

**PSYCHOSOCIAL PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN
MIGRANT ADOLESCENTS**

***Rupan Dhillon and **Saima Hafiz**

Address should be correspondence to: *Dr. Rupan Dhillon, Assistant Professor

**Saima Hafiz, Research Fellow, Department of Psychology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

Emails: rupan.oberoi@rediffmail.com; saimahafiz21@gmail.com.

Contact: +919132794000; +918492077917.

Abstract

Migration is considered as a series of events constituting a lifelong process which impacts upon the lives of all involved, including those who do and do not migrate, by the movement of people in or out of their communities with resulting changes. Migration is the cause of reduction in personal control which can result in feelings of helplessness, can bring a change in role and interruption of lifestyle, can challenge self-concept and can increase anxiety and distress. This study, hence, has directed its focus on trying to understand that how the various determinants: self esteem, coping strategies, family environment, personality and social support are determining psychological distress. The total of 200 migrants was taken from various camps and schools situated in various areas of Jammu city. Purposive sampling technique was employed for the collection of data. In this study, a large number of variables were reduced to four factors with the help of varimax rotated factor analysis. Step Wise Regression Analysis has been used to find out the predictors of psychological distress in migrants. It is revealed from the results that the social support factor provides a significantly unique contribution to psychological distress ($\beta = -.67, p < .01$), along with family environment ($\beta = -.54, p < .01$), factor of coping ($\beta = -.27, p < 0.01$) and personality factor ($\beta = -.10, p < .01$) in migrants.

Key words: *Psychological distress, Migrants, Adolescents, Self esteem, Coping, Family environment, Personality and Social supports, Migrant camps, Step wise regression analysis.*

Introduction

Migration is the cause of reduction in personal control which can result in feelings of helplessness, can bring a change in role and interruption of lifestyle, can challenge self-concept and can increase anxiety and distress. There are some other factors which can cause distress and those are; barrier in communication due to difficulty in language and cultural differences, unfavorable experiences before, during and after migration, traditional beliefs, socio-economic

status of the family, un-favorable family environment and maladaptive coping strategies utilized in order to overcome distress.

Migration has four associated factors. The first condition is initiated with the place of origin. Secondly, there are factors which trigger the movement from their actual place or country. Thirdly, there are resources which affect the host environment of a migrant. Lastly, there is a wide array of factors that characterize the move. The mental health of migrants is greatly influenced by the post migration stressors which require the attention of researchers in recognizing the role of environment in the context of various factors associated with migration. The post migration difficulty is associated with various challenges faced by them.

Several post- migration stressors pose a great threat to the well being of migrants, out of which limited access to healthcare, worries about family members left behind, unemployment, low self esteem and isolation disturb the mental balance of migrants. These factors can be regarded as predictors of psychological distress in migrants (Silove *et al.*, 1998).

In India, the patterns of migration have been changed due to socio cultural, economic, political and legal factors. As the industrialization took place, people started to migrate in large numbers. This migration is usually from villages to towns. The dislocations are of short distances. Migration is also more predominant among the population of lower socio economic status.

In this study, Kashmiri migrants have been the focus. The historical perspective of this migration is that the Kashmiri pandits were forcefully asked to leave their home place. Migration of Kashmiri pandits is called a forced one and it came in to being in 1990. An act of mobilization had occurred some 22 years back in 1990 in the Kashmir valley which enforced the existence of Kashmiri pandits to leave their homeland. The whole scenario of migration remained stressful for Kashmiri pandits under different conditions. The journey which had started in 1990 was influenced by post migration stressors. Singh *et al.* (2015) have stated that forced migration has made the migrants psychologically and physically unstable. Migration has led to marked changes in their life style, family structure and relationships. Their inability to cope with the ongoing family disturbances have caused disharmony which is responsible for distress. The student community has also suffered from the feelings of alienation and hopelessness.

