Abstract
Alcoholism is a foremost public health problem afflicting people all over the world resulting in misery and untold sufferings to the family of the alcoholic very especially to the spouse. Alcohol dependence and alcohol abuse seem to be an incapacitate sickness which manifests itself as a disorder of conduct. The study delineates how wives in India cope with their alcoholic husbands, how they cope with them and what motivates them to carry on in spite of the surrender of the husbands to the addiction. Coping Questionnaires were used. Descriptive design was used to assess the ways of coping among the wives of alcoholics who were staying with their husbands. A total of 200 wives of alcoholics were used as respondents. Majority of the wives of alcoholics used escape-avoidance. This was substantiated by the fact that the responses of the respondents, translated to relative score, which garnered the highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy, obtained a mean score from 0.14 to 0.16 and standard deviation value.

1. INTRODUCTION
Alcoholism is most popular social problem and chronic disease, affecting the body, brain and Spirit, and generally the use of psychoactive substance affects a person’s mental state and external behavior in the world. That is why William Shakespeare, appropriately said: “O! Thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us calls thee devil! O! God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! That we should, with joy, pleasance, revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!” (Othello). Alcoholism, also called an addictive dependency, is a destructive pattern of alcohol use evident through intense craving, loss of control, physical dependence and tolerance. Hence alcohol is a disease often radical and fatal to daily life of the alcoholics.
Dr. Judith Lewis :: Women Coping With Alcoholic Husbands

Living with an alcoholic causes ongoing problems in one or the other areas of his family life through stressors, depression, anxiety, (e.g., family disorder, spousal disagreement, financial situation, occupation, and physical and emotional abuse, etc) and in spite of these obstacles the alcoholic is keen on the intake of the alcohol.

The alcohol dependence and alcohol abuse seem to be an incapacitate sickness in the lives of families which manifests itself as a disorder of conduct. Cho (2008) stated that the wives of alcoholics experience various psychosocial difficulties due to their husband’s alcoholism. And the plight experienced by the wives with alcoholic husband has terrific psychological and physical problems, including hopelessness, fear, worries, nervousness, mania, paranoia, psychosomatic, insomnia, fatigue, somatoform, aggression, anger, shamefulness, humiliation, and so on - these are the “grievances of the heart” that go with alcoholism in the family”. That’s why, here the author of this study as a response to the rising problem of alcoholism today in all over the world, being in the filled of helping profession, would like to give an awareness of alcoholism and its effect on family system, through a brief review of my research on alcoholism and wives with alcoholic husbands. The author believes that we need to offer informed help to these wives of alcoholics, if we do not, then there is a greater chance that no one else will.

1.1 Alcohol Use, Abuse And Dependence

Alcohol use, mostly excessive in nature, is pervasive all through the world and has been throughout the history. From the very dawn of human civilization alcohol was widespread. Hence those who are using excessive alcohol cause on themselves physical and psychological harm as harmful drinkers. Whether they own it or not, they themselves are responsible for the harm. Indeed, the experts continue to say (McCrady, 1982) that alcohol use causes stressful family interactions, the negative effects of which are dampened by subsequent alcohol use, thereby serving as a negative reinforce. Gottman (1994) said that as alcohol use increases, so do negative family interactions, marital violence, and marital dissatisfaction, all of which serve to perpetuate the dissolution process (Marshal Michael P. 2003). Even in the literature many studies have examined that heavy drinking partners have poor quality of health compared to those whose husbands are not extreme drinkers. So this could give an idea that how one partner’s alcohol fixation cause problems related to alcohol which in turn results in the wife’s depression eventually (Gregory G. Homish, 2006).

