A STUDY OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AMONG EXECUTIVES IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKING

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BY
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Supervisor's Certificate

This is to certify that M.Phil. dissertation entitled "A STUDY OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AMONG EXECUTIVES IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKING" submitted by Mr. Sayeeduzzafar for the degree of M.Phil. in Psychology, has been carried out under my supervision. The dissertation is suitable for submission to the examiner for evaluation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

LH - LEARNED HELPLESSNESS
LH1 - INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH2 - INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH3 - INTERNAL-GLOBAL-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH4 - EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH5 - INTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH6 - EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH7 - EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LH8 - EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS
LHT - TOTAL LEARNED HELPNESS
EX1 - EXECUTIVE GROUP 1
EX2 - EXECUTIVE GROUP 2
EX3 - EXECUTIVE GROUP 3
EX4 - EXECUTIVE GROUP 4
CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE
MEANING AND CONCEPT OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

The term 'Learned Helplessness' also known as LH is of recent origin in the literature of Psychology. LH means, uncontrollability of all those environmental conditions where an individual feels that the situations existing in the environment may not be altered, eliminated or changed. According to Pestonjee and Reddy (1988), "learned helplessness is a cognitive state of being (an individual or an animal) which believes that whatever it does is not going to alter the outcome of an event". In other words, it comes to believe in response-outcome non contingency. The concept of LH can be better understood from the statements of the people that they often do not like many things prevailing in the society, their neighbourhood, organizations and on their jobs. And they are unable to alter or eliminate all those undesirable things. Undoubtedly these statements explicitly reveal their feelings of uneasiness with existing environmental conditions. They express their inability to do any thing to change them for the betterment. Now, it is obvious from such statements that LH is the outcome of the feeling of uneasiness with the existing environmental conditions and the inability to change them for the better. Therefore, LH has been viewed as the cognitive state of beings (animals/humans) who believe that whatever they do will not alter the outcome of an event.
This concept of LH was accidently discovered by Overmier and Seligman (1967) when they were conducting an experiment on mongrel dogs to determine the relationship of fear conditioning to instrumental learning by inducing inescapable shock upon subsequent escape and avoidance conditioning. In his series of experiments dogs were subjected to inescapable electric shock with variation in duration, degree and frequency. Initially the dogs struggled very hard to escape shock. After repeated failure to escape, the dogs passively endured the shocks by discontinuing their efforts to escape. At this time they made escape possible. But, in spite of escape being possible, the dogs made no attempt to escape. Whereas, the other group of dogs who did not received any shock earlier did escape well. On the basis of this finding they stated that the dogs learned that shocks were independent of their behaviour and this learning was transferred to new situation inhibiting escape response in that altered situation. Overmier and Seligman (1967) termed this state of dogs as a Learned Helplessness (LH).

The subsequent research on LH was carried out by Seligman and Maier (1967), in which they probed that the LH effect was caused by the uncontrollability of the original shock. According to them the phenomenon of LH results from experience with uncontrollability. They define uncontrollability as the response - outcome independence.
means subject has no control over the outcome of the event. To support his argument that LH results from the experience of uncontrollable outcomes, Maier and Seligman used a 'triadic design' in which three groups of eight mongrel dogs were used as a subject. The escape group was trained in a hammock to turn off the shock by pressing a panel with their nose. The yoked group received shocks identical in numbers, durations, and pattern similar to that of the escape group. The yoked group differed from the escape group only in terms of the instrumental control in which the subjects received over-shock while pressing the panel. This pressing of the panel did not affect the programmed shocks given to the yoked group. The third group named as the naive group received no shock in the hammock. After 24 hours of the hammock treatments, all the three groups received escape-avoidance training in a shuttle box. The escape and naive group performed well in the shuttle box, they jumped the barriers readily to avoid shocks. In contrast the yoked group was found significantly slower to respond than the other two groups. On the basis of their findings they stated that it is not shock itself but inability to control the shock produced and the failure to respond, this they termed as learned helplessness (LH). The occurrence of the LH phenomenon was also observed and reported by Thomas and Batler (1969), on cats; Padilla and Padilla (1970), on cats and fish and Braud et al (1969), on rats using more or less the same triadic design. This supported the findings of Overmier and Seligman
Inspired by the research finding and conceptual development of the phenomenon of LH based on animal studies, the later researchers planned to conduct research/experiments on human subjects and tried to probe further regarding the concept and causal factors of LH. Perhaps the first study conducted on human subject was carried out in two phases by Thorton and Jacobs (1970, 1971). In animal studies to develop LH phenomenon mere traumatic shock were used. But it was not possible in human subjects due to ethical considerations.

Thus, Thorton and Jacobs used typical stress set instructions which involved subjective setting of the stress level, according to subject perception of having unpleasant but not painful. The shock used were of such level that the subject could perceive it as unpleasant but not painful. They conducted a series of experiments and observed the LH phenomenon in humans as perceived by Seligman et al in animals.

A number of studies have been done after Thorton and Jacobs (1971), but according to Seligman, Hiroto’s (1974) study is the representative. This study was
conducted on college students and finds the same results as observed by Seligman et al. on mongrel dogs. Hiroto used the same design as used by Seligman and others. He divided their subjects into three groups. The first group of subjects called the escape group received a loud noise which they learned to turn off by pressing a button. The subjects in the inescapable group received the same noise, but the noise were independent of their responding. A third group received no noise. All the three group then taken to a hand shuttle box, in order to escape noise, the subjects had to move his hand from one side to other. Both the no noise and escape groups learned readily in the shuttle box with their hands. Like other species, however, the human inescapable group failed to escape and avoid rather most sat passively and took the aversive noise, means a phenomenon like LH were noticed in the subjects. Apart from this study, other investigators like (Fosco and Geer, 1971; Racinscas, 1971; Glass and Singer, 1972; Roth, 1973; Krantz, Glass and Snyder, 1974; Roth and Bootzin, 1974; Hiroto and Seligman, 1975; Rodin, 1975; Miller and Seligman, 1975a; Roth and Kubal, 1975;) used humans as subject and supported the findings of the phenomenon of LH as observed by Seligman, Overmier and Maier (1967, 1967) on mongrel dogs.
LEARNED HELPLESSNESS MODELS:

ELEMENTARY MODEL OF L.H.