Lazarus and Folkman's Psychosocial Stress model

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define “stress as a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well being”. Stress is viewed as a condition or feeling experienced when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately deal with the demands being placed on them or with threats to their well being. The model draws on Lazarus Stress Theory (1966) which states that the confrontation between the individual and a stressor i.e. the relationship between the individual and the environment has the potential to result in conflict and stress. An individual who is confronted with a stressor appraises, i.e. undertakes an assessment of the situation. Lazarus distinguishes between primary and secondary appraisal; primary appraisal being the individual’s judgment whether or not the stressor poses a serious threat and secondary appraisal being the evaluation of one’s own capabilities, external support and coping options. Lazarus assumes that appraisal as the cognitive process preceding coping not only influences the inner state of the individual but also influences the process of coping, adjustment and adaptation and is therefore the most significant element in the adjustment process.

In this psychosocial model, an emphasis is placed on psychological resources and social resources. The adaptive coping strategies come in the category of psychological resources and supportive personal relationships fall in the category of social resources. The key point in this model is cognitive appraisal. The individual has to make sense of his own world. An understanding of individual differences in appraisal is particularly important when examining responses to similar stressors among persons with similar level of resources. In simple words, it means, that if we keep the resources and demands relatively constant, subjective or intra-psychic factors assume importance in understanding the stress process.

But on the other hand, when we examine stress among populations with greater levels of variation in their access to environmental resources or in the types of stressors they are exposed to, then the importance of subjective factors diminishes. For refugees, it is likely that objective factors in their lives (e.g. family separation, legal status, permission to work, accommodation conditions) will on the whole play more significant role in shaping their psychological well being as compared voluntary migrants. These objective factors become more salient than the intra psychic factors.

This model enters the stress process at the point where the individual is already engaged in a potentially stressful transaction with his environment. It can be stated here that this model focuses more on the appraisal process and the coping strategies or responses an individual adopts as opposed to the more objective factors of the distribution of resources or demands in society. If the stressful impact of a demand ultimately depends on the individual's perceptions and coping ability, then the responsibility for failure to manage such a situation lies within the individual.

Studies have shown that stress alone cannot lead to depression. Other conditions such as inadequate cognitive appraisal or inadequate social resources are also the additional factors that contribute to the stress to lead to an illness. Social resources represent the individuals' social network and social support, which can be mobilized to deal with a stressful situation and may mediate stress-related outcomes.

Moving is considered as a stressful event because it disturbs the equilibrium between the mover and his environment. Stress Process Model by Pearlin (1989) and Thoits (1995) tries to explain the link between exposure to stressor and depression. Migration is a stressor which negatively affects the well being of migrants. The applicability of the model to migration comes predominantly from studies conducted in the West (Beiser, 1999). Also, this model has been used widely for the studies of voluntary and involuntary migration.

The major tenet of this model is how exposure to stressors translates in to depression. Migration is a single stressor as it uproots people from their homes and leaves them in an unfamiliar environment. It demands challenging social, economic and psychological adjustments. Such conditions not only affect mental well being directly but also leads to chronic strains in other spheres of life. Involuntary migration will also be influenced by expectations and attitudes.

Sood and Bakshi (2014) studied the quality of life of aged Kashmiri migrants in Jammu and opined that low quality of life was found among aged Kashmiri migrants. There are a number of studies which make it clear that migration and psychological problems like depression and anxiety are related to each other (Bhugra, 2004; Ryan, Dooley and Benson, 2008). It is documented that migration weakens the structural and cultural chains and involves abuse, exploitation, emotional problems and psychological distress (Chari et al., 2003). It is a transition of complex processes that results in mental health issues (Blair, 2000).