Moreover it is very obvious that their family members are often more worried with anxiety, besides the wife and children feel ashamed to involve in social activities, hence they experience more stressful life events. Furthermore it is known fact that uses of alcohol will provisionally alleviate daily stress or pressure in the family system through increase in emotional appearance and problem-solving ability, trying to help to maintain relatively stable and adaptive marital and family relationships (Steinglass, 1971, 1979a, 1979b; Steinglass, Davis, & Berenson, 1977, Marshal Michael P. 2003). However, the use of alcohol can rapidly develop into abuse and even dependence.
Alcohol Abuse. Alcohol abuse is a disease, which means having unhealthy or hazardous drinking habits, such as drinking every day or drinking in excess of at a time. When a person abuses alcohol, he continues to drink even though he knows his consumption of alcohol is causing evil. It is a maladaptive pattern of drinking in which a person uses alcohol that results following problems that is, unenthusiastic work, sluggish lifestyle, lack of home responsibilities, recurrent thoughts about the alcohol, medical and legal problems. Abuse of alcohol has physical dangers, such as, hurting someone while drunk, hostility towards others, having social relationship problems and road accidents. These are effects of alcohol which worsens the person's social life, in a way that is harmful to himself. Moreover, research suggested by Brice M.R. Appenzeller et al. (2005) show that alcohol abusers are indeed recognized as particularly hazardous drivers with significantly increased risk of involvement in road traffic accident. It is said that alcohol abuse is associated within the family, not only with violence but also with severe psychological hardships for children and parents alike (Harvard Law Review 1981).

Moreover as a consequence of alcohol abuse on families there occurs increased domestic violence. Research suggests that alcohol abuse disturbs the family, especially family ritual and routine, causing instability and irregular family interaction between spouses and children which could also contribute to the maladjustment in the children of alcohol abusers (Bente Storm Mowatt Haugland, 2005). Alcohol abuse is an important risk factor towards spousal violence consisting of physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual, economic/financial, and spiritual abuse. Likewise alcohol abuse projects significant risk factor for child abuse and abuse of other family members. However it is generally believed that alcohol abuse cannot be "cured"; that's why the alcoholic will always remain vulnerable but then with help of treatment, counseling, group meetings, certain rehabilitation Programs could give the awareness to control the drinking habit.

Alcohol Dependence. The addicts become so weak morally and psychologically that they can no larger depend on themselves because they surrender themselves to alcohol. This means if individuals drink large quantities of alcohol frequently, he run the risk of becoming alcohol dependent; it is called addictive dependence on alcohol. In contrast, they drink more than they can afford and for a longer duration than needed, hence they drink repeatedly. Besides patients could increase their addiction to alcohol also find it hard to live every day without having a drink. Moreover individuals find the ways and means of drinking more and more alcohol, and scheduling the life around to find the next drink. It shows a kind of compulsive urge to drink and powerlessness to prevent drinking. Jennifer Lukassen, (2005), stated that heavy alcohol use, abuse and dependence discovered to be a crippling disease in the lives of people. She has shown that it is related to toxic biochemical effects (Rehm et al., 2003). It causes dysfunctional family and social relationships, financial strain, poor physical health, (Single, MacLennan, & MacNeil, 1995), acute and chronic health problems, (Rehm et al., 2003), and unintentional and intentional injuries. (Rehm et al., 2003; Beaudet, Chen, Perez, Ross, & Wilkins, 1998).
Likewise, the alcoholics not only surrender to alcohol and but also increase the drinking habit, leading to drink bigger and bigger amounts of alcohol in order to feel its effects. Alcohol dependence could be a predisposition factor or can even be genetic or it might be formed by family behavior towards drinking or it could be a social drinking, or due to stressful events, which may increase the risk of start to drink and gradually become dependents. However the person who becomes dependent on alcohol is an ailing person and the sickness can be progressive and life threatening.

1.2 Effects Of Alcoholism On The Brain
The role of the dopamine (DA) system in brain reward mechanisms has been studied for about three decades (Liebman and Butcher, 1973; Yokel and Wise, 1975). Severe chronic alcoholism has also been associated with morphological changes, such as cortical neuronal loss as demonstrated by human neuropathological (Harper and Kril, 1989).