The term LH was first used by Seligman, and Overmier (1967) to describe the impaired performance of dogs in an instrumental training situation produced by prior exposure to uncontrollable aversive stimuli. According to Susan Roth, "LH refers to an interference in learning occurring due to experience with noncontingent rewards, and to underlying processes hypothesized to be responsible for this interference: the learning of response-reinforcement independence and its generalization." Response-reinforcement independence means our responses do not produce desired outcomes. When an organism is repeatedly exposed to outcome which are independent of his responses, it develops a feeling that the outcomes are uncontrollable or independent of his responses. This learning can result in the development of an expectation that outcomes would be independent of responses in future also. Which in turn leads to deficits in performance (Maier et al, 1969; Seligman et al, 1971). The basis of performance deficits are of three types, which are as follows:
MOTIVATIONAL DEFICITS

When a person believes that outcomes are not dependent upon his responses, it leads to reduced motivation/incentive for making efforts. The belief that outcome are independent to response, the person generalizes it to other new situations also. Let us take an example of a Sr. manager TCCB Of BHEL, who had sent a proposal for some changes in the design of the transformer to the R&D department. By making this change the quality of the transformer can be improved a lot. But all suggestions have been turned down by the DGM (Research & Development or R&D) without giving any cause. Even after some time when the above DGM of R&D got transferred to some other place, and the new DGM who is quite responsive to bringing in some technological changes, for good performance of their products, the above Sr. manager did not send any proposal for change. This is because he believes that submitting such a proposal is futile. A number of researchers have observed the motivational deficits in human and animals because of LH (Behrend and Bitterman, 1963; Lefcourt, 1966; Ratter, 1966; Frumkin and Brookshire, 1969; Powel and Creer, 1969; Pyne, Anderson and Murcurio, 1970; Padilla and Padilla, 1970; Ketter and Giacalone, 1970; Padilla, 1973; Maier, Albin and Teasta, 1973; Enberg, Hansen, Welker and Thomas, 1973; Gamzu, Williams and Schwartz, 1973; Bainbridge, 1973; Hiroto, 1974; Welker, 1974; Hiroto and Seligman, 1975; Hiroto,
Seligman and Klien et al, 1975; Miller and Seligman, 1975; Seligman and Beagley, 1975; Seligman, Rosselini and Kozak, 1975; Rossiline and Seligman, 1975).

COGNITIVE DEFICITS

LH can also produce cognitive deficits, as the organism does not think that responses and outcomes are contingently related. Inference with future learning occurs, and there is difficulty in forming new cognitives of response producing outcomes. Let us take the example of the above Sr. manager again who has acquired a cognitive set that submitting any proposal leads only to a non sanction. It will be more difficult for him to accept the fact that some of these proposals can be accepted or sanctioned. This type of cognitive deficits were also observed in animals and men by a number of researchers in different experiments (Rescorla, 1967; Thomas, Freeman, Svincki, Burr and Lyons, 1970; Mellgren and Ost, 1971; Kemler and Shepp, 1971; Mackintosh, 1973; Hiroto and Seligman, 1974; Miller and Seligamn; Maier and Teasta, 1975; Klien et al, 1975).

EMOTIONAL DEFICITS

Expectancy of response-outcome-independence leads to emotional disturbance in the form of anxiety, depression, insomnia etc. The above stated Sr. manager might
become indifferent towards other areas of his life, and can show withdrawal symptoms and may even remain absent from duty frequently. Emotional deficits are also reported by several researchers among LH persons and or animals (Sines, Cleeland and Adkins, 1963; Elliot, 1969; Moot, Cabella and Crabtree, 1970; Jay Weiss, 1970; Corah and Bofa, 1970; Seligman and Grooves, 1970; Honkanson, Degood, Forest and Brittain, 1971; Desiderato and Newman, 1971; Averill and Rosenn, 1972; Payne, 1972; But Seligman's model of LH fails to explain how generalizability takes place from one situation to another situation (Hiroto and Seligman, 1975). Moreover, helplessness did not always generalize beyond the setting in which actual response-outcome independence was experienced (Peterson, 1982; Alloy et al, 1984). This model also did not account for the impact of individual differences like gender (Dweck and Repucci, 1973; Baucom, Danker and Brown, 1979). Benson and Kennelly, 1976; and Burglass and Jones, 1978 explained that the expectancy of response-outcome independence as well as aversive outcome are necessary to induce LH.

ATTRIBUTION MODEL OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

To resolve the inadequacies in Seligman's model Abramson et al., 1978 produced a reformulated model of LH based on attribution theory. Attribution theories
suggested that people make causal explanation for observed events and behaviour (Heider, 1958; Wong and Weiner, 1981). These causal attributions have a powerful effect on feelings, plans and well beings. This theory provides a framework by which attribution made by persons can be classified along many dimensions (Passer et al., 1979). The basic dimensions are Internal-External, Stable-Unstable (Weiner, 1971) and Global-Specific (Seligman et al.).

**INTERNAL-EXTERNAL (I-E)**

The I-E dimension makes a distinction between causes. Internal causes are based within the person whose behaviour the theory seeks to explain and are believed to be applicable to that person only. While External causes are not the part of the person whose behaviour is being explained. They are expected to affect all persons who attempt to behave similarly. This dimension represents self-other-continuum and gives rise to two different types of helplessness.

**PERSONAL HELPLESSNESS (PH)**

PH refers to believes that there are responses which can produce the desired outcomes. But the person does not have them in his repertoire. Like lack of ability, poor skills and lack of efforts etc.
UNIVERSAL HELPLESSNESS (UH)

UH refers to believes that relevant others also do not have the requisite responses in their responses. It is important to note that the reference person for universal helplessness are relevant others and not just any body. This includes luck, task difficulty and work overload etc.

An additional effect associated with the I-E dimension is loss of self esteem. Internal attribution make the person feel that he, unlike others, has been unable to control the desired outcomes, and is ashamed, feels guilty, and loss of self esteem. On the other hand, external attribution make the person felt that all are helpless like him, and prevent such loss of self esteem.

STABLE - UNSTABLE (S-U)

This dimension of attribution model distinguishes factors which are long lived and recurrent from those which are short lived and intermittent. Attribution of failure to stable factors would produce helplessness effect which persist for a longer period of time. While unstable causal attribution would produce helplessness which dissipitates with time. These unstable causes may not be
present in future situations. Seligman and his associates proposed that chronicity of helplessness occur when stable attribution are made (like, lack of ability, task difficulty, and lack of power). This is because such factors are likely to be present in the future. Therefore, these factor will prevent response from having the desired effect. If the attribution is unstable like (recession, poor health and or insufficient effort) cause is not expected to occur in future or unlikely to be chronic.

GLOBAL - SPECIFIC (G-S)

Global factors are those which exist in most situations and influence outcome widely. In contrast, specific factors are unique of the original situation and do not generalize across situations. Global attribution of uncontrollability imply that helplessness would occur across situations. The generality of helplessness may thus be explained by the G-S dimension of attributions.

Global causes like lack of aptitude, poor health, and recession affect a wide variety of situations including that in which the causes were stated. Whereas, specific causes like insufficient effort, and difficult task may affect only one or few more specific situations. Hence, attribution to global causes affect the behaviour of the
person in many other situations (Alloy, 1982) and the person may generalize the situation where this cause is relevant. In contrast to specific causes helplessness is likely to occur in dissimilar situations.

All the three dimensions of causal attributions described above are continuous rather than dichotomous. These three dimensions of attributions can be grouped together in different combinations which will result in eight types of causal attributions. These are:

1. Internal - global - stable
2. Internal - global - unstable
3. Internal - specific - stable
4. Internal - specific - unstable
5. External - global - stable
6. External - global - unstable
7. External - specific - stable
8. External - specific - unstable

Each of these dimensions has a different implication for the future expectations of people, and their performance on subsequent tasks.