Objectives

Post migration is associated with adjustment to new environment. The capability to respond to the unfavorable circumstances makes one more prone to such psychological disturbances after migration (Van Tilburg et al., 1996). The role of pre migration factors such as personality, type of migration, persecution, and post migration factors, such as bereavement, culture shock, a gap between prior expectancies and current achievements, feeling of dejection in the host community are some of the factors which are responsible for psychological problems in migrants. Keeping in mind the existing literature an effort is made to study the various psychosocial predictors of psychological distress. There can be many social reasons that can cause distress in migrants but this study is focusing more on the psychological variables and is trying to understand which variable holds more importance in the life of the adolescent migrants in the current scenario. The main objective of the study is to examine the self esteem, dimensions of coping, family environment, personality and social support as predictors of psychological distress in migrant adolescents. These variables have been chosen keeping in mind the theoretical rationale of the study and the existing review of literature and hence is an effort in similar direction as the review.

Hypotheses

The psychosocial variables of self esteem, coping, family environment, personality and social support will be significant predictors of psychological distress in migrant adolescents.

- (a) There will be a significant negative relationship between self esteem and psychological distress.
- (b) There will be a significant positive relationship of coping strategies i.e. self control, distancing and escape avoidance with psychological distress.
- (c) There will be a significant negative relationship of coping strategies i.e. seeking social support, planful problem solving, accepting responsibility, positive reappraisal and confrontive coping with psychological distress.
- (d) There will be a significant positive relationship between conflict and control with psychological distress.
- (e) There will be a significant negative relationship between cohesion, expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural

orientation, active recreational orientation, moral religious emphasis and organization with psychological distress.

- (f) There will be significant positive relationship of neuroticism with psychological distress.
- (g) There will be significant negative relationship of extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness with psychological distress.
- (h) There will be significant negative relationship of appraisal support, belonging support, esteem support and tangible support with psychological distress.

Methodology

Sample

A total number of 200 participants were taken for the study. The age group of 14-19 years is considered for the sample. The migrants are taken from the schools situated in the migrant camps. These camps are installed for the migrants at the time of migration and some were newly constructed after some years of migration. The camps are situated in Muthi, Jagti, Purkhoo, Nagrota, and Bantalab. The sampling technique employed in the case of migrants is purposive sampling. They were told about the confidentiality of data.

Measures

General Health Questionnaire- 12 (GHQ-12) (Goldberg and Williams, 1988)

GHQ-12 is a good predictor of psychological distress. It has been used most extensively as a screening instrument for the assessment of common mental disorders and can also be used as measure of psychological well being. The scale consists of 12 items. Every individual have to respond on a likert four-point scale. The high the score, the higher is the psychological distress. This instrument contains two broader areas: - the inability to carry out normal functions and the appearance of distress and to assess the well-being in a person.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965)

This is a 10 item scale which contains both positive and negative feelings about the self. The responses of the respondent can be recorded on a 4 point likert scale which is arranged from

strongly agree to strongly disagree. Higher score indicates high self esteem. It is a good measure of the assessment of level of self esteem among individuals.

Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WAYS) (Folkman and Lazarus, 1988)

The measure of coping strategies can be used to recognize the thoughts and actions of an individual. It is a 66 item scale which measures eight types of coping processes i.e. confrontive coping, distancing, self controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal. The items are further scaled as emotion focused and problem focused coping. Each item is rated on a 4 point likert scale which indicates the usability of each strategy at the times of stress. It varies from (0) does not apply or not used to used a great deal (3).

Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos and Moos, 1986)

It is designed to measure social and environmental characteristics of families (Moos and Moos, 1986). It is a 90 item scale which measures factors like cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization and control. There are three dimensions of family environment scale: relationship dimension i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, personal growth i.e. independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, active recreational orientation and moral religious emphasis and system maintenance i.e. organization and control. The answer is recorded on yes or no format.