1.3 Families Affected By Alcoholism
Every family has its own problems, like for example sufferings, worries, struggles, distress. Some problems that affects one member of a family, affects the family as an entire. Family is the basic unit of society where future citizens are produced who can provide noble values to humanity. But the presence of an alcoholic in the family destroys it totally. Alcoholism is therefore known as a family disease. As millions of families all over the world suffer due to alcoholism, it is a great family problem. Family life can disrupt because of alcohol and bring harmful effects that can last a lifetime. Families of drinkers also suffer economic hardships, since a large amount of money goes to alcohol drinks where alcohol is being abused. In such cases, the Family life is described by disorder and inconsistency; here the Wives of active alcoholics suffer, and the children of alcoholics grow up emotionally depressed, confused by the behavior of their parents they tend give rise to major complexity in the behaviour modification. Living with an alcoholic is a nightmare in the family. According Lynne Kelly alcoholism in the family generates negative impacts on children, and in the family functioning, family communication, family processes, and family stressors (Lynne Kelly, 2006). Besides, the family conflicts are also due to alcohol, resulting often in separations and divorces causing emotional hardship to the family. All this explanation makes it abundantly evident that alcohol can destroy marriage relationships. If the husband fails to care for his wife and assaults her under the influence of the alcohol, how can relationships continue in a stable manner? If the head of the family fails to earn money for the family, and behaves irresponsibly with the children and the wife, how can there be peace in the family? In such cases the family relationships are bound to break down. The following pages delineate how wives in India cope with their alcoholic husbands, how they cope with them and what motivates them to carry on in spite of the surrender of the husbands to the addiction.

2. WIFE’S CAPACITY TO COPE WITH ALCOHOLIC HUSBAND
The term ‘coping’ refers to a person’s cognitive and behavioral responses to a stressful situation. Coping is often used to verify how the individuals are handling stress and
whether they have the situation under control. Coping is the human reaction - mental and physical - to stressful experiences. Whether one is handling particular circumstance healthily or weakly, whether or not one is trying to resolve the situation or not, is determined through coping. Folkman & Lazarus (1988) viewed stressors as threats that tax or exceed personal resources and defined coping as constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and internal demands (Revathi, S. 2009). We projects in our research how these wives who have been married to alcoholics handle their stress, why they find it hard to cope with the situation, in the context of the consequences of alcoholism resulting chaotic circumstances in families. In the study (Lewis, J. 2011) we did majority of the wives of alcoholics used “escape avoidance” to cope with the stressful situations. Women reported significantly more emotion focused avoidant coping strategies, such as distancing, and self-controlling specifically escape avoidance coping. Many of these women were victimized by alcoholic husbands. As a result, many do not learn effective problem-focused coping strategies. Moreover, many of the problems faced by these women, such as lack of income, were not immediately solvable. The test ‘Ways of Coping by Folkman and Lazarus’ was used to know the prevalent or dominant coping strategies employed significantly more often by the wives with alcoholic husbands. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that escape avoidance was used by people to escape the situation when they are frightened and when they do not wish to confront the situation in order to avoid conflict with the stressful situation. There are reasons why wives of alcoholics use escape avoidance, namely, they are worry less, feel calm and serene, and experience decrease loneliness and feelings of alienation. These women do not try to change the situation, nor do they confront it, they just escape from it. Moreover, self-controll and escape-avoidance may also stop the expressions of aggressive feelings or any other emotions by not allowing the internal contact with such feelings. On the other hand marriage is between the two families and not merely between two persons. The ill-repute of family relationships or breakdown in marriage affects not merely the couples but also their families to which the couple belong. The cultural pressure to keep conflicts concealed and secret is tremendous. In such cases, escape avoidance strategy suits well culturally.

2.1 Counseling Techniques For Wives Of Alcoholics
Wives of alcoholics’ families are exposed to great emotional damage because of family atmosphere being not normal. That is the reason why we had to design a certain intervention program to help these women in order to cope with the stress of being married to an alcoholic. They need to be aware about their own capacity to cope with the situation and also learn new coping strategies which would improve their ways of coping.

➢ **Counseling:** Counseling can help alleviate the stress experienced by wives of alcoholics and find positive meaning in life through coping with circumstances in a
positive manner. Also, it can be a way to learn to accept the family strain for those who are living with husbands. Hence counseling can help to establish consistency and encourage healthy interactions between husbands and wives. It can make the wives of alcoholic husbands to use certain positive means and coping strategies. Besides therapy can be an area for the progress of such coping strategies. It opens doors for dynamic women who can live with dignity and respect if they seek help from professional counselors who can be of great help to alleviate their sufferings.

- **Individual Counseling**: Individual counseling is done in one to one basis. It facilitates the exploration and resolution of personal problems and gives methods to employ coping strategies wisely. The counselor creates special occasion for wives to learn to understand themselves. Also, the counselor can help the women to acquire new insights into the nature and origin of their problems and can help find ways to manage them.