Taking the effects of these three dimensions together, it is observed that executives who makes internal-global-stable attributions, like lack of aptitude for
managerial work will show highest personal helplessness in large number of organizational situations. Similarly, executives who make, external-stable-global attribution such as fate or destiny will express highest universal helplessness across a large number of organizational situations.

The second major attributional model of LH was presented by Miller and Norman (1979). This model supports all the predictions of the reformulated LH model (Abramson et al., 1978). Besides, it provides new insight into the process by which causal attribution and LH emerge. LH has been viewed in the Abramson's attribution model as a cognition produced by experiences of response-outcomes-independence and the attribution that persons make for the experience. In addition to this cause, Miller and Norman suggested that attributions are also affected by person's characteristics, as well as the particular situation in which the experience takes place. These three elements interact to give rise to causal attributions, which determines future expectations as well as the likelihood of consequent helplessness. However, this model fails to describe and clarify as to how the interaction of experiences, information about situations and personal characteristics gives rise to each type of causal attribution. But this model does attempt to indicate the variable involved in the development of LH, and gives
evidences of their significance in the development of Learned Helplessness.

According to the Miller and Norman model the two types of information which affect LH are outcome cues and situational cues. Outcome cues refers to the feedback received by the person from his previous experience, about the extent to which outcome depended on his effort and extent of previous success. Situational cues refer to the significant stimuli or information received from the context of the particular experience, such as instructions about the uncontrollable stimuli (Glass and Singer, 1973; Hiroto, 1974; Klein et al., 1976), amount of exposure to uncontrollability (Roth and Kubal, 1976) and other stimuli such as other's performance (Weiner, 1974). Individual differences which significantly affect LH are gender (Dweck and Repucci, 1973), previously held expectations about performance (Hiroto, 1974) and depressive mood (Hammen and Krantz, 1976).

After the reformulation, LH is conceived primarily as a cognitive phenomenon in humans that emerges following experiences of response-outcome independence. In each person the experience gives rise to causal attributions which represent a fairly stable characteristics and affect future behaviour. More generally, a person first learns that he/she makes for it, might or might not be helpless in future
situations. Therefore, helplessness need no more be treated as a specific reaction to a particular experience in the laboratory. Instead, it may be considered as an enduring state of response-outcome expectancy that individuals bear in themselves.

The state-oriented approach towards LH was suggested in Seligman's original reformulation. The original reformulation lends support to this approach by suggesting that the situational view of helplessness as a short lived reaction to laboratory experience does not adequately explain LH (Miller and Norman, 1979). In spite of these theoretical advances, most research has avoided studies of naturally occurring LH (Brown and Siegel, 1988), and has tended to treat LH as a transient state observed immediately after a short experience of experimentally induced response-outcome independence.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON ATTRIBUTIONAL ANALYSIS & L.H.

INTERNAL-EXTERNAL (I-E) ATTRIBUTIONS

A number of researches has been done on examining the link between I-E attribution and LH. Internal attributions leads to greater loss in self esteem as
compared to external attributions (Abramson et al., 1978; McFarland and Ross, 1982; Peterson and Seligman, 1984; Mikulincer, 1986, 1989). In his study of I-E attribution on performance following insolvable problems, Mikulincer manipulated perceived task importance, perceived task difficulty and threat to self esteem, and examined the effects of I-E attribution. While the performance deficits for external attribution could be examined by recourse of self handicapping strategies adopted by the person to protect his self esteem. Internal attribution for failure leads to personal helplessness whereas external attribution leads to universal helplessness. In most of the laboratory based researches on LH, personal and universal helplessness has been treated as orthogonal dimensions. However, Sahoo’s (1991) study in organizational setting found the two to be significantly and positively correlated. Balakrishnan (1990) found that knowing that others are also helpless is no consolation in reducing performance deficits. In a study on the homeless, Burn (1992) found that environments which are consistently low in control lead to external attribution and universal helplessness. Similar results has also been reported by Dweck and Repucci (1973) and Hanusa and Schultz (1977).
STABLE-UNSTABLE (S-U) ATTRIBUTIONS

Attribution of failure to stable factors leads to chronicity of helplessness (Weiner, 1974; Mikulincer, 1986, 1988; Mikulincer and Nizan, 1988).

Attribution of failure to unstable cues is not likely to lead to chronic deficits because those causes may not be present in future.

GLOBAL-SPECIFIC (G-S) ATTRIBUTIONS

A number of researchers (Alloy, 1982; Anderson, 1983; Mikulincer and Nizan, 1988; Snyder and Higgins, 1988) found that global attributions are more likely to lead to generalization of LH to dissimilar situations. While specific attributions like poor effort is less likely to lead to generality of LH in other situations.

Because the causal factors of the earlier situations may not be present in later situations. The available literature indicates that global and stable attributions are necessary for generalization of expectancies of uncontrollability to dissimilar situations.
ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE AND ANALYSIS

A number of people explain events in a habitual fashion called "attribution style". The type of attribution a person makes may be influenced by his general attributional style (Seligman et al., 1979) and environmental cues. Some people habitually attribute bad happenings to external, stable and global causes, and good happenings to internal, stable and specific causes.

The style becomes more important in situations where the information about causes is ambiguous. A number of researches have been done on attributional style and LH/depression using attributional style questionnaire-ASQ (Seligman et al., 1979; Alloy et al., 1984; Peterson et al., 1988). They found that a subject with global attributional style for negative events showed LH deficits which generalized to both similar as well as dissimilar situations. Metalasky et al., 1984, in a naturalistic situation found that students with more internal and global attribution style showed more severe reactions.

Let's take an example of a Sr. manager, who is not applying for the post of DGM. He can offer several explanations for this behaviour, which in turn we may use to predict their future behaviour.
"My efforts to convince the Selection Committee to make me DGM are of no use, because......

I. ....I lack the aptitude for DGM work
   (internal-global-stable).

II. ....My current health is in shambles after the accident
    (internal-global-unstable).

III. ....Any person can get such posts only through destiny
     (external-global-stable).

IV. ....There is recession in the industry
    (external-global-unstable).

V. ....I have not put in enough effort to convince the selection committee
   (internal-specific-unstable).

VI. ....I do not have skills beyond my specialization
    (internal-specific-stable).

VII. ....This post is always given to owner's relatives
     (external-specific-stable).

VIII. ....The selection committee members are busy at present
      (external-specific-unstable).

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

Attribution analysis of LH is still the most well documented theory, but alternative explanation of LH has emerged in recent years. Snyder and Higgins (1988) has tried
to explain LH by recourse to excuse making. "Excuse making is the process of shifting causal attributions for negative personal outcomes from sources that are more central to the person's sense of self to sources that are relatively less central, thereby, resulting in perceived benefits to the person's image and sense of control" (Snyder and Higgins, 1988).

A global attribution produces more task-irrelevant self-preoccupation (off task cognitions), which impairs performance on a subsequent task. On the other hand, a specific attribution for failure is an excuse attribution which shifts the responsibility away from the person, thereby making failure irrelevant for self evaluation. By making excuses, people split the person who may have performed poorly in some situation from the real person who does well otherwise (Snyder et al., 1983). This excuse making reduces engagement in off-task cognitions the main cause of performance deficits.

