Adolescence is a stage of transition when a student experiences stress due to a number of factors. Stress is an important contributing factor to a wide range of emotional states. Family history and biology can create a predisposition for dealing poorly with stress. These factors make a person susceptible to depression and self-destructive behavior. Personality traits, especially when they change dramatically, can signal serious trouble.

The ability to cope with stress is vital for the student. During times of difficulty students may be vulnerable towards taking maladaptive steps that could result in worsening of the situation; these maladaptive steps could also result in a self-harming behavior.
The current study tries to examine stress and coping among adolescents. It examines the usefulness of intervention strategies in developing better coping skills and managing stress. Students from ninth standard were selected for the study. This, being a transition stage in a student's life, is a critical time where students have to take major decisions that will define their future. The study was planned to investigate the effectiveness of intervention strategies developed to increase coping and reduce stress levels among students so as to deal with the complexities arising from stress.

The interventions were designed to enhance life skills among students through a school-based program. Each session was planned with the aim to help the subjects increasing their coping skills and thus manage stress. In choosing methods to combat stress, factors causing stress, areas of stress and coping skills used by the students were first
examined using a scale. Twenty-four sessions were conducted over twelve weeks, each session lasting for 45 minutes or one class period. The twenty-four sessions covered 25 activities. Activities undertaken during each session were reviewed at the start of the next session.

The following activities were undertaken:

1. Maintaining a stress diary
2. Making an action plan
3. Breathing exercises
4. Relaxation response
5. Self hypnosis and auto suggestion
6. Thought awareness, rational thinking, and positive thinking
7. Progressive muscular relaxation
8. Imagery in stress reduction
9. Effective planning
10. Study habits
The study involved 300 subjects, 150 in the experimental group and 150 in the control group. The experimental group underwent the treatment—they were trained as per activities described above.
All the subjects were administered the stress and coping scale prior to the start of the intervention as a baseline measure and one month following the completion of the intervention to measure the effectiveness of interventions. Instruments were developed to measure stress and coping.

A scale to measure stress was devised as stress was recognized as a target construct in the process of adapting to life events and circumstances. For this reason, it warranted a measurement instrument validated for the specific concept of stress that is reliable, responsive, user-friendly, and economical. Areas covered through the scale include physical health, psychological well-being, home environment, social environment, and education. The scale was administered to 400 subjects to establish its reliability. As mentioned in the results the reliability of this scale was established through reliability alpha (.8269). The group mean was
considered as the cut-off point for the groups to demarcate level of stress for the interpretation of test results.

Lazarus (1970) developed the Ways of Coping Checklist (WCC) based on the transactional model of stress, which posited two types of coping: problem-focused and emotional regulation (Lazarus, 1991). This instrument has always had a drawback: the number of factors obtained, changes from one sample to the next or from one stressor to another (Parker & Endler, 1992). The scale developed for this study is based on the Lazarus' work. The items of the scale were classified into seven areas similar to the WCC scale—confrontational coping, distancing, self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planned problem solving and positive re-appraisal. The reliability of the scale was obtained.
Results obtained on stress indicate that there was no significant difference on the stress scale scores for experimental and control groups at pre-test. All students in the study reported similar scores on stress. These scores were used as a baseline to compare scores obtained post-test. This stage of the students' life is a transitional period involving personal and academic challenges. It is an age where students search for their identity. Relationships with family members also change with the child now being perceived as a young adult who is expected to take on different adult roles. Peer groups that form at this age also play an important role in the students' life.

Stress scores for the experimental group post-test decreased marginally however, for the non-intervention control group stress level increased considerably. This clearly supports hypothesis 1-b of differences occurring following intervention
among the participants of the experimental condition. Stress is a life event or situation that causes imbalance in an individual's life. Adolescents are under constant pressure due to changes taking place within and around them. Adolescence can be a difficult time for some children as it places a number of demands on their academic life.

The activities selected for intervention covered different areas of an adolescent students' life, with the aim to help them develop self-help skills to manage and cope effectively with difficulties. Imparting life skills training to adolescents enhances their ability to deal with different aspects of life both psychological and social.