- **Family Therapy**: Marital and family therapy are two of the most outstanding current advances in the area of psychotherapy (Ofarrell Timothy j. 1989,). Furthermore family therapy allows sharing and discussing interpersonal misapprehension which can be reinterpreted and explained by the counselor as a facilitator. The family system therapies are based on the assumption that one of the family members is affected through negative conduct, or even the entire family is affected negatively in one way or the other. This is eminently true of alcohol. The techniques and therapies should be appropriated therefore by all the members of the family.

- **Group Therapy**: Group therapy gives a different type of atmosphere for growth and adjustment. The group participants in the case of married couples and their conflict in interrelatedness due to alcoholism can be discussed, analysed in Group therapy and behavioral solutions can discerned. In it they can see themselves; as well as they can see others with their roles and actions. The group gives the opportunity to decrease the sense of loneliness, and lessen stress, and increase the coping strategies and also learn new ways of coping with the alcoholic husbands. It is an occasion to share and discuss. They are psychologically strengthened by the positive support from the participants of the group therapy.

### 3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

- **Objectives**: The objectives of this study were (I) to assess the ways of coping among the wives of alcoholics.

- **Research Design**: A descriptive design was used to assess the ways of coping among the wives of alcoholics who were staying with their husbands during de-addiction treatment.

- **The Inclusion Criteria**: Respondents of this study include wives who are legally married in a monogamous relationship and currently living with their alcoholic husbands and their child or children. Included also are wives who undergo counseling sessions whose husband is an alcoholic who is currently rehabilitated in one of the de-
addiction centers in the four districts of Karnataka in South India. These alcoholics remained in the de-addiction centers for three weeks for treatment. Their wives on the other hand, visited them regularly at the same time attended the counseling program offered by the de-addiction centers

- **Instrument And Data Collection:** Coping among the WOAs was measured by ways of coping questionnaire, a 66-item scale (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). This instrument measures the thoughts and actions used by the WOA to cope with stressful encounters of everyday living.

4. **WAYS OF COPING QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLER SET**

This test was used by the author to measure the coping technique of the wives with alcoholic husbands in Karnataka Province in South India. Respondents were asked to describe the most stressful encounter experienced during the previous week and then to fill out the ways of coping questionnaire. Individuals respond to each item on a 4-point Likert scale, indicating the frequency with which each strategy is used: 0 indicates “does not apply and/or not used”. 1 indicates “used somewhat” 2 indicates “used quite a bit,” and 3 indicates “used a great deal”. In raw scoring, the raw scores are the sum of the respondents’ responses to the items that comprise a given scale. This method, which used in the majority of this research, provides a summary of the extent to which each type of coping was used in a particular encounter.

A relative score for each scale is computed by (a) dividing the sum of the ratings of the scale by the number of items on that scale, (b) calculating the sum of the average item scores across all scales, and (c) dividing the average item score for a given scale by the sum of the average item scores across all scales. The coping behavior that scored the highest amongst the scales shows the prevalent or dominant coping strategy employed by the wives with alcoholic husband. The following are the description of the different coping scales:

- **Confrontive Coping** describes aggressive efforts to alter the situation and suggests some degree of hostility and risk-taking.
- **Distancing Coping** describes cognitive efforts to detach oneself and to minimize the significance of the situation.
- **Self-Controlling** describes efforts to regulate one’s feelings and actions.
- **Seeking Social Support** describes efforts to seek informational support, tangible support, and emotional support.
- **Accepting Responsibility** acknowledges one’s own role in the problem with a concomitant theme of trying to put things right.
- **Escape-Avoidance** describes wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid the problem. Items on this scale contrast with those on the distancing scale suggest detachment.
- **Planful Problem Solving** describes deliberate problem-focused efforts to alter the situation, coupled with an analytic approach to solving the problem.
Positive Reappraisal describes efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth. It also has a religious dimension.

Table 1: Coping Strategies Mean Score and Standard Deviation Value of the Respondents

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Through Table 1 the respondent’s coping behaviors are measured by the Ways of Coping Questionnaire. Relative score was utilized to describe the proportion of effort represented for each type of coping strategies. It can be noted that each of the age group of respondents perceived that their primary coping behavior was escape-avoidance. This was substantiated by the fact that the responses of the respondents, translated to relative score, which garnered the highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy, obtained a mean score from 0.14 to 0.16 and standard deviation value range from 0.02 to 0.03. As a whole, the preceded coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The subsequent coping behavior of the respondents was distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.14 and standard behavior value of both 0.02.

