The purpose of the present investigation was two-fold. First, the objective was to test the predicted pattern of relationship amongst several helplessness and attributional dimensions. Second, the goal was to examine the association between helplessness and coping mechanisms adopted by adolescents. Three hundred and thirty nine adolescents (123 boys and 216 girls) were randomly sampled from undergraduate colleges spread out in North Orissa. Of these participants, 176 adolescents were from the higher secondary classes and 163 were from the pre-degree classes. All the participants were individually administered a battery of tests. The Students Helplessness Questionnaire measured personal helplessness, universal helplessness, non-contingency, satisfaction, and motivational deficits. The helplessness questionnaire also included the scale of attributional style; it measured respondent's explanatory style in terms of internal, stable, and global attributions. The Folkman and Lazarus (1986) ways of coping scale (adapted to socio-cultural setting) identified the magnitude of various coping strategies used by adolescents. The strategies included confrontative coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, avoiding responsibility, escape avoidance, planful problem solving, positive approval and religion. The correlational analysis amongst several dimensions of helplessness supported predicted pattern of relationship excepting the relationship between personal and universal helplessness. Contrary to
western findings, personal and universal helplessness were positively inter-related. This was considered to be a culture specific phenomenon. Furthermore, personal helplessness was related to attributions of internality, stability and globality in the context of bad events. On the contrary, helplessness was negatively associated with internal, stable and global attributions used for explaining good events. The relationship between helplessness and explanatory style was largely in the expected direction. There was partial support for the prediction that personal helplessness is negatively related with direct forms of coping such as confrontative type, and it is positively associated with indirect forms such as distancing. The educational grade level did not emerge as a significant factor for predicting group differences on helplessness, attribution and coping forms. But sex differences were revealed especially in the domain of coping strategies. Boys were found to use direct forms of coping to a greater extent than girls. On the contrary, girls were observed to employ indirect forms to a greater extent compared to boys. The findings were explained in the light of current conceptualization of helplessness, attribution, and coping. Some culture-specific phenomena were also discovered and explained. Implications in terms of understanding adolescent problems and providing effective counselling were outlined. Future directions for relevant research were suggested.