Neo Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) (Costa and McCrae, 1992)

It is constructed by Costa and McCrae (1992) which is used to evaluate personality traits of an individual. The NEO –FFI is a short form of the Revised NEO Personality Inventory. This assesses five dimensions of personality, that is neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), agreeableness (A), openness (O) and conscientiousness (C). Scoring key can be used to get the format of scores for each item. After adding the responses on each dimension, it provides total score of specific

trait. Accordingly, overall score varies from 12 to 60. The scale has 60 items classify the personality in to five components namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) (Cohen and Hoberman, 1983)

The scale is a self report measure of social functioning. It is a 40 item scale and is diverged in to four sub scales i.e. appraisal supports, belonging support, esteem support and tangible support. There are 10 items in each scale. The score ranges from 0-3 for each item. The participants are rated on a 4 point likert scale vary from definitely true to definitely false. The subjects are supposed to give their responses on the basis of how truly or falsely they perceive was each item representing their current situation of stress. The split half reliability is .79 for appraisal support, 0.84 for belonging support, 0.74 for esteem support and finally for tangible support it is 0.82.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix for Migrant Adolescents of Age Group 14-19 Years (N = 200)

Variables	Rotated Factor Loadings				h ²
	F-I	F- II	F- III	F- IV	
Self esteem	.54		.65		.84
Confrontive coping	.41	.82			.86
Distancing		.43	.75		.82
Self control		.88			.88
Seeking social support		.84			.88
Accepting responsibility		.78			.79
Escape avoidance		.86			.87
Planful problem solving		.83			.85
Positive reappraisal		.84			.83
Cohesion	.82				.79
Expressiveness	.81				.74
Conflict	-.75				.85
Independence	.82				.85
Achievement orientation	.77				.83
Intellectual cultural orientation	.82				.79
Active recreational orientation	.77				.74
Moral religious emphasis	.77				.78
Organization	.81				.81
Control	.74				.65
Neuroticism			-.81		.79
Extraversion	.65		.43		.74
Openness	.60			.43	.74
Agreeableness	.40			.83	.89
Conscientiousness				.82	.88
Appraisal support			.93		.88
Belonging support			.90		.85
Self esteem support			.87		.78
Tangible support			.85		.75
Eigen value	8.66	6.44	5.53	2.08	
% of Variance	30.9	23.0	19.7	7.42	

Table 2

Step Wise Regression Analysis for Migrant Adolescents of Age Group 14-19 Years (N= 200)

Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig.
Social Support Factor	.665	.442	.43	156.97	.01
S.S; Family Environment	.857	.735	.732	273.24	.01
S.S, F.E, Factor of Coping	.898	.807	.804	273.55	.01
S.S, F.E, F.C, Personality Factor	.904	.818	.812	218.79	.01

Table 1 shows us the factor analytic structure of a large number of variables reduced to a few factors. In this study, a large number of variables were reduced to four factors by applying varimax rotated factor analysis. The significant loadings were taken above the cut off point of .40 in accordance with the data. After obtaining these four factors which are named as social support factor, family environment factor, factor of coping and personality factor, the data was further subjected to step wise regression analysis.

Table 2 shows us the regression coefficients for the sample of migrants. It provides us with Model Summary table representing the values of R, R² and adjusted R² which determine how well a regression model fits the data. R column represents the value of the multiple correlation coefficients. R can be considered as one of the measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable. A value of 0.90 indicates a good level of prediction. R Square is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. R square column depicts that the predictors show a variance of 81.8 %. The F value shows that the predictors statistically significantly predict the criterion variable i.e. psychological distress, $F(4, 95) = 218.79, p < .01$.

Table 3**Coefficients of Regression for Migrant Adolescents of Age Group 14-19 Years (N= 200)**