Sedek and Kofta (1990) has put forth an informational explanation of LH by defining uncontrollability in information processing terms. When a person is in the uncontrollable situation, he receives consistent informational feedback as he engages in hypothesis testing activity during problem solving. Gradually, some of the hypotheses are disapproved and he is able to construct an
adequate cognitive schema for the future. But on the other hand, a person facing uncontrollable situations receive meaningless informational feedback and he is unable to construct an appropriate cognitive schema for behaviour. The high disorderliness thus produced does not get reduced inspite of cognitive exertion by the person. This inability to have any cognitive gain leads to a state of cognitive exhaustion in which little hypothesis testing is done. This state is the immediate antecedent of LH symptoms.

The main difference between the attributional model and information model of LH is that the original theory views response-outcome noncontingency as the crucial aspect, thus locating the source of helplessness in something that follows behavioral acts (i.e. their outcome which are independent to behaviour). In contrast the present approach attributes helplessness to difficulties encountered at an early stage of action development, namely when an organism attempts to derive an anticipatory schema usually called action programme for successful guidance of future activity. According to the current theory, the essential feature of helplessness training is repeatedly experiencing the inability to derive such a programme by means of hypothesis testing activity (Sedek and Kofta, 1990).
LEARNED HELPLESSNESS IN ORGANIZATIONS

A very few studies of LH in naturalistic settings has been found in the review of literature.

Balakrishnan (1990) found LH to be positively correlated with chance locus of control and negatively correlated with internal locus of control, job involvement and job satisfaction.

In this study attributional theory did not get adequate support. Education level was inversely related with LH.

People in financial organization were found to have higher personal helplessness as compared to those in manufacturing and consulting organizations.

Baum and Gatchel (1981) studied crowding in college dormitories and found attribution to be important determinants of helplessness. Golin et al. (1981) found that attribution style of children and adults at a particular time predicted depression in future. Hammen, Krantz and Cochran (1981) found similar result for college students. Metalasky et al. (1982) found that students with internal and global attribution styles showed more severe depression
symptoms after receiving low mid term grade. Sahoo (1991) found positive correlation between PLH and ULH and negative correlation between PLH and Job satisfaction. Employees in financial institutions showed less helplessness than employee in educational and industrial organizations, contrary to the finding of Balakrishnan (1990) for executives. Chawla (1994) found no relationship among PLH and ULH with demographic variables among the managerial staff of Banking sectors. Means age, sex, educational background and income has no effect on Learned Helplessness. Lata and Dhar (1989) found that age has significant correlation with learned helplessness, more in old ages, less in young ages. Sarkar(1993) reported very low level of learned helplessness in middle managers of engineering industry.

Rampant employee indiscipline is observed in many public and even private sector organizations in different forms. If we ask to an executive what he does to control indiscipline in the organizations, he will respond, "What can I do? I am helpless". Or if we ask to any executives what you will do to convince your employees not to go on strike, they will say, "How can I? I am not even sure whether it is my job?" There are so many evidences of such examples from our own personal and work experience. These example capture a phenomenon very widely pervasive in life. Injustice, inequities and deprivation are experienced as aversive conditions. In such situations, people would
normally engage in instrumental activity, directed towards removing or alleviating aversive conditions.

Perception of attractive, valued and attainable goals or rewards tend to lead people to put in efforts to obtain them. Problem faced in life would ordinarily push people to squarely face them and engage in problem solving activities. Some people remain passive and apathetic, reflecting maladaptive behaviour. They tend not to do anything and quietly suffer the unpleasant consequences of inaction. And some even deny that the problem exists; others show different types of withdrawal behaviour. The LH construct provides a clear explanation about why the phenomenon observed in the above said example takes place.

When people initially make any effort and often failed to achieve desired results, they believe that desired results are uncertain, no matter what they do. From these experiences they learned that they were helpless and there was no use even to try. Thereafter, they reduced their efforts or gave up completely, became passive and sad, and faced the undesired outcome with inaction.

According to Martinko and Gardner (1982), "LH can be induced by a variety of experiences in organizations." Bureaucratic organizations are observed to
direct member behaviour through established rules and routines which inhibit self expression and limit autonomy (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

Therefore, employees learn from the organizational environment to suspend their judgement and come to doubt whether their own ideas and actions are acceptable at the job. Over time these organizations shapes employees to become incapable of demonstrating innovation or responsibility, even when such behaviour is desired and rewarded (Argyris, 1957). For example, lack of control over production process experienced by assembly line workers (Blauner, 1964) can induce a sense of powerlessness and cause LH. These workers become generally passive and therefore, cannot be depended upon to exercise initiative on the few occasions when it is required.

There are other factors which causes helplessness in organizations. When a person faced very difficult or impossible goals, they fail to find meaningful relationship between their actions and desired results (Stedry and Kay, 1966). Employees and executives who are held accountable for results produced by others, or given formal roles without commensurate resources and authority, perceived a sense of powerlessness at their job (Kanter, 1983). Organizational rewards which are perceived to be
independent of efforts (Kerr, 1975) may be expected to increase the sense of helplessness among employees. Conger and Kanoongo (1988) stated that jobs providing very little challenges and meaning or involving role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload are related to powerlessness.

Factors which induced uncertainty in the organizational environment have been suggested as possible causes of helplessness. Toffler (1970) has stated that rapidly changes in environment may give rise to helplessness among workers.

Financial emergencies, significant technological changes and mergers can induce significant alterations in organizational structure, strategies and tactics. These changes causes uncertainty in large segments within the organizations (Cogner and Kanungo, 1988). Unpredictable work environment were also observed to be related to "burnout" among health service professionals (Cherniss, 1980).

**LEARNED HELPLESSNESS AND ITS RELATED CONSTRUCTS**

**LOCUS OF CONTROL**

Locus of control refers to the general expectation that people hold about the major cause of events
and results. The causes could either be their own behaviour or qualities (internal control) or could be fate, chance and other powerful people (external control). Most of the researchers has used I-E scale (1966) to measure the internal and external locus of control as bipolar states on a continuum. Contrary to common belief, the scale was not designed to measure the general conception of locus of control (Lefcourt, 1981). The original aim was to assess the expectancies about own control with regard to different goals such as achievement, social recognition and affection. Locus of control has been treated as a trait, where persons with high control are said to be potent and assertive, while the external are held as helpless and incompetent (Cohen et al., 1976).

However, some researchers have also indicated the existence of multiple locus of control as against the simple undimensional model proposed by Rotter (eg. Collins, 1974).

Like learned helplessness, locus of control is also a personality construct related to believes held by people about desired outcomes. Unlike LH, which focuses on the cognitive states where outcomes are perceived to be independent of response, locus of control makes individuals to identify causes of events around them. While causal
attributions made for perception of LH indicates causes which interfere with responses made to achieve desired outcomes. And locus of control merely indicates what the person believes is the cause of outcome in general. Locus of control which refers to an expectancy about events in general appears to have poor predictive capacity, while LH uses an attributional model to make elaborate predictions about chronicity and cross-situational generalization of maladaptive behaviour.

