DISCUSSION

The objective of the present investigation was to identify the significant predictors of psychological distress among adolescents. The predictor variables were perfectionism, attributional styles and self-efficacy. Some demographic variables were also used as predictors. Stepwise multiple regression analysis for the total sample yielded a set of five predictors i.e. composite attribution for negative events, composite attribution for positive events, discrepancy of perfectionism, stream (science vs. arts) and self-efficacy.

A close scrutiny of the results of the present study revealed that composite attribution for negative events emerged as the most significant positive predictor of psychological distress experienced by senior secondary students. This finding corroborates the results of earlier studies, (Seligman et al., 1979; Sweeney et al. 1986; Elliott, 1987; Metalsky et al. 1993), they found that negative attributional style is strongly related to depression. Similarly, Luten, Ralph, and Mineka (1997), and Fazio and Palm (1998) also found that pessimistic attributional style was correlated with negative affect and depressed mood, but was unrelated to low levels of positive affect. Similarly, Sanjuan et al. (2008) also found that negative attributional style has an association with psychological distress. On the basis of their findings they suggested that attributional style for negative events has an important role in increasing psychological distress while attributional style for positive events play an important role in decreasing distress and increasing well-being of individuals. Shaheen and Alam (2010) also observed that composite attribution for negative events and its three dimensions (i.e. internal-external, stable- unstable and global-specific) were positively correlated with psychological distress among adolescents. Joiner and Wagner (1995) also observed that
negative attributional styles were associated with increased depression of children and adolescents.

Though composite attribution for negative events emerged as the most significant positive predictor of psychological distress among adolescents while its different dimensions such as internal/external, stable/unstable, global/specific could not successfully predict psychological distress.

As our per expectation, composite attribution for positive events also emerged as the second significant predictor of psychological distress among adolescents. This result is supported by earlier findings such as McCauley et al. (1988). They found that depressed children as compared to non-depressed children tend to have more helpless explanatory style especially with regard to how they explained positive events. Similarly Curry and Craighead (1990) also indicated that adolescents with a diagnosis of major depression differed with regard to their explanatory style for positive events i.e. they made significantly fewer internal stable and global explanations for positive events. Fazio and Palm (1998) examined the attributional style and depression among students. They found that students with pessimistic attributional style had higher level of depression as compared to students with optimistic attributional style. Corr and Gray (1996) also found that trait anxiety was positively correlated with negative attributional style and negatively correlated with positive attributional style. Cheng and Furnhaum (2001, 2003) reported that optimistic attributional style in positive situations was found as a strong predictor of self-reported happiness and mental health while pessimistic attributional style the case of in negative situations was found to be a predictor of both happiness and mental health. Vines and Nixon (2009) found that positive attributional style for positive events moderated the relationship between negative life events and follow-up depressive symptoms. In a study Shaheen and Alam (2010) found that
composite attribution for positive events and its three dimensions (i.e. internal-external, stable- unstable and global-specific) were negatively correlated with psychological distress.

Present results indicated that discrepancy dimension of the perfectionism emerged as the third important significant positive predictor of psychological distress, while its two other dimensions such as, standard and order could not successfully predict psychological distress among adolescents. It means that those who have scored high discrepancy experienced more psychological distress. In other words highly perceived discrepancy lead to maladaptive perfectionism that play important role in predicting psychological distress. This finding was highly supported by Hankin et al. (1997) in this regard. They found in their study that, the actual-ideal discrepancies and self-oriented perfectionism was closely associated with specifically depressive symptoms, while socially prescribed perfectionism was associated with general emotional distress. They further found that girls experienced more depressive symptoms as compared to boys. Bieling et al. (2004) also observed that maladaptive perfectionism was more strongly associated with depression, anxiety, stress and test taking anxiety as compare to adaptive perfectionism.

From the results of present investigation it was also observed that other dimensions of perfectionism i.e. standard and order could not successfully predict psychological distress. This finding is partially supported by Van Yperen and Hagedoorn (2008), they found in their study that low personal standards and the perception that others are imposing high standards on the self-operate in concert to strengthen the link between perceived discrepancy and psychological distress. Similarly Flett et al. (2008) found that self-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism and irrational beliefs were all associated significantly with elevated distress.
among adolescents and irrational beliefs predicted unique variance in distress. 

*Geranmayepour and Besharat (2010)* also found that positive perfectionism was positively associated with psychological well-being and negatively associated with psychological distress while, negative perfectionism was negatively associated with psychological wellbeing and positively associated with psychological distress.

*Chang et al. (2004)* found that maladaptive perfectionism but not adaptive perfectionism, was associated with stress. It was confirmed that discrepancy of perfectionism is a positive predictor of psychological distress, while the other subscale of perfectionism i.e. standard and order did not predicted psychological distress among adolescents.