Some important issues in the adolescent's life include development of self-identity, relationships with parents and peers, and making academic choices. A certain degree of conflict about the
appropriate degree of parental control of an adolescent's life is almost inevitable. Children are frequent victims of stress because they are often unable to communicate their feelings accurately or their responses to events over which they feel they have no control. Ability to negotiate and cope with stressors that increase risk of personal, social or cognitive difficulties (Carson, Swanson, Cooney & Gillum, 1992) has been associated with children's development, emotional adjustment and psychological well-being.

The post-test scores obtained in this research indicate that students can be trained to manage stress. It is well documented that stress persists throughout adolescence. Rather than how much stress individual experiences the critical issue is how the individual perceives stress and responds to it. Often stress results from something that is beyond one's control. Ability to manage stress is
very important. Some stress is normal, and challenges can be expected. Seaward (1997) points out that coping with stress is an ongoing process. Therefore, it is critical that children and adolescents are given opportunities to develop life skills that will help them effectively cope with daily stressors, major life events, and change. An unhealthy response to stress occurs when the demands of the stressor exceed an individual's coping ability.

Stress is retained among students due to a number of reasons:

- Stress is created by parental pressure to perform and to stand out among other children. When they can't rise up to that expectation, or during the process of meeting it, children may suffer from frustration, physical stress, aggression, undesirable complexes, and depression.
- Peers relations are an important factor that contributes towards stress experienced by students.
Students who are under-performers, develop negative traits such as shyness, unfriendliness, jealousy, and may withdraw to become loners.

• Over burdening a student's life can put them under stress. A child's in school and after-school activities should be carefully arranged to give them some breathing space. The academic system gives students tremendous amount of homework, which they usually have to complete using up their evenings, weekends and most of the vacations. Unable to find enough time for themselves, students often lose interest in studies and under perform. They often feel stress by being asked to do too much in too little a time. Lack of participation in extracurricular activities due to excessive academic work also leads to stress.

• Teenage depression or growing up tensions add to the pressures. If unable to adapt to the transition and change, students often carry enormous amount
of anxiety, negative personal traits and can suffer from massive attention problems.

Stress affects different dimensions of an adolescent's life their health - physical and mental, emotional, social, and academic lives. Data analyzed through this research indicates that subjects expressed difficulty in the emotional area, followed by cognitive difficulties and social expression of stress. Data also may imply that subjects who experience emotional, health, social, and cognitive stress may express this through physical symptoms. The subject under stress may choose to detach oneself cognitively and minimize the significance of the situation. The theory of cognitive costs supports the findings that individuals may hold the cognitive belief of loss or threat of harm. Events are seen as beyond them and uncontrolled.
In the month of May 2005 alone newspapers and television channels reported nearly 10 suicides by students who hung themselves or jumped to their death fearing bad results. At a time when student suicides are making the headlines, a new survey and counselling initiative among students of a premier South Mumbai college throws significant light on depression among troubled teenagers. Almost 21 per cent of the students surveyed at Mumbai's St Xavier's College (Pareikh, 1998) were found to be depressed, with more male students (25 per cent) than female students (18 per cent) falling into that category. Seven per cent of the depressed students were identified as being suicidal, 35 % cited problems with career, 22 % with relationships, 16 % with family and 12 % with examination stress.

Children today seem to encounter many stressful life events at an earlier age. To assist the student to cope better with the demands placed on them a
twelve-week intervention program was designed and administered in a school setup. Results indicate that students who received intervention showed reduced stress scores following intervention. Similar studies have been reported by Schinke, Schilling, Snow (1986)). At post-test and relative to control condition subjects, intervention condition subjects scored more positively on measures of problem solving, assertive direct refusals, adequacy of information about junior high school, ability to handle stress, ability to deal with peer pressure, and general readiness for junior high school.