Model	Unstandardized coefficient B	Standardized coefficient Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Constant	24.79		145.6	.01	1.00	1.00
Social support factor	-3.71	-.67	-21.8	.01	1.00	1.00
Family environment	-3.02	-.54	-17.7	.01	1.00	1.00
Factor of coping	-1.50	-.27	-8.79	.01	1.00	1.00
Personality factor	-.57	-.10	-3.37	.01	1.00	1.00

p < 3.96 significant at 0.05.**p < 6.96 significant at 0.01.**

Table no. 3 shows unstandardized coefficients (B) and standardized coefficients (β). The various factors obtained have either a positive or a negative association with psychological distress. Social support factor, family environment, factor of coping and personality factor show an inverse relationship with psychological distress. The multi-co-linearity statistics shows the values of variance inflation factor which tells us about linear relationship of one predictor variable with other predictors and the tolerance value which is the inverse of VIF. The table value shows that there is no multi-co-linearity between the predictors by using factor scores. The factor of social support provides a significantly unique contribution to psychological distress ($\beta = -.67, p < .01$), along with family environment ($\beta = -.54, p < .01$), factor of coping ($\beta = -.27, p < 0.01$) and personality factor ($\beta = -.10, p < .01$) in migrants.

Social Support Factor

A perusal of the table 3 shows that **social support factor has attained the highest regression coefficient** ($\beta = -.67, p < .01$). This factor has the most significant predictor as social support and shows that social support predicts psychological distress among migrant adolescents. It can be said that social support and its dimensions are important predictors of psychological distress. Having a good social support network can reduce the negative impact of stressors which otherwise would lead to psychological distress. Social support is getting support in terms of emotional or instrumental from the social structure.

The results indicate that adolescents who find social support in their environment have lower distress. It is stated that social support has a positive effect on mental health which promotes the sense of stability and self worth (Aneshensel, 1992).

Social support is considered as an effective coping resource especially for the migrants when the social networks that earlier existed are no longer available. The four dimensions of social support i.e. appraisal support, belonging support, esteem support and tangible support significantly contribute to reducing psychological distress. The adolescents who perceive availability of someone to talk to about personal problems or to do things with or have help in terms of material aid will have less feelings of psychological distress.

It is stated in the review that emotional support for migrants is an intervention strategy to normalize their state of being (Bartkeviciene and Raudeliunaite, 2013) and lack of emotional support, esteem support, informational support, instrumental support affects the mental health of migrants (Drogendijk *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, it can be added that poor social support and economic conditions are important predictors of mental health in immigrants (Syed *et al.*, 2006). The psychosocial environment in terms of low social support and lack of control over life events in a new society results in high rates of psychological symptoms in migrants (Mallett *et al.*, 2002; Silveira and Ebrahim, 1998). Hence, it can be said that social support has come to be the most important predictor of psychological distress. The distress in migrants can be reduced by providing them an effective support.

In this factor, distancing has come out as an important predictor for predicting psychological distress. Distancing is an emotion focused coping strategy. In our study, it is

showing a negative association with distress which may suggest that migrants distance themselves from people and situations and resort to the using of this strategy to cope with their situations. A study by Khawaja (2007) has stated that emotion and avoidant coping is significantly related with psychological distress in Muslim migrants.

Further on, self esteem is also contributing to the prediction of psychological distress. It has a negative relationship with psychological distress. Self esteem is the self worth of an individual. It is the confidence in total aspects of human activity. Adolescents who have high self esteem will have lower psychological distress. Having high self esteem is a sort of coping resource that neutralizes the effect of stress on psychological distress (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978; Thoits, 1994). However, those who lack this psychological resource can have negative imbalances in healthy life. Hence, self esteem is another important aspect of psychological distress in migrant adolescents.

There are two personality variables which are part of this factor. These variables are neuroticism and extraversion. Extraversion has a negative relationship and neuroticism has a positive relationship with psychological distress. The results show that more are the neurotic tendencies in the adolescents more will be inclination to psychological distress. On the other hand, extraverted individuals will have less psychological distress. Personality traits are of important concern in experiencing psychological distress. The way we get affected by the distress is influenced by our personality which determines our behavior. Neuroticism is characterized with tendencies to experience negative affect and emotional instability. On the other hand, extraversion is a tendency to have disposition towards energetic activity and sociability. Extraverts are able to cope with every day stressors, seek social support that helps them to deal with stress; they are very assertive to positive affect. That is why they are able to deal with distress effectively. Lack of such personality characteristics makes the migrants more psychologically imbalanced.