The result of present investigation indicated that the fourth important predictor of psychological distress was stream itself i.e. Science vs. Art.

The results of present research revealed that the fifth and last important predictor of psychological distress was self-efficacy. There was a negative predictive relationship between self-efficacy and psychological distress. The present finding is supported by *Wu et al. (2004)* who found that psychological distress was best predicted by a low level of general self-efficacy as well as a high level of external health locus of control. Internal health control beliefs did not contribute to the prediction of distress. Similarly *Akin (2008)* found that depression, anxiety, and stress are indirectly and negatively predicted by self-efficacy. *Roddenberry and Renk (2010)* also found that participants who endorse higher levels of stress also endorse higher levels of illness, higher levels of external locus of control and lower levels of self-efficacy.

Results of regression analyses for gender (boys and girls) revealed that four predictors were identified for male students as composite negative, discrepancy of perfectionism, self-efficacy and composite positive. Similarly four predictors were also
emerged for female students i.e. composite negative, composite positive, academic achievement and discrepancy of perfectionism. A comparison of predictors among male and female students revealed that composite negative, composite positive and discrepancy were the common predictors for both male and female students. Composite attribution for negative events was the most important and useful predictor of psychological distress for both male and female students. On the basis of present findings it is apparently clear that those male and female students who had a more pessimistic attributional style experiencing more psychological distress. This finding is supported by a large number of studies which explained with a wide range of participants including children, adolescents and college students that examined the association between explanatory style and depression that approved the reformulated learned helplessness model of depression (e.g., Bodiford et. al., 1988; Brown & Siegel, 1988; Curry & Craighead, 1990; Hull & Mendolia, 1991; McCauley et al. 1988; Peterson & Vaidya, 2001; Pinto & Francis, 1993).

Results of regression analyses for gender group also revealed that discrepancy subscale of the perfectionism emerged a common predictor of psychological distress for both male and female students. Though for boys its contribution was higher as compared to girls in discrepancy, the results make it apparently clear that discrepancy are equally important for boys and girls and significantly predicted psychological distress among both the group. While other different dimensions of perfectionism such as, standard and order could not successfully predict psychological distress for boys and girls.

Self-efficacy emerged a significant negative predictor of psychological distress only for male students but not for females. On the basis of present findings it is clear that male students, who scored high on self-efficacy, experienced less psychological distress. This study is supported by Sehgal (1999), who compared self-efficacy, stress,
and well-being and health status between male and female college students. His results showed that males scored high on self-efficacy and psychosomatic stress than female but no significant difference was found in the well-being scores. Singh et al. (2009) also found that elderly males scored higher on perceived self-efficacy and mental health, than elderly females. And further, younger elderly groups scored higher on perceived self-efficacy and reported better mental health than the elderly of advanced age groups. Similarly, Marsh et al. (1994) found the relationship between self-efficacy, attitude and achievement in mathematics and they reported that the self-efficacy was found to have mediating effect on attitude and achievements, further, the self-efficacy and attitude were found more strongly related with achievements for boys in comparison to girls. Singh and Udainiya (2009) also found significant effect of family type, gender and self-efficacy on well-being of adolescence.

From the regression analysis for gender, it was also observed that academic achievement was specific important negative predictor of psychological distress only for female students. This study is supported by Pomerantz, Altermatt, and Saxon (2002) who found that the associations between academic achievement and internalizing distress being substantially more strong for females than males. In other words there were negative predictive relationship between academic achievement and psychological distress.

The result of regression analyses for stream groups (Science and Arts) were indicated as follow composite positive, composite negative, discrepancy and self-efficacy. For Science stream four predictors were identified such as composite negative, discrepancy, composite positive, and self-efficacy, while for Arts stream another four predictors were identified as composite positive, composite negative, discrepancy and self-efficacy. On the basis of results it is observed that composite attribution for negative
events and discrepancy of perfectionism was most important predictors for Science stream while its contribution was least in Arts stream. Similarly composite positive was the most useful predictor for Arts student while its contribution was least for Science students. Self-efficacy was found equally important for both Science and Arts students.

If we look at the results of t-test analyses for gender group comparisons we find that there is no significance difference between male and female students in experiencing psychological distress. A comparison of Science and Arts students revealed that Arts students experienced more psychological distress as compared to Science students. This study was supported by earlier study conducted by Mustafa (2004), who further found that academic stress affected the adjustment of Arts students more as compared to Science students. Therefore, Arts students experiencing more psychological distress as compared to Science students. When students of nuclear and joint families were compared with each other on psychological distress, no significant difference could be obtained between the students belonging to nuclear and joint families.