Data obtained on post-test scores for coping is encouraging. If trained to cope with stress students can manage stress more effectively. Various studies have been undertaken to determine the effectiveness of training students to manage stress and cope effectively. School-based life skills programs that focus on such strategies as relaxation, problem
solving, and positive perspectives are successful in teaching children and adolescents how to control their stress ((Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; DeWolfe & Saunders, 1995; Anderson & Haslam, 1994; Romano, 1992; Miller & McCormick, 1991; Gilbert & Orlick, 1996; De Wolfe & Saunders, 1995).

When one encounters a difficult or stressful life situation, they react in a various ways, to try to make the situation better or to decrease the stress and difficult feelings that the situation has created. Different people react in different ways. Obviously, some of these coping behaviors are more effective than others. It is not possible to simply categories ways of coping as intrinsically good or bad.

Coping involves a constant process of trying out different ways of dealing with a situation, in order to feel better or to improve the situation. It is possible to learn to actively think about, and discuss
how best to cope with specific situations. Obviously, strategies vary depending upon the type of situation and the individual person's habits and resources. Some students do not cope well because they simply do not know how to use a more effective strategy. Others simply choose an ineffective strategy for a specific situation. People who experience more stress and distress in their life often feel stuck in a situation and powerless to change their circumstances, either because they do not know how to cope or because they use ineffective coping strategies.

It is important to note that teaching children how to cope does not involve teaching that there are good and bad coping strategies. The goal is to help children consider many different ways of dealing with different situations and then to evaluate for themselves what may happen if they cope in certain ways. This experience of thinking about coping,
coupled with exposure to many ways of coping, should increase a child's range of possibilities for dealing with problematic situations.

Data from this research also indicated that students use wishful thinking and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid a problem. This could be due to the constant pressure that the students experience, as the demands and expectations laid on them are high and constant. Students do not have an outlet to express themselves or channelise their efforts in constructive ways.

Students may also feel compelled to act in ways that they are not happy thus causing the experience of stress. Thus proper guidance and training becomes important. Socially it is an accepted phenomenon that a school has the right to mould a student's behavior or thoughts. Thus, school based programs
serve as an effective medium to impart training on
the correct methods students could use to adapt to
challenging situations.

The data indicates that most subjects seek out
informational support, tangible support, and
emotional support. However many describe their
coping mechanism as cognitive efforts to detach
oneself and to minimize the significance of the
situation. Subjects who acknowledge one's own role
in the problem show problem-focused efforts to alter
the situation, coupled with an analytic approach to
solving the problem.

Research on cognitive perspective (Goodhart 1985)
has shown psychological effects associated with
positive and negative thinking were a result of self-
relevant thoughts, not externally relevant thoughts.
Although successful coping relies on many
individual and environmental factors (Turkel & Eth,
1990, in Carson et al., 1992), personal characteristics, such as locus of control and competency are associated with greater resiliency and more adaptive coping styles (Carson et al., 1992).

Coping responses can be described as positive or negative and as Reactive (reacting to one’s thoughts and feelings) or Active (dealing with actual stressful situations or events). In a similar fashion, Folkman (1982) distinguishes between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Active or Reactive coping responses can be positive or negative, depending on the situation and the content of the response. In many cases, positive coping responses are active, problem-solving efforts (Lazarus, Averill, & Opton, 1974). Individuals who possess a strong sense of control over the environment are likely to cope effectively (Bandura, 1977; Cohen & Edwards, 1989; Taylor, Helgeson, Reed, & Skokan, 1991).
Research has demonstrated that problem-focused coping, as well as seeking social support, leads to better adjustment among diverse populations (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Cronkite & Moos, 1984; Dunkel-Schetter, Feinstein, Taylor, & Falke, 1992; Duquette, Kerouac, Sandhu, & Beaudet, 1994; Holahan & Moos, 1986, 1987, 1990, 1991; Leiter & Harvie, 1996; Smith, 1996; Vitaliana, Maiuro, & Russo, 1987; Zea, Reisen, & Poppen, 1999), although there appears to be some context, such as coping with loss and grief, where emotion-focused coping might be more beneficial (Thompson, 1997). Avoidance coping predicted worse adjustment, and greater social support was related to better adjustment among students.