It is stated that individuals high on neuroticism and low on extraversion are less inclined to have a good psychological wellbeing. These are important in understanding the adaptive nature of individual and therefore influence the tendency of migrant's adjustment in the host country (Mobarakeh *et al.*, 2015). Adolescent with high neurotic personality traits are anxious,

depressive, moody, vulnerable and emotionally unstable (Garusifarshi, 2007). The psychosocial environment in terms of maladaptive coping strategies, attitude towards the future and lack of social support disturbs the health and social well-being (Ek *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it can be concluded that the most important predictors obtained are social support and personality traits of neuroticism and extraversion including self esteem which help in predicting psychological distress in migrants.

Family Environment

Family environment is the second important predictor of psychological distress in migrants ($\beta = -.54, p < .01$). It comprises of all the variables of family environment i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual orientation, active recreational orientation, moral religious emphasis, organization and control. It can be stated from the results that family environment is an important predictor of psychological distress in migrants and has a negative relationship with psychological distress. Only conflict variable has a positive relationship with distress. The unfavorable family environment provides the individuals with insecure attachment which affects their psychological wellbeing. It is important to have a favorable family environment because it is an essential component for the normal functioning of individuals.

The home environment consists of the following three dimensions which tell us about the interaction among family members, i.e. relationship, personal growth and system maintenance. The relationship dimensions determine the capability of family members, how firmly they are close to each other, expressive and their proneness to conflictual atmosphere. The personal growth dimension indicates the tendency of individuals to self development, achievement orientation, intellectual orientation, active recreational orientation and moral religious emphasis. The system maintenance dimension provides the atmosphere which is organized and controlled. The whole perspective is based on family system theory which defines family as a small group of interrelated and interdependent individual elements.

Researchers have documented the role of family support in the psychological well being of individuals such as experiencing less stress (Dick, Manson and Beats, 1993). Cohesion is a protective factor against the harmful effect of stressors (Hovey and King, 1996). It is evident

from the studies that perceived family cohesion and support is the distinctive feature against psychological distress (Rivera, 2007). Family cohesion makes the emotional bond stronger that decreases the impact of stress (Rivera *et al.*, 2008). Also, conflict in the family is related with adolescent's insecurity and psychological distress as well as aggressive behavior and conduct disorder (Wissink *et al.*, 2006).

Migrants who live in non cohesive families experience high level of psychological distress (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Supportive families with high degree of expressiveness are more likely to develop positive relationship which helps in combating psychological distress (Duong Tran, Lee and Khoi, 1996). Greenberg and Chen (1996) reported that the degree of warmth and acceptance by parents acts as a protective factor against psychological distress. Another study by Bankstan and Zhou (1997) illustrates that praise, approval, expression of physical affection and cooperation were negatively correlated with psychological distress.

This means that those who are nurtured in unfavorable family environments report more psychological distress than those whose upbringing occurs in cohesive and supportive family environments. It provide us with clear picture that if the home environment is not cohesive and there are no active recreational orientations, moral values, religious orientations, expressiveness of feelings and unity , it is bound to increase the feelings of distress in migrants.

The Indian culture also represents the collectivistic approach towards family structure. Strong family obligations followed by all members in the family provide the base for the healthy well being of individuals. The discrepancy in the family support system can result in range of psychological problems. The roots of personal growth are held in the family ties and relationships. Migration is one of the causes that vandalize the strong family networks. The restructuring of family relationships can cause psychological distress among Kashmiri migrants. The joint family system and its changing into a less integrated family system can increase their psychological problems (Dhingra and Arora, 2005) and feelings of loneliness (Parasuraman, 1986).