LEARNED RESOURCEFULNESS (LR)

Theoretical conceptualization suggested that self control skills are learned; individual with different learning histories are expected to show substantial differences in self control (Rosenbaum, 1980). LR refers to "an acquired repertoire of behaviour and skills (mostly cognitive) by which a person self-regulates internal responses such as emotions, cognitions and pain) that interfere with smooth execution of desired behaviour" (Rosenbaum and Ben Ari, 1985). The construct proposes that LR is triggered by a situation where well established responses fail to produce expected outcomes. Following the experience of uncontrollability, a person who had low LR showed significantly higher performance deficits with
similar controllable tasks than those persons who had high LR (Rosenbaum and Jaffe, 1983). Hence, persons with strong self-control skills or high LR are likely to show low personal helplessness.

Like LH, learned resourcefulness is also a hypothetical construct which seeks to explain differences in behaviour when action fails to produces desired results. Although both these constructs reflects a stable disposition held by individuals. LH has been identified as a cognitive state while LR has been conceived as a set of cognitive and behavioural skills. LR construct does not explain variations in maladaptive behaviour such as chronicity and cross-situational generalization, which learned helplessness does.

**SELF EFFICACY**

According to Bandura (1977)," self-efficacy is a belief in one's capability for performance of a specific task. "Bandura's self efficacy theory of effects of control is compatible with Minimax-hypothesis. Personal control gives a sense of self efficacy (perceived ability) to the individual for tackling an aversive event. This results in reduction of their level of anxiety and arousal.

Biggs and Tofler (1981) suggested that the expectancy about the outcomes sets the general context (to
respond or not respond), but actual involvement with the task and persistence revolves around perception of self-efficacy.

Self efficacy like LH is a hypothetical construct about expectations that a person holds about the ability of their actions to produce desired outcomes. The primary difference is that, self-efficacy is posited with respect to a specific situation while LH refers to a more generalized trait carried by people. Hence, self-efficacy does not reflect a stable disposition, and precludes its use as a means of predicting behaviour in other situations or in future.
CHAPTER 11

METHODOLOGY
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present research aimed at studying the learned helplessness (LH) in a public sector undertaking. Its relevance lay in the present scenario in the public sectors which reveals widespread symptoms of learned helplessness like indifference, lack of initiative in problem solving, inaction while facing unpleasant conditions, etc.

There is widespread cynicism in the public sector at all levels in the hierarchy. Employees behave as if they have given up all hopes. The malady is more rampant in the executives managers of public sector undertakings. Executives are frequently seen expressing their helplessness in dealing with the subordinates and superiors alike. On enforcing discipline and punctuality, a common but exasperated response is "What can I do?" or for that matter, "What can anybody do?" Interference of trade unions is often cited as one reason for their belief in futility of making any effort. In the past, some attempts have been made to explain such maladaptive behaviour using the learned helplessness concept (Martinko and Gardner, 1982).
The aim of a scientific endeavor like the present one is to ascertain facts and analyze them in an objective manner, to work out a neat design, systematically analyze the data and present the data in the light of whatever parallel findings are available (McGuigan, 1969; McNemar, 1962; Edward, 1956; and Siegal and Castella, 1989).

Subscribing to these requirements of scientific study, the present research is directed to explore learned helplessness among the executives of a public sector undertaking. It also proposes to determine the relationship of learned helplessness with several demographic variables.

SAMPLE:

The size of the sample plays a significant role in the statistical analysis of the data and in the generalizability of results. There is no clear rule regarding the appropriate size of the sample for a particular analysis. It has been proposed that the sample for stable results are directly proportional to the number of variables involved. Thorndike (1979) proposed a rule or informal guide that "there should be
ten respondent for each variable plus fifty respondents”.

And as per this guide or rule we should have \(11 \times 10 + 50 = 160\) respondents. Keeping this in view and availability of the data the study was conducted on 172 executives of different hierarchal posts working in BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS Ltd. Bhopal unit, a public sector undertaking. After scrutiny of filled data 07 were rejected because of various reasons like incomplete information, wrong entry etc. The remaining 165 cases were used in this study. The respondents were broadly divided into four groups on the basis of their position in the organization.

1. EXECUTIVE-I OR EX1 (DGM/DGM/AGM) 35
2. EXECUTIVES-II OR EX2 (SENIOR MANAGER) 40
3. EXECUTIVES-III OR EX3 (MANAGERS) 45
4. EXECUTIVES-IV OR EX4 (DY. MANAGERS) 45

TOTAL EXECUTIVES = 165

All the respondents were having engineering background in the form of degree and diplomas. Some had management background.

PROCEDURE:

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (Bhopal unit)
executives were selected as a sample keeping in mind the availability of the data, cost and distance for data collection. BHEL has eleven units including one administrative unit. This organization runs in three shifts. And most of the executive cadre are coming in the first shift from 7.00 am to 4.00 pm. Keeping in mind the maximum availability of respondents first shift executives were chosen for data collection. While in other shifts very few executive were available because at that very time most of the units are controlled by senior supervisors, and in case of emergency senior officers move in to handle the problem. The data were collected using the survey method. Each respondent was personally contacted by the investigator and data was collected through questionnaire. Executives of all the eleven units were included in the sample. They were assured of confidentiality of their responses.

TOOL USED

The study was performed through a questionnaire "A psychometric measure of learned helplessness" developed by Pestonjee and Reddy (1988). This scale is based on the attributional model of learned helplessness, developed by Abramson et al. (1978, 80). Three sets of attributional dimension have
been developed (a) Internal-External (b) Stable-Unstable and (c) Global-Specific.

a) **INTERNAL-EXTERNAL** : Individuals tend to attribute outcomes to internal factor, when they believe that outcomes are more likely or less likely to happen to themselves, than to relevant others.

Conversely when they believe that outcomes as likely to happen themselves as to relevant others, they are making extra attributions.

b) **STABLE-UNSTABLE** : Stable attributions are the ones when the state of helplessness is likely to persist for an individual over a period of time under similar condition or situations. Unstable attributions, on the other hand, may result in a state of helplessness for a shorter period.

c) **GLOBAL-SPECIFIC** : Global factors are ones that can cause helplessness generally in a wide variety of situations and tasks. And specific factors causes helplessness in a particular specific situation.

These three attributions combined
together give eight different attributions of learned helplessness. These are as follows.

1. INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH1)
2. INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH2)
3. INTERNAL-GLOBAL-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH3)
4. EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH4)
5. INTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH5)
6. EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH6)
7. EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH7)
8. EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH8)

The learned helplessness scale has 24 statements. The statements are non-uniformly distributed into eight groups (factors) of attributions discussed above. A six point rating scale is used ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The respondents strongly agreeing with the statement will get a rating of one and strongly disagree will get six. The ratings have reverse meaning, higher the score lower the learned helplessness. The scale has reliability and validity within acceptable norms.