Valintiner, Holahan, and Moos (1994) found that initial parental support was associated with later psychological adjustment both directly and indirectly through adaptive coping strategies.
Hobfoll, Dunahoo, Leong, Bonz, and Zachar (1997) found that active coping predicted both academic success and personal/emotional adjustment among a sample of freshmen at a small Eastern college. Other research supported the notion that active coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping and seeking social support, are associated with better adjustment to stressful events (Cronkite & Moos, 1984; Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1992; Holahan & Moos, 1986, 1987).

Academic achievement was used as a variable, in this study to understand the subjects stress levels and coping skills. Groups were analyzed based on academic performance. They were categorized as above average, average and below average based on rank obtained in the previous academic exam. Recently, Union Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh deliberated with policy-makers
and promised a policy guideline by 2006 and a national debate before that on how we can lower the enormous load of stress on students without lowering the quality of the education. At the conclave, there were suggestions that the present examination system be replaced by an open-book, flexible time system, or by a continuous and comprehensive evaluation system with grading and career counselling. There was talk of doing away with disparities in state boards in favor of a common syllabus for students across the country. But any reform plan will depend crucially upon the political priority accorded to it.

Scores obtained based on academic achievement indicate that subjects (experimental group) from all three levels above level, average level, and below average level showed similar levels of stress. There is not much difference between the groups on pre-test stress scores based on academic achievement,
indicating that the group is homogeneous and subjects might be experiencing similar kinds of issues that may be age related. Irrespective of the subjects' academic performance the subject perceives stress. Adolescents are at a vulnerable age and under a lot of stress due to the internal changes in body as well as the external pressure of performance. A 'good' academic result is an important yardstick to measure their success. If they fail to achieve the targeted results many of them end up facing traumatizing times.

The subjects in experimental group from all three categories showed better performance on post-test indicating that life skills training helped them manage stress better. Comparing subjects on coping skills the subjects in the experimental group showed improved coping skills based on their academic performance. Among the control group children coping skills have dropped down with time with the
mean score for the average and below average group having risen indicating poorer adjustment. Research has shown that stress negatively impacts different aspects of psychological functioning. Consequences of stress include elevated anxiety, depression, suicidal behavior, poor academic performance, and delinquent behavior. Cognitive and behavioral techniques provide individuals with a strategy to manage stress and thus, have the potential to serve a protective function and reduce the negative impact of stressful events.

In an interesting research on students it was observed that coping styles and social support are moderating variables in the relationship between stress and distress (Nelson NG, Dell’Oliver C, Koch C, Buckler R., 2001). They used current grade point averages as a measure of academic success. Results indicate that more successful students are likely be healthier and report less stress, more social support,
and utilization of more positive and less negative coping styles. Unexpected findings were that more successful students were likely to be women and to report increased use of focus on and venting of emotion as a coping style.

Data was obtained for this research by analyzing four schools and coping scores of subjects. Two municipal schools (BMC) and two private schools were chosen for the research. Most children attending these schools are from the lower social economic group.

Comparing subjects based on the type of school they attended- BMC run or private and scores on stress scale-. There is not much difference in the pre-test scores of the two groups, however in the post test subjects from the control group shows a slight increase in stress levels from the pre test condition. The above data does not strongly support hypothesis
4-a that stress levels will differ amongst subjects based on the type of school they attend. It is important to understand and consider how students from different social backgrounds and social classes are raised. Children of educated parents are consistently reminded of how important success is. There is a lot of time and money invested in these students. Contrary to this, subjects from lower income groups attending BMC system schools have a strong need to fight for survival, a need to rise above the current standard and prove themselves.

Both groups experienced stress however the cause of the same could differ in both groups. Subjects from BMC schools in this study showed stress more in relation to physical, emotional, and home environment compared to children from private schools who showed stress in social and cognitive areas. Thus the expression and perception of stress in the two groups differed even though the levels of
stress were similar. The coping mechanism used by each of these groups also differed with subjects from BMC schools using distancing, accepting responsibility and positive reappraisal more often as compared to subjects from private schools. Even though stress was maintained, results indicate coping skills have improved among both groups, more so among subjects from private schools.

