# CHAPTER 1
## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the theoretical background looking at adolescence and stress; the relationship or connection between these two areas; the background to this study on school and home environments is also dealt with.

1. ADOLESCENCE

1.1 Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. It is reported, that the real reason for the developmental period of adolescence, was to delay young people from going into the workforce, due to the scarcity of jobs. There are also varying views on the actual timeline of adolescence - especially about when it ends. Typically, we view adolescence beginning at puberty and ending at 18 or 21 years. Others suggest that there is a period of late adolescence that extends well into what is now known as the period of young adulthood.

1.2 Theories of Adolescent Development

1.2.1 Biogenetic Psychology Theory

Hall (1916) was the first psychologist to advance a psychology of adolescence in its own right and to use scientific methods to study them. He defined this period to begin at puberty at about 12 or 13 years, and end late, between 22 years to 25 years of age. Hall also described adolescence as a period of ‘sturm und drang’ - storm and stress. He saw the emotional life of the adolescent as an oscillation between contradictory tendencies. Energy, exaltation, and supernatural activity are followed by indifference, lethargy, and loathing. Exuberant gaiety, laughter, and euphoria make place for dysphoria, depressive gloom, and melancholy. Egoism, vanity, and conceit are just as characteristic of this period of life as are abasement, humiliation, and bashfulness. According to Hall, during this stage of development, there also is a yearning for idols and authority that does not exclude a revolutionary radicalism directed against any kind of authority. In late adolescence, according to Hall, the individual recapitulates the state of the beginning of modern civilization. This stage corresponds to the end of the developmental process: maturity. Hall's genetic psychology did not see the human being as the final and finished product of the developmental process; it allowed for indefinite further development (Muuss, 1975).
1.2.2 Psychoanalytic Theory
Freud (1948) paid relatively little attention to adolescent development only to discuss it in terms of psychosexual development. He shared a common idea with that of Hall's evolutionary theory: that the period of adolescence could be seen as phylo-genetic. Freud (1948) did maintain that the individual goes through the earlier experiences of mankind in his psychosexual development. According to Freud and psychoanalytic theory, the stages of psychosexual development are genetically determined and are relatively independent of environmental factors (Muuss, 1975, p.38). Freud believed that adolescence was a universal phenomenon and included behavioral, social and emotional changes; the relationship between the physiological and psychological changes; and the influences on self-image. He also stated that the physiological changes are related to emotional changes, especially an increase in negative emotions, such as moodiness, anxiety, loathing, tension and other forms of adolescent behavior.

1.2.3 Defense Mechanism Theory
Freud (1948) assigns greater importance to puberty as a critical factor in character formation. She also places much emphasis on the relationship between the id, the ego and the superego. She believes that the physiological process of sexual maturation, beginning with the functioning of the sexual glands, plays a critical role in influencing the psychological realm. This interaction results in the instinctual reawakening of the libidinal forces, which, in turn, can bring about psychological disequilibrium. The painfully established balance between ego and id during the latency period is disturbed by puberty, and internal conflict results. Thus, one aspect of puberty, the puberty conflict, is the endeavor to regain equilibrium (Muuss, 1975).

Freud (1948) believes the factors involved in adolescent conflict are:

- The strength of the id impulse, which is determined by physiological and endocrinological processes during pubescence.
- The ego's ability to cope with or to yield to the instinctual forces. This in turn depends on the character training and superego development of the child during the latency period.
- The effectiveness and nature of the defense mechanism at the disposal of the ego.

1.2.4 Need for Independence Theory
Rank (1964) suggests that in early adolescence, the individual undergoes a basic change in attitude; he begins to oppose dependency, including the rule of external
environmental factors (parents, teachers, the law, and so on) and the rule of internal cravings - the newly awakened instinctual urges. Establishing volitional independence, which society values and requires, becomes an important but difficult developmental task for the adolescent. This newly developed need for independence and the struggle for the attainment of independence lies at the root of many adolescent personal relationships and their complications. Rank (1964) sees no necessity for external sexual restrictions and inhibitions, since the struggle is one in which the individual's will strives for independence against domination by biological needs (Muuss, 1975).

1.2.5 Identity Development Theory

The core concept of Erikson's (1950) theory is the acquisition of an ego-identity or identity crisis - this is the most essential characteristic of