The following are the brief statements of the eight different types of learned helplessness of the scale used.
1. **INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE ATTRIBUTIONS (LH1)**: There are six statements in the scale for measuring this type of helplessness. Here an individual experiencing this helplessness attributes it to himself, in a specific situation and is likely to last long, eg. specialization and expertise.

2. **INTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE (LH2)**: Same as Internal-specific-stable, but it is not likely to last long, eg. poor effort. There are four statements in this scale for this category of helplessness.

3. **INTERNAL-GLOBAL-STABLE (LH3)**: Here too the individual attributes his learned helplessness to internal factors. They are general in nature and are likely to last long, eg. lack of aptitude. There are only two statements, of which, for one the score is to be reversed.

4. **EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-UNSTABLE (LH4)**: There are three statements and all of them are related to undesirable elements in the culture of one’s organization and his inability to do anything about them.
5. INTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE (LH5): There are three statements in this category of helplessness which are internal but temporary and global, eg. current health.

6. EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-SPECIFIC (LH6): Learned helplessness due to factors, external to individuals, universal and permanent, eg. destiny. There are two statements in this category for which rating of one will be reversed.

7. EXTERNAL-SPECIFIC-STABLE (LH7): There are two statements and ratings for both are to be reversed. This helplessness is due to external factors only, but very specific and stable in nature.

8. EXTERNAL-GLOBAL-UNSTABLE (LH8): Learned helplessness due to external factors only, but global and unstable. These are related to effort expanded and the results obtained by people in general. The number of statements are two and rating for both are to be reversed.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES:

The data were analyzed with the help of SPSS and SYSTAT software packages on personal computer.
The mean, median, standard deviation, correlation, significance of difference between means were calculated.

The whole data were divided into high and low groups of executives considering Learned Helplessness, Age, Present Experience, and Total Experience using median, i.e. High LH group, Low LH group, High Age group, Low Age group, High Present Experience group, Low Present Experience group, High Total Experience group, Low Total Experience group. Analysis were done for different sub groups like Executives group1(Ex1), Executives group2(Ex2), Executives groups3 (Ex3), and Executives group4 (Ex4).
CHAPTER - III

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
The present research was an exploratory research which was mainly directed to explore the learned helplessness (LH), among the various hierarchies of executives of public sector undertaking. Further it was also attempted to find out the relationship of LH with some of the important demographic variables. The sample has been categorised as Ex1 comprising of GM, DGM, AGM, Ex2 comprising of Senior Managers, Ex3 comprising of Managers, and Ex4 comprising of Dy. Managers, respectively from Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Bhopal unit.

The four groups differ in terms of power, position and responsibilities on their jobs in the organizations. The data obtained were statistically analyzed for all the eight dimensions of learned helplessness separately for the comparison groups and also on the total learned helplessness of each group. The results have been shown in the following Tables with their discussions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>14.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>14.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.54</td>
<td>08.20</td>
<td>08.20</td>
<td>06.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>09.00</td>
<td>07.65</td>
<td>06.80</td>
<td>07.24</td>
</tr>
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<td>LH5</td>
<td>09.40</td>
<td>09.40</td>
<td>10.82</td>
<td>09.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>05.34</td>
<td>07.15</td>
<td>06.75</td>
<td>06.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>08.74</td>
<td>09.02</td>
<td>09.24</td>
<td>08.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.48</td>
<td>09.05</td>
<td>08.91</td>
<td>08.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>83.42</td>
<td>85.72</td>
<td>85.95</td>
<td>75.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
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<td>48.22</td>
<td>41.53</td>
<td>39.53</td>
</tr>
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<td>PR. EXPR.</td>
<td>04.02</td>
<td>03.20</td>
<td>06.71</td>
<td>04.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. EXPR.</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>19.15</td>
<td>16.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table-1 shows the mean scores of Ex1, Ex2, Ex3, and Ex4 on all the eight dimensions of learned helplessness, total learned helplessness and demographic variables, to have a general look about the trend of the results in all the four comparison groups. It appears from the mean scores that Ex4 had shown higher degree of learned helplessness, followed by Ex1. The Ex2 and Ex3 had shown almost similar trend and lesser degree of helplessness in comparison to Ex1 and Ex4.
### TABLE - 2

**MEAN, S.D. AND t-VALUE FOR EX1 AND EX2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>EX1 (N=35)</th>
<th>EX2 (N=40)</th>
<th>t-VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>MEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td>03.59</td>
<td>22.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>03.07</td>
<td>12.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.54</td>
<td>01.60</td>
<td>08.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>09.00</td>
<td>02.26</td>
<td>07.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>09.40</td>
<td>01.69</td>
<td>09.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>05.34</td>
<td>01.51</td>
<td>07.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>08.74</td>
<td>01.74</td>
<td>09.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.48</td>
<td>01.20</td>
<td>09.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>83.42</td>
<td>06.06</td>
<td>85.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - Significant at .01 level of significance  
** - Significant at .05 level of significance

As shown in the Table-2, the Ex1 and Ex2 groups do not differ significantly on total learned helplessness, but the difference between the means of two groups have been found significant on LH1, LH4 AND LH6. On the remaining five dimensions the difference between the two groups were found to be insignificant. This difference between the means of two groups may be interpreted in terms of their positions, responsibilities and status. However, on LH1 the two groups differed significantly showing more feeling of helplessness in Ex2, which indicates lack of
specialization and expertise in specific situations - immediate decision makings and implementations. On LH4, the two groups differed significantly. The mean score of Ex1 is higher showing low degree of helplessness as compared to Ex2, which may be due to the presence of undesirable things in the organization - lack of autonomy, communication and feedback. The comparison of means on LH6 dimension showed that there was significant difference between Ex1 and Ex2. Since this factor of LH is related to external-global factor like luck, chance and destiny, looking dominant in Ex1, because most of the decisions in public sectors are taken at the govt. level so the top officials have to implement the decisions in their organizations, which is being imposed on them. As a result of this kind of frequent experience might develop the attribution of external-global factor. Therefore, this group showed more helplessness in comparison to others. The results obtained on factors LH1, LH4, and LH6 are supported directly or indirectly with the findings of early researchers (Hiroto, 1974; Martinko and Gardner, 1982).
As shown in Table-3, the two groups differed significantly on LH4, LH5, LH6, and also on total LH. The two groups differed significantly on LHT, the mean score of both the groups had shown that the Exl group suffered with high degree of helplessness as compared to their junior counterparts. The helplessness of Exl group can be attributed so many factors like their power, position, responsibility, status, govt. policies etc., because they are the top officials of the organization and are responsible for every mishap or activity in the organization. The two groups also differed on LH4 dimension, and Ex3 are found to be more
suffered, this can be attributed to lack of autonomy, communication and feedback, which may be prevalent in the organization.