There is enough evidence to prove that environment plays an important role in the students' life. Grobel,-Jo; Schwarzer,-Ralf (1989) found that growing competition within a reference group with relatively high academic standards led to higher levels of anxiety. Perceived school environment was a major factor in affecting self-esteem and anxiety.

Socio-economic status (SES) is an important predictor of a range of health and illness outcomes (Baum, Garofalo, Yali, 1999). A relatively novel
hypothesis is that these effects are due to chronic stress that is associated with SES; lower SES is reliably associated with a number of important social and environmental conditions that contribute to chronic stress burden, including crowding, crime, noise pollution, discrimination, and other hazards or stressors. In other words, chronic stress may capture much of the variance in health and social outcomes associated with harmful aspects of lower social status. Low SES is generally associated with distress, prevalence of mental health problems, and with health-impairing behaviors that are also related to stress.

There is strong research evidence to on connections between personality and coping mechanisms used. Ferguson (2001) confirmed that there is indeed a relationship between some personality traits and corresponding coping strategies. Correlation obtained in the current study between personality
scores and stress scores show a negative correlation between Factor C and stress scores. Factor C represents Ego strength. Ego strength is commonly regarded as the factor expressing natural dynamic integration, emotional control, and stability. Such individuals are emotionally reactive, changeable, affected by feelings, emotionally less stable, easily upset. Cattell (1957 b,) and Eysenck (1953) considered this factor as not entirely dependent on learning and experience. This indicated that ego strength has a role to play in stress experienced.

When working with students it is important to take into account personality characteristics as they contribute to coping resources of the individual. The current research indicated a positive correlation between Factor Q and pre-stress scores. Factor Q is closely related to anxiety. Such individuals are private, discreet, non-disclosing, shrewd, polished, worldly, astute, and diplomatic. In terms of stress
level, worrying and apprehension are not good indicators.

Correlation scores for pre-test coping and post-test coping and personality scores show a positive correlation between Q4 and pre-test coping scores. Those found high on Q4 are regarded as irritable, tense, and frustrated and remain in turmoil. An interesting finding is a correlation between Factor J and post-test coping scores. Factor J is called the Neurasthenia Factor (Cattelle, 1972) since some signs of Neurticism are related to this factor. Those high on this factor prefer to do things their own way, are physically and intellectually fastidious, think over their mistake, have private views of their own, and have few friends.

Research, especially in health psychology, has mainly been concentrated on the investigation of stable traits rather than on studying coping as a
process (Monat & Lazarus, 1991). Factor N (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) has been associated with coping strategies such as denial, behavioural disengagement, lost temper, which are known as maladaptive ways of coping. On the other hand, E has been shown to be related to more positive coping styles, such as acceptance, positive reinterpretation and growth, humor, and seeking social support (Ferguson, 2001).

Past research on the relationships between personality traits and coping techniques has led to controversial findings. Some researchers believe that trait measures cannot predict coping styles because coping is a dynamic process, which shifts in nature depending on situational constraints, and is also affected by how the individual appraises each situation (Clayton & Darvish, 1979). According to this line of thought, stable coping styles are not likely to exist as individuals change their coping
strategies depending on the circumstances, and are not locked with one single response mode each time (Cohen & Lazarus, 1973;). Moreover, further research has put emphasis on the emotional aspect of coping. Monat & Lazarus (1991) highlighted the complexity of each stage of the coping process, during which emotions continuously unfold and gradually present the individual with a series of issues to deal with.

Data obtained from this research has also shown that parental expectation and perceived parental expectation has a relationship with stress and coping scores. A positive correlation between perceived parental expectation and stress implies that the greater the subject perceives parental expectation greater the stress scores. Interestingly, greater the actual parental expectation, greater was the stress score. This could be one reason why stress scores were maintained following intervention. Parents
today are far more ambitious and would like to achieve what they could not through their children. The economics of education or child rearing being high parents also expect high returns on their investment. Such high expectations drive students to maladaptive behavior including suicide for fear of rebuke or rejection.

