention, a strong relationship was obtained between Normative commitment and Turnover intention (“-.488”) . This correlation was significant at alpha level 0.01. Surprisingly, neither affective commitment nor continuance commitment shared a correlation with turnover intention but affective shared a positive correlation of .479 with normative commitment and almost similarly continuance shared a correlation of .520 with normative commitment; both of these correlations were significant at alpha level 0.01. This result is rather unusual as in literature, it is the affective commitment which affects turnover intention the most. A probable cause of these results might be that semi-skilled workers were qualitatively different in terms of how they saw commitment than executives, this might be possible as previous researches have been conducted on executives rather than workers at lower levels of organization.

Yet another possibility could be that because the sample size was small, effects of affective and continuance commitment got lost in sampling error. Thus hypothesis 4 that organizational commitment has a negative correlation with turnover intention can only be partially accepted.

One of the important limitations of the study is its small sample size (N=51). Although much of its findings, leaving a few, are in line with prevalent research literature yet the small sample size hampers generalizability of the research.

CONCLUSION

The study found that in terms of leadership and organizational commitment relationship, only transactional leadership had a significant albeit moderate correlation with normative commitment. Turnover intention correlated negatively with transformational leadership. The study found non-significant correlation between transactional leadership and turnover intention, affective commitment, continuance commitment and turnover intention.

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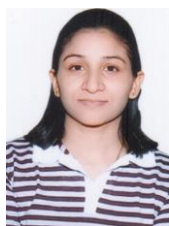
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AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



Vikas Yadav, completed his graduation in Psychology from Delhi University. He is presently specializing in the area of Organizational Behavior in the last year of Post graduation in Applied Psychology. Besides being interested in the area of prejudice and discrimination, he is fascinated by the topics of work motivation, leadership and commitment. Along with studies he is also actively involved with the college street play society.



Dr. Nishi Misra, is Scientist 'F' at Defence Institute of Psychological Research, Delhi. She specializes in the area of Clinical Psychology. She has twenty years of service as a scientist and has served as a psychologist in Services Selection Board, Allahabad. She has worked extensively in the area of suicides and fratricides, job stress and post-traumatic stress in Armed Forces. She counsels DRDO personnel as well. Presently she is working in the area of development of new selection system for the Armed Force. She has to her credit number of research projects and publications in National and International journals.