On LH5 dimension, the two group also differed significantly, and the mean score of the two group showed higher level of helplessness in Ex1, this can be attributed to current health, which is internal-global and unstable in nature. At the same time their average age is highest among the groups and age deteriorate the health as well as performance in other terms. On LH6 dimensions, the two groups differed significantly, and Ex1 group had shown low mean score as compared to their counterparts. This trend of result is almost same for Ex1 as discussed in Table-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE - 4</th>
<th>MEAN, S.D. AND t - VALUE FOR EX1 AND EX4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH FACTORS</td>
<td>EX1 (N-35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>19.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>09.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>09.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>05.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>08.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>83.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is evident from Table-4, that Ex1 and Ex4 were found to differ significantly, on LH1, LH3, LH4, LH6, and LHT. The feeling of helplessness is higher in Ex4 than Ex1. The presence of higher LH may be attributed to lack of specialization and expertise, (LH1), lack of aptitude (LH3), undesirable things in the environment like lack of autonomy, feedback and communication (LH4), are the prominent cause of helplessness feeling. On the total LH the significance of difference between the means of the two groups clearly indicates that the higher degree of LH in Ex4 than Ex1. It is obvious from the trend of the results discussed that nature of the work, autonomy in the decision making exercise of powers, emerges as causative factors to develop a greater degree of helplessness in Ex4 as compared to Ex1.

TABLE - 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>EX2 (N-40)</th>
<th>EX3 (N-45)</th>
<th>t - VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>22.45</td>
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<td>20.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>02.06</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.20</td>
<td>01.58</td>
<td>08.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>07.65</td>
<td>02.49</td>
<td>06.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>09.40</td>
<td>02.14</td>
<td>10.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>07.15</td>
<td>01.78</td>
<td>06.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>09.02</td>
<td>01.50</td>
<td>09.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>09.05</td>
<td>01.30</td>
<td>08.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>85.72</td>
<td>04.79</td>
<td>85.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table-5, the significance of difference between the means of Ex2 and Ex3 were found significant only on LH1, LH2, LH4, and LH5. The significance of difference could not be obtained on other dimensions of learned helplessness including total learned helplessness. It is seen from the mean score of Ex3, on LH1 is lower indicates high helplessness because of lack of expertise and specialization. While on LH2, the Ex2 showed higher degree of helplessness can be attributed to poor efforts. And this poor effort is because of the absence of incentives in the form of promotion or identification with the job. On LH4 dimension the Ex3 showed higher helplessness as compared to their counterparts, because of the presence of undesirable things in the environment. While on LH5 dimension the Ex2 showed high degree of helplessness can be attributed to their poor health or any other internal but temporary problems.
### TABLE - 6

**MEAN, S.D. AND t VALUE FOR EX2 AND EX4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>EX2 (N-40)</th>
<th>EX4 (N-45)</th>
<th>t - VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
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<td>LH3</td>
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<td>01.58</td>
<td>06.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>07.65</td>
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<td>LH6</td>
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<td>LH7</td>
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<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>09.05</td>
<td>01.30</td>
<td>08.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>85.72</td>
<td>04.79</td>
<td>75.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the Table-6, the comparison of means between the two groups viz, Ex2 and Ex4 clearly showed that the two groups are found to be different significantly on LH1, LH2, LH3, LH7, LH8 and LHT. As regards the LH1 dimension, the Ex4 groups had shown higher helplessness and differed significantly on LH1 dimension as compared to their counterparts, because of lack of specialization and expertise with the present job. As for LH2 dimension is concerned, Ex4 group showed less helplessness mainly due to their making of more effort on the job as compared to their counterparts. This Ex4 group has a lot of expectation in the
job hierarchy, promotional avenues in the form of rewards and incentives, therefore, they make more effort on their own with the present job. As a result they have lesser degree of helplessness than the comparison group on LH2. Since these two groups also differed significantly on LH3, which shows higher LH in Ex4, may be caused by lack of aptitude on the present job. The mean score on LH7 and LH8 had shown the higher degree of helplessness in Ex4 as compared to Ex2. On LH7 the Ex4 group showed higher helplessness and both the group differed significantly, because this factor is external and the reason may be attributed to family problems, social relations and organizational support. This kind of tendency may be influencing more to the Ex4 because they are beginners in to act in the managerial capacity as compared to Ex2. On LH4 the Ex4 group is also found to differ significantly and showed higher degree of helplessness, this helplessness can be attributed to lack of rewards for special efforts. On total LH dimension also both the groups differed significantly and mean score of the two groups revealed that the Ex4 group suffered with high feeling of LH as compared to their counterparts. And the difference and causes are same as discussed earlier.
TABLE - 7

MEAN, S.D. AND t- VALUE FOR EX3 AND EX4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>EX1 (N-35)</th>
<th>EX3 (N-45)</th>
<th>t - VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>MEAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>04.01</td>
<td>14.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.73</td>
<td>02.74</td>
<td>14.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.20</td>
<td>01.04</td>
<td>06.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>06.80</td>
<td>01.74</td>
<td>07.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>10.82</td>
<td>01.46</td>
<td>09.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>06.75</td>
<td>01.49</td>
<td>06.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>09.24</td>
<td>01.28</td>
<td>08.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.91</td>
<td>01.37</td>
<td>08.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>85.95</td>
<td>04.76</td>
<td>75.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is apparent from Table-7, that the difference between the Ex3 and Ex4 differed significantly on LH1, LH3, LH5, LH7, LH8 and on LHT. The trend of the result is almost similar on LH1, LH3, LH7, LH8 and LHT. As far as LH5 is concerned this Ex4 group also showed higher degree of higher helplessness as compared to their counterparts, though this factor is attributed with health, but here some other internal-specific problem is operating may be lack of adjustment or other psychosomatic problems.
### TABLE-8

**MEAN, S.D. AND t-VALUE FOR HIGH LH AND LOW LH GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>HIGH LH GROUP (N-85)</th>
<th>LOW LH GROUP (N-80)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>t-VALUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>04.02</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>03.43</td>
<td>06.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>02.85</td>
<td>15.01</td>
<td>02.91</td>
<td>01.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>07.58</td>
<td>01.66</td>
<td>08.05</td>
<td>01.53</td>
<td>01.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>06.97</td>
<td>02.02</td>
<td>08.28</td>
<td>02.12</td>
<td>04.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>02.02</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>01.86</td>
<td>01.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>06.45</td>
<td>01.40</td>
<td>06.77</td>
<td>01.85</td>
<td>01.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>08.75</td>
<td>01.51</td>
<td>09.22</td>
<td>01.20</td>
<td>02.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.58</td>
<td>01.38</td>
<td>09.20</td>
<td>01.19</td>
<td>03.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>80.51</td>
<td>03.21</td>
<td>88.72</td>
<td>03.06</td>
<td>17.10*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table-8, the two groups differed significantly on LH1, LH4, LH7, LH8 and LHT. The LH1 is related to specialization and expertise, the mean LH score is very low in high learned helplessness group as compared to low learned helplessness group. It revealed that the high learned helplessness have been found lackness in specialization and expertise in specific situation which emerged as a factor contributing helplessness in executives. The high learned helplessness group also showed significant difference on LH4 which may be attributed to undesirable elements in the organization. The high learned helplessness group was also found significantly different on LH7 that is
related with very specific internal-situation may be family problems as compared to low learned helplessness group. With regard to LH8, the two groups differed significantly, this LH8 factor is related to efforts and rewards. The high learned helplessness group was found much helpless as compared to low learned helplessness group. This factor of LH signifies that the high learned helplessness group have shown high degree of helplessness due to lack of effort and reward in the organization. On the LHT the two groups differed significantly. Now it is apparent from the mean values as shown in Table-8, the four factors i.e. LH1, LH4, LH7 and LH8 have emerged as a sources of feeling of learned helplessness among the executives.