Family roles govern the perceived expectations and responsibilities placed on children by parents. There is evidence to support the finding that children's perception of their place in the family influences how they feel about themselves, and how they interact with others (Kottman & Johnson, 1993 in Nims, 1998). Components of family structure during formative years that reflect emotional and affiliative ties are implicated in the psychological status, coping and relating styles of mature individuals (Fullerton, Ursano, Wetzler & Slusarcick, 1989).
Researchers in the past (Jones, Russell W., 1996) have investigated the factors contributing to academic stress and found: peer pressure, parental pressure, importance of academia and fear of failure contributed to stress among students. Peer pressure was found to vary across ethnicity and grade, but not across gender. Parental pressure was found to be consistent across all variables. Importance of school and fear of failure were found to vary across ethnicity, gender and grade. These variations are discussed in relation to ethnic, grade and gender influences. Implications for education are considered.

Research suggests that a positive relationship with parents provides a form of social support, which enhances psychological resources (e.g. self-esteem) and therefore enables adolescents to cope with stressful events (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Baumrind, 1991). In a study of high school students Danko
(1994) found that students with authoritative parents reported less frequent use of active coping behaviour than did students with highly permissive or non-authoritative parents. The results of the described studies showed that perceived authoritative and controlling parenting styles are closely related to psychological disturbance in adolescence. Smaller number of studies have investigated the role of perceived parenting styles in the development of anxiety (e.g. Gerlsma, Emmelkamp, & Arrindell, 1990; Furukawa, 1992; Muris & Merckelbach, 1998). These studies suggest that the parenting styles perceived by the adolescents have a substantial impact on their level of psychopathology. Parental rejection and control are closely associated with anxiety in childhood. Parent and child relationships are extremely important in the formation of self-esteem, which is considered a crucial contributor to psychological well-being (Zervas, 1994). It is still debated
whether the component of self-esteem influenced most by parental relationships is restricted to the familial environment or if it is global (Zervas, 1994).

Another interesting finding from this research is the birth order and coping mechanisms. Older born subjects show lower coping scores or better coping skills than later born subjects. This may be due to the social system that older born are expected to take on social responsibilities at an earlier age than younger ones. Each family member experiences and interprets family dynamics differently. Siblings growing up in the same family may have a vastly different childhood. Research has indicated that intra-family experiences may be almost as diverse as inter-family experiences (Richardson & Richardson, 1990). Part of the differences in family experiences might be due to parental expectations, which vary by birth order. Adults seem to have higher
expectations of their first-born and tend to describe their first born more positively than subsequent arrivals (Kalmuss & Davidson, 1992). Differences may also be attributable to the tone that the sibling constellation itself brings to family interaction, determined by sibling spacing, gender and birth order (Dunn & Kendrick, 1982). For example a male child born after a female child who is perceived as successful, may be subjected to higher parental expectation as society expects the male child to take on more responsibilities as compared to his female sibling.

Results from the study has also shown that poor study habits could be a source of stress. Lack of effective study skills could mean a lot of time wasted on unnecessary activity. Our academic system also requires students to memorize a lot of information. This requires good study skills. Keeping in mind the vast syllabus that the student is
required to cover effective management of time becomes important.

Females in the study showed higher stress scores than males at both pre and post test level. Girls and boys experience distinctly different patterns of stress during adolescence that may leave girls more vulnerable to depression. During adolescence female students undergo both physical and social changes that lay great demands on them. Moods change and tough decisions may seem difficult and unmanageable. The ancient Indian text Manu Samhita proclaims that a woman is first a daughter, then a wife and later a mother. In other words, her existence is recognized only in terms of her relation to men. In The Inner World, Dr Kakar writes that this gender bias results in depressive moodiness, extreme touchiness and morbid sensitivity in urban Indian women. By not releasing stress, an adolescent girl can feel overwhelmed and depression
may develop. Female students take on multiple roles. They may be involved in other activities like helping the family in daily activities apart from studying thus adding to pressures. Studies show girls are twice as likely as boys to report feeling depressed and are more likely to develop self-image problems and eating disorders as a result of depression.