The most commonly used coping style of the wives of alcoholics with respect to their age is “Escape Avoidance” to cope with the stressful situations. The age grouping in the above table is based on the psychological development stages of Erik Erikson, (Friedman & Schustack, 2003). The Ways of Coping Questionnaire by Folkman and
Lazarus was used to know that escape avoidance describes wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to actively escape or avoid the problem. People escape the situation when they are frightened, when they do not wish to confront the situation. They do that in order to save themselves without being noticed. Appropriate actions are devised depending on the context and the situation. Escape involves leaving or escaping from a feared social or performance situation (Sigmon Sandra T. 2006).

In the context of this research, the wives of the alcoholics regardless of their age employ this strategy to cope with their husbands drinking and other family members misery. The survival instinct in site of the stress impels them to do that. This can be done by just ignoring the addicted husband or escaping from his sight or avoiding his company in public and the like. It can take subtle forms like pretending that she is peaceful and joyful in public as if she experiences no stress and anxiety. This strategy is also employed to avoid conflict and confrontation with the stressful situation. Moreover, escape avoidance may also serve to refrain from the expression of aggressive feelings or any other emotions by not allowing internal contact with such feelings. The distancing demands exertion of cognitive efforts to detach one and to minimize the significance of the situation. Meanwhile, self-controlling requires making efforts to regulate one’s feelings and actions. The respondents somehow felt in their life that distancing and avoiding the addicted husband while eating, drinking, or sleeping more than usual help them cope with the situation. Self-controlling or restricting one’s speech and conduct against the addicted husband was also a strategy used by the respondents to cope with the situation. Silence is another weapon that helped them to minimize the conflict.

The number of years in marriage of respondent’s category perceived that their foremost coping behavior was escape-avoidance. This was supported by the fact that the responses of the respondents that have highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy obtained a mean score from 0.14 to 0.16 and standard deviation value range from 0.02 to 0.03. Taken collectively, the preceded coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The succeeding coping behavior of the respondents was also distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.13 and standard behavior value of both 0.02. The wives of alcoholics are affected by their husbands' drinking. According to Connolly Brian (2010), many people considered marriage as the unimpeded, blissful joining of two individuals. Where marriage really represents the merger of two entire systems combining together to developing a new family system. On the other hand, living with an alcoholic is a family affair because it leads the members of a household to experience constant stress and fears of various kinds it has frequently been referred to as a “family illness which is the reason why the respondents somehow felt that the situation would go away or be over with soon. The coping behaviors of the respondents with respect to their number of children are also escape-avoidance. This was
corroborated on the fact that the responses of the respondents that have highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy obtained the same mean scores of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. Taken as one, the principal coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The succeeding coping behavior of the respondents was also distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.13 and standard behavior value of both 0.02.

The presence of a child or children is an added reason to escape from the addicted husband. By concentrating attention on the children, the wife can escape from her responsibility to her husband. Whether the wives have just one child or many children they would invariably suffer. As a mother, she always worries about her children’s well-being, comfort, security, safety, health and their future. Similarly in the study of Wallace John (2000), children of alcoholics develop emotional, psychosomatic and behavioral problems in the community. As a result, wives of alcoholics due to their extreme stress find it hard to cope (Kinney, 2000). In this situation, she may try to escape the situation by leaving the house with her children, since relaxation and spontaneity are difficult when there is so much tension and stress. So as a mother, she finds it difficult to accept such suffering. Hence she might use as a coping strategy long sleeping, taking medication are just bare the situation.

As regards the educational attainment of the respondents, the college group of the respondents perceived that their coping behavior was planful-problem solving as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.16 and standard deviation value of 0.02. Also, the groups of pre-university college, high school, elementary, and no education regarded that their coping behavior was escape-avoidance as revealed on the fact that their responses obtained a mean score from 0.17 to 0.15 and standard deviation value from 0.04 to 0.02. By and large, the preceded coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The consecutive coping behavior of the respondents was distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.14 and standard behavior value of both 0.02.