**TABLE - 9**

**MEAN, S.D. AND t VALUE FOR HIGH AND LOW AGE GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>HIGH AGE GROUP (N=94)</th>
<th>LOW AGE GROUP (N=71)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>20.05</td>
<td>04.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>02.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>08.04</td>
<td>01.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>08.05</td>
<td>02.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>01.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>06.37</td>
<td>01.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>09.06</td>
<td>01.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.81</td>
<td>01.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>84.65</td>
<td>05.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table-9, the two groups differed significantly on LH3, LH4 and LH6. The low age group showed the higher degree of helplessness as compared to the high age group. This result is contradictory to the finding of Lata and Dhar (1989), that higher age group suffered with higher helplessness. The difference between the two groups on LH3, LH4 and LH6 can be attributed to lack of aptitude, undesirable things in the organization, and some external-universal permanent factors like chance and destiny has the sources of helplessness as compared to high age group. However, the two groups did not differ significantly on total learned helplessness.

**TABLE - 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>HIGH PR. EXP. GRP. (N-72)</th>
<th>LOW PR. EXP. GRP. (N-93)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>19.29</td>
<td>03.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>03.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>07.70</td>
<td>01.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>07.59</td>
<td>02.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>01.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>06.34</td>
<td>01.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>08.77</td>
<td>01.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>09.04</td>
<td>01.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>83.83</td>
<td>10.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table-10, the high and low present experience group did not differ significantly on any dimension of learned helplessness except LH5. The LH5 factor is related to current health or may be any other personal problem found to be a cause of helplessness in low present experience group. The two groups did not differ significantly on total learned helplessness.

**TABLE - 11**

**MEAN, S.D. AND t- VALUE FOR HIGH TOTAL EXPERIENCE AND LOW TOTAL EXPERIENCE GROUP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LH FACTORS</th>
<th>HIGH TOT. EXP. GRP. (N-94)</th>
<th>LOW TOT. EXP. GRP. (N-71)</th>
<th>t-VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LH1</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>14.98</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH3</td>
<td>07.94</td>
<td>07.63</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH4</td>
<td>08.09</td>
<td>06.97</td>
<td>3.61*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH5</td>
<td>09.98</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH6</td>
<td>06.35</td>
<td>06.95</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH7</td>
<td>09.05</td>
<td>08.88</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH8</td>
<td>08.78</td>
<td>09.01</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>84.37</td>
<td>84.66</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table-11, high and low total experience groups also did not found to differ significantly on any learned helplessness dimension other than LH4. The
mean score on LH4 is low in low total experience group indicates that the feeling of learned helplessness may be caused by undesirable things in the organization. These two groups also did not differ significantly on total learned helplessness. It appears from the trend of the result that LH may be attributed to environmental factor rather than experience on the job.

**TABLE-12**

TABLE SHOWING r - VALUE OF LH WITH AGE, PRESENT EXPERIENCE AND TOTAL EXPERIENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>PRESENT EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>TOTAL EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LHT</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>-.056</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table-12, LH was found low positively correlated with the age, though the value is insignificant but the trend of the data showed that LH is to some extend found to be related with age. Infact in one of the studies carried out by Lata and Dhar (1989) reported positive correlation with age. The finding obtained is supporting the finding of Lata and Dhar (1989). It is also found that the LH is inversely related with the present experience of executives on the job. The inverse correlation reveals that only present experience on the job is not influencing to develop the feeling of learned helplessness in the executives. However, Lh was found low positively related
with total experience indicates that the total experience on the job have some influence on the development of feeling of helplessness in the executives of public sector undertaking.

Though the sample size of the present study is small, if we take the sample of other category of employees from the same organization keeping in view only the factor of age and total experience on learned helplessness, we may obtain positive correlation of learned helplessness with age and total experience in public sector undertaking. Attempt to be made in future to include other categories of employees to make the findings of the present research more authentic and generalized.

It appeared from the trend of the results that the executives of this Public Sector Undertaking did not show the higher degree of feeling of helplessness in general but they had shown some degree of the feeling of learned helplessness on factors like LH1 (internal-specific-stable), LH2 (internal-specific-unstable), LH4 (external-specific-unstable) and LH6 (external-global-stable). On the other remaining dimension of learned helplessness all the executives had shown very lesser degree of learned helplessness.

The present researcher was in great difficulty to compare their findings with the findings of other researchers in this area due to non-availability of research findings.
According to the finding of the present study the learned helplessness may be primarily due to external attributions like undesirable things in the organizations, strong believe in destiny etc. but, also on some internal attribution like lack of specialization, expertise and poor efforts in specific situations.

The learned helplessness may be lead to performance deficits in the organizations. It can be controlled by the management using some intervention strategies.

The management should follow up a learned helplessness measurement programme for its executives when some changes takes place in the organization. The new comers in the organization should be properly guided and given assignment where they are likely to succeed. The management should make aware to its executives that their failure on job may be due to some specific internal and or external factors, which might develop the feeling of helplessness, so specific causes to be spelt out on some important occassions. There is need to bring change in executives perception of uncontrollability of outcomes, they should be given encouragement, verbal feedback, and social persuasion by the management. The executives should be provided pre-treatment strategies that may reduce the susceptibility of learned
helplessness. Lastly, through the principle of modelling executives can unlearn organizationally induced helplessness by seeing the model of success. This method of modelling should encourage the management to develop some programme to make successful executives more visible or rewards success through social recognition.

The future research in this area requires an extensive investigation using all categories of employees and relate this concept with performance of employee at all levels in the organizations.
REFERENCES


Seligman, M. E. P.; Maier, S. F. and Solomon, R. (1971): Unpredictable and uncontrollable aversive events. In


PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATES:

1. NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION:
2. YOUR HIGHEST QUALIFICATION:
3. AGE:
4. SEX:
5. DESIGNATION:
6. EXPERIENCE IN THE PRESENT POST:
7. TOTAL EXPERIENCE:
8. PROMOTIONAL AVENUES:
9. INCOME:
10. MARITAL STATUS:
11. NUMBER OF DEPENDENT:
12. FAMILY STRUCTURE:

DEAR RESPONDENT: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by putting appropriate number against the bracket ( ), showing your degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement given below....

STONGLY AGREE - 1
AGREE - 2
SLIGHTLY AGREE - 3
SLIGHTLY DISAGREE - 4
DISAGREE - 5
STONGLY DISAGREE - 6

Your explicit responses will be very useful for this research work. Please do not conceal the facts, the responses would be treated in strict confidence and for research purpose only.

THANKS