Peer pressure is a major contributing factor toward stress. Peer influence in this research has a positive correlation to stress and negative correlation to coping. Children are bogged down by the fear of being ostracized by friends if they don’t fare well in the exams. Previous research points out that friendships across the board are very important to the overall growth and stability as far as the development of a person is concerned. Friends provide social and cognitive skills in each other that would otherwise be lacking. While peer influence is
defined as neither good nor bad as a whole, it can go either way very easily based on the adolescents and the group as well as the dynamics that take place within the group (Hartup, 1996).

Adolescents learn from their peers far more than we may think. A study done on risky behavior and peer groups states “Risk-taking & non-risk-taking behavior is learned predominantly in the context of peer clusters. Risk-taking peer groups are more influential, and choose their surrounding peer group at a key stage in their development, far more readily than do non-risk-taking peer groups” (Pearson, 2000). Interestingly enough, adolescents claim peer influence not to be a factor in their decisions, yet the answers to countless survey questions show otherwise (Duncan 1992). This is even more important because it means they have internalized their peer’s opinions. Not being openly aware that their peers opinions and perceptions do have an...
effect is serious because in order to address these issues, we all need to be aware of where these ideas are coming from, to stop the problems at their core.

We know from research that friends do not blindly follow each other into things, or get pressured so much but instead trust their friend's judgments and often go on the faith they have in their friends. Coercion, intimidation and bullying are all far less of an issue in adolescent friendships as the fact that many adolescents blindly trust the judgment of a peer. Unfortunately this is precisely the behavior that gets friends into trouble because these adolescents sometimes end up trusting in error, which can potentially lead to more serious consequences than if they went on their own judgments (Dillemence, 1991).

Ability to negotiate and cope with stressors, the stimuli or experiences that increase risk of personal,
social or cognitive difficulties (Carson, Swanson, Cooney & Gillum, 1992), has been associated with children's development, emotional adjustment and physical well-being. There are great individual differences in children's vulnerability or resilience when confronted with stress. Age, health status, temperament, heredity, cognitive appraisal of stressors and locus of control are some of the factors implicated in this variation (Carson et al., 1992). Adaptation to distinct stressors is a unique trajectory for each individual.

Resiliency could also be viewed as a dynamic process (Carson et al., 1992) since it may be situation specific to an extent (Carson et al., 1992). Inability to handle stress effectively in childhood has been associated with adjustment problems, anxiety disorders, antisocial behaviour, hyper-vigilance and psychosomatic illness (Carson et al., 1992). Protective factors against stress include
personality factors such as flexibility and sociability (Carson et al., 1992).

Relationships with others outside the family, including peers, teachers and community involvement, can also act as buffers and assist a child in dealing with stressors (Carson et al., 1992). Yet it is the bond between siblings, parents and peers that have been implicated as key determinants of resilience to stress in childhood (Carson et al., 1992). Compatibility between the individual's characteristics and those of the family, and parental expectations have also been associated with individual coping styles (Carson et al., 1992). Greater compatibility may result in greater resilience when confronted with stressful situations (Anthony, 1987 in Carson et al., 1992).

Although successful coping relies on many individual and environmental factors (Turkel & Eth,
1990, in Carson et al., 1992), personal characteristics, such as locus of control and competency are associated with greater resilience and more adaptive coping styles (Carson et al., 1992). These individual determinants of coping style may override family factors with either a positive or negative outcome (Carson et al., 1992). They may also be determined in part by family interactions. It has been suggested that the first-born personality exhibits greater resilience (Carson et al., 1992). It could be suggested that the archetypal experiences of first-born individuals may foster greater locus of control, providing the individuals with greater confidence in their ability to negotiate stressful stimuli. Causative inferences concerning these factors must be undertaken cautiously, if at all, since a variety of influences shape individual response to stress (Carson et al., 1992), most of which are difficult to control in empirical investigations.
This chapter discusses results obtained through this research and discusses them in the light of past research. Data obtained is encouraging and provides information on importance of school based counselling program.