Further perusal of the factor table of family environment factor highlights few other variables i.e. self esteem, confrontive coping and three dimensions of personality which are extraversion, openness to experiences and agreeableness. This shows that along with the family

dimensions personality variables and self esteem are also significantly predicting psychological distress. The three traits that have come significant and are negatively relating with psychological distress are extraversion, openness to experiences and agreeableness. So, it is clear from our results that these personality traits are of great importance as these traits will determine the adaptation process of the migrants especially the adolescents studying in schools and colleges. The personality traits of extraversion, openness to experiences and agreeableness are healthy traits. Extraversion is that trait of personality which directly effects distress. If these traits are present in adolescents, it will help in reducing psychological distress. However, if these traits are lacking, migrants will not be able to adapt themselves to the post migration environment.

Studies have stated that low extraversion predicts higher symptoms of distress. Similar results have also been reported for the other two dimensions of agreeableness and openness to experiences. These factors predicted the risk for both major and minor depression (Weiss *et al.*, 2009; Hayward *et al.*, 2013).

Self esteem has a negative relationship with psychological distress. Ritsner, Modai and Ponizovsky (2000) outline the risk factors like loss of professional status and social prestige among migrants that lowers their self esteem and results in higher distress, depression and anxiety. The feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, because of differences in the host and native cultures (Heras and Revilla, 1994), result in low self esteem among immigrant children (Rumbaut, 1994). Bhugra (2004) stated that self-esteem, personality traits, psychological robustness, cultural identity and acculturation are the risk and resilience factors that may affect the mental health of migrants.

Therefore, in conclusion it can be stated that family environment, personality traits and self esteem are important predictors of psychological distress. Having a good home environment, high self esteem, extraverted, open and agreeable personality traits will definitely be an important psycho-social resource to overcome psychological distress in migrant adolescents.

Factor of Coping

As we move on, the coefficient value ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .01$) shows that **factor of coping is the significant predictors of psychological distress in migrants**. This factor comprises of all the dimensions of coping i.e. confrontive coping, distancing, self control, seeking social support,

accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal are significantly predicting psychological distress. All the dimensions of coping have negative relationship with psychological distress. So, here it can be very clearly stated that coping plays an important role in predicting psychological distress in migrants. This is a complete integrated factor.

The process of coping consists of cognitive and behavioral tendencies to cope with situational demands that one perceives as demanding. Coping skills are the characteristics or ways of dealing with difficulties. It refers to a person's ability to deal with different types of situations.

The stressful events following the migration hinder the process of coping that causes instability in the psychological well-being of migrant adolescents. There are individual differences in adopting various strategies to cope with the demands of life. Some use emotion focused coping whereas others used problem focused coping. Some use emotion focused in order to regulate their emotions in the stress while others adopt risk taking behaviors to counter the situation during crisis. Maladaptive utilization of coping strategies can be detrimental for the mental health of migrants. It might be one of the important causes for the psychological distress in migrants. Horwitz, Hill and King (2011) concluded that maladaptive coping strategies were predictors of depression in adolescents.

It is revealed from studies that the student community of Kashmiri migrants is under the great influence of physical and psychological problems. Coping tendencies get affected due to the prolonged exposure to the inconsistencies of the changing environment (Dhingra and Arora, 2005). The results are in line with study of Walsh, Shulman and Maurer (2008) who stated that greater the experienced immigration distress, the greater the experienced difficulty of stressful life events and the lower the level of coping.

Studies have shown that if migrants use strategies like distraction or substance abuse, it is because they are experiencing lot of stress. Also, these migrants use emotion focused coping and denial in order to overcome stress. They even engage in delayed emotional processing when facing problems which may cause long term problems. The positive coping strategies are always related to positive mental health outcomes. These adaptive coping strategies include positive

reframing, humor, planning and support. So migrants who rely on approach coping rather than avoidance coping will have better outcomes. The ineffective use of coping strategies in the form of avoidance or withdrawal results in range of mental health problems in migrants (Busse and O'Mahoney, 2000).