The coping strategy of the college group of the respondents is planful problem solving. According to Hwan (2005), education enhances one’s human capacity because the person is able to face life and the problems of life in a planned manner therefore education is truly a human asset (Hwan 2005). Those respondents who had no college education and had lower levels of education have not developed their human capacity and hence “escape-avoidance” is their coping strategy as in other cases (NK Singh, D Bhattacharjee, B Das, et al, 2009). They can only adjust to their husbands ways and just escape from facing the reality because alcoholism is a complex illness and living with alcoholic husbands is emotionally stressful.
With regard to the coping behaviors of the respondents with respect to the number of years that their husbands have been drinking. The entire category of the respondents perceived that their main coping behavior was escape-avoidance. This was supported on the details that the respondent’s responses that have highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy obtained a mean score from 0.14 to 0.16 and standard deviation value from 0.02 to 0.03. In general, the coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The coping behavior of the respondents was distancing and self-controlling. This was based on the fact that their responses obtained a mean score of both 0.13 and standard behavior value of both 0.02.

In recent years, alcohol dependence has become a major social and personal menace in most societies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), alcohol use disorders accounted for 1.4% of the global disease burden. In southern India, the prevalence of alcohol use is higher among people of lower socio-economic status and those who have lower levels of education (NK Singh, D Bhattacharjee, B Das, et al, 2009). He further stated that a large-scale survey over 32,000 people performed in 2001 found alcohol use rates of 20 to 38% in males. It also true that the alcoholic wives had more negative interaction such as hostility, blame, and criticism when husbands drinking in many years of marriage life and also negative communication and attitudes. Moreover, a person may become more vulnerable to alcohol dependence if exposed to persistent negative communication. According to the World Health Organization 2004 (WHO), drinking frequently or severely harms the individual’s functioning in various social roles. Alcohol misuse is associated with many negative consequences both for the drinker’s partner as well as the children. Besides heavy drinking at the workplace may potentially lower productivity or may lead to unemployment. Habitual drinker's likely impact on family life is the fact that the drinking and its consequences can result in substantial mental health problems of wives especially family members. This could be the reason why most of the wives of alcoholics have been suffering with their habitual drinking alcohol partner. Physical category of the respondents perceived that their coping behavior was accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, and positive-reappraisal as indicated in their responses that obtained an equal mean score of 0.14 and standard deviation value of 0.02. Moreover, the category under verbal, and combination of physical and verbal regarded that their coping behavior was escape-avoidance as revealed by the fact that the respondent’s responses obtained the same mean score from 0.15 and standard deviation value from 0.02 to 0.03. Commually, the preceded coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The succeeding coping behavior of the respondents was distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.13 and standard behavior value of both 0.02.

According to the World Health Organization, intimate partner violence refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that cause physical, psychological or
verbal harm to those in that relationship. Cafourek (2005) further mentioned that the abuse is any pattern of behavior that threatens the physical, mental or emotional well-being of another. It includes act of physical aggression like slapping, hitting, kicking or beating, and psychological abuse like intimidation, constant belittling or humiliation. Abuses such as verbal, emotional and physical battering wreak havoc in the lives of millions. Verbal abuse always lowers self-esteem.

In South Asia, where wife beating is said to be common as well as particularly severe, as much as 45% of women in rural India have admitted being beaten by their husbands (Rao, 1997, Subramaniam 2001). Another very serious issue faced by some women is the possibility of abuse in the marriage when the alcoholic husband becomes verbally or physically abusive to his wife. Besides long-term alcohol abuse can have dangerous physical and emotional effects. In this study, almost all men who abused their wives were habitual alcohol drinkers. The researcher can conclude that wife beating prevalent in our society is likely to be higher and hence a much larger social problem. The respondent’s categories on economic status perceived that their coping behavior was escape-avoidance. This was supported by the fact that the responses of the respondents that have highest proportion of effort for each type of the coping strategy obtained the same mean scores of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. Taken collectively, the preceded coping behavior of the respondents was escape-avoidance as indicated in their responses that obtained a mean score of 0.15 and standard deviation value of 0.02. The succeeding coping behavior of the respondents was distancing and self-controlling. This was confirmed in their responses that obtained a mean score of both 0.13 and standard behavior value of both 0.02. Alcoholism can also put a financial strain on marriage.

According to Subramaniam (2001), in the case of families with low standard of living or poor economic status, the wives were reported to have been beaten by their husbands. He further mentioned that these findings are consistent with studies which found that spousal abuse is more likely to occur in families of lower socio-economic class and low-income group families however, others have concluded that relative poverty alone does not distinguish violent and nonviolent relationships. In addition, it is possible that wife abuse in the upper socio-economic classes occurs. But their case due to the upper strata of society having greater access to resources, they succeed to keep the abuses private.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first objective of the study was to assess the ways of coping among the WOAs. This study showed that all eight ways of coping were used by the WOA (Table 1).

Why “escape – avoidance”

In this study, majority of the wives of alcoholics used “escape avoidance” to cope with the stressful situations. Women reported significantly more emotion focused avoidant coping strategies, such as distancing, and self-controlling specifically escape coping.
Boyd Mary R. (2007) stated that individuals who cannot manage the problem themselves often resort to emotion-focused avoidant strategies to manage their emotional turmoil. Many of these women were victimized by alcoholic husbands. As a result, many do not learn effective problem-focused coping strategies. Moreover, many of the problems faced by these women, such as lack of income, were not immediately solvable.

The Ways of Coping Questionnaire by Folkman and Lazarus was used to know the prevalent or dominant coping strategies employed significantly more often by the wives with alcoholic husbands. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that escape avoidance was used by people to escape the situation when they are frightened and when they do not wish to confront the situation in order to avoid conflict with the stressful situation. Juliana Dors Tigre da Silva (2006) stated that the women used coping strategies frequently wishing that the problem would go away and hoped for a miracle to happen. They also started having fantasies about how things might turn out. All these are aimed at escaping from the stressor, trying to feel “better by eating, smoking, drinking, taking drugs or medicines” to stay away from people.

There are reasons why wives of alcoholics use escape avoidance, they are worry less, feel calm and serene, and decrease loneliness and feelings of alienation. These women do not try to change the situation, nor do they confront it, they just escape from it. Moreover, self-control and escape-avoidance may also stop the expression of aggressive feelings or any other emotions by not allowing the internal contact with such feelings. Sathya-narayana Rao & Kuruvilla found that discord, avoidance, indulgence and fearful withdrawal were the most common coping behaviours.

On the other hand according to S. Revathi (2009) marital breakdown, taking special action, assertion and sexual withdrawal, were the least coping behaviours. It was not surprising that the group of women carrying the biggest burden in terms of more stressors scored higher on all scales. Taking this into account, it is can be considered that the avoidant coping styles, which wives of alcoholics tend to use, are part of their individual responses when facing their stressful situation. They resort to that in order to save themselves without being noticed. This could be one of the probable reasons why many of the respondents of this study used the escape avoidance compared to other coping strategies. Earlier, we have noted that most of the respondents have severe stress level and negative life regard. Given this, somehow it follows that the respondents’ coping strategy will also be unhealthy as in the case of escape avoidance. This does not mean other strategies are not present they are only less employed by the respondents. The escape avoidance style corresponds with this belief perfectly. It is useless to confront or to change the situation. Most of the respondents are strong believers of the doctrine of Karma. It is no wonder why escape avoidance is their primary coping strategy in this study. (b)Cultural: The coping strategies have a cultural component (Yajnavalkya, Brih. Upanishad Ch III and IV; O’Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, Karma and Rebirth, 1980).
In India the marriage is between the two families and not merely between two persons. The ill-repute of family relationships or breakdown in marriage affects not merely the couples but also their families to which the couple belongs. The cultural pressure to keep conflicts concealed and a secret is tremendous. In such cases, escape avoidance strategy suits well culturally. (c) Rural Setting: Living in rural areas added stressors to the lives of these women (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1997; Rural Women’s Work Group, 2000). This was, in fact, reflected in the findings that most women in this sample used escape avoidance strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

Majority of the wives of alcoholics used “escape avoidance” to cope with the stressful situations. Women reported significantly more emotion focused avoidant coping strategies, such as distancing, and self-controlling specifically escape coping. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that escape avoidance was used by people to escape the situation when they are frightened and when they do not wish to confront the situation in order to avoid conflict with the stressful situation. The findings of this study will help community health nurses and psychiatric nurses to identify, various coping strategies adopted by wives of alcoholics and will help them to strengthen the healthy adaptive coping strategies and rectify the maladaptive coping strategies and help the WOA to perceive the stressful situations as manageable, challenging and not threatening (S. Revathi (2009). An understanding of adaptive coping styles can be used in the prevention of distress and the promotion of well-being.

7. REFERENCES