Hence, coping patterns influence the state of psychological distress in migrants. Concluding about the importance of this factor structure, it can be stated that review supports that adaptive use of coping strategies will decrease distress in migrants. These strategies are used depending upon the everyday situations of the migrants. Migrants who are not able to utilize them will face problems in adaptations in their new environment.

Personality Factor

Further perusal of the table 3 shows that the **personality factor is the next factor predicting psychological distress in migrants**. Its regression weight is ($\beta = -.10, p < .01$). It shows that the three personality traits that are significantly contributing to psychological distress of migrants are openness to experiences, conscientiousness and agreeableness and are negatively related with psychological distress.

Personality trait is the unique blend of personal dispositions that either outsource the uniqueness of individuals or characterize their differences. Personality is a distinctive characteristic of an individual which remains consistent and contributes in self adjustment of migrants. Personality traits anticipate the nature of threat and enhance our capability to deal with the distress. Some personality aspects support the adjustment process whereas other refrain it.

Openness is the tendency to explore new experiences. It is the interest in various aspects and is a high curiosity for wide perspectives. People who are open are more flexible. They are able to accept challenges and are able to contribute creative ideas in solving various problems. Conscientiousness refers to orderliness, discipline and is related to achievement orientations and self motivation. Agreeable individuals are more helpful, avoid conflict, understand the differences and are altruistic. The conscientiousness and agreeableness are the predictors of social emotional adjustment in migrant children (Subroto, Wati and Satiadarma, 2015).

It can be seen that these variables are important predictors and are also positively related to each other. Our result is supported by the study of Weiss *et al.* (2009) who state that low

conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experiences predicted depression. Individual differences in conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experiences can play a major role in prediction of depression. It can be said that the combination of these personality traits in migrant adolescents are the key perspectives for reducing mental health risk in the form of psychological distress.

In a study by Paulauskaite *et al.* (2010), connection has been found between conscientiousness and migration. Aluja and Garcia (2004) have found that conscientiousness is connected with order and responsibility and those who possess this trait are very enthusiastic about their country and family. Personality traits are the predictors of pro-immigrant attitude in which agreeableness shows the strongest association (Gallego and Pardos-Prado, 2013). Openness to experiences is an important aspect of migration (Jokela, 2009). Having high conscientiousness is related to positive wellbeing (Steel, Schmidt and Shultz, 2008) because such individuals alter the situation more specifically (McCrae and Costa, 1991), are highly goal oriented (Barrick, Mount and Strauss, 1993) and are highly motivated beings (Judge and Ilies, 2002). They have competent tendencies and are capable of higher well being (McGregor and Little, 1998). These studies suggest that these traits have adaptive consistencies for leading a balanced life. Hence, personality traits more specifically agreeableness, openness to experiences and conscientiousness are the important characteristics that predict the migrant's psychological distress. Lack of these traits may enhance psychological distress in migrants.

Conclusion

Step wise regression analysis was applied in order to obtain the most significant predictors of psychological distress in migrants. There are four main significant predictors which are explained in association with psychological distress. If we see the importance of predictors in migrants, it can be clearly suggested that social support, family environment, coping and personality traits are all important and significant predictors of psychological distress in migrants. If the social support system is weakened, psychological distress is increased. Coping strategies if utilized effectively can reduce psychological distress in migrants. Having a cohesive and expressive atmosphere reduces the psychological distress in migrants. And lastly, personality traits of extraversion, openness to experiences, conscientiousness and agreeableness are all

positive factors for a healthy personality and are beneficial for reducing psychological distress in migrants. As already suggested, migrants are undergoing lots of stresses in their life and continued exposure to these stressors will lead them to a state of increased distress. However, if changes are made in these psycho-social resources, they can be beneficial in reducing in the distress they are experiencing. One interesting finding is that all the personality traits are coming significant which may suggest the importance of personality in understanding the behavior of migrants. Having a healthy personality can reduce psychological distress in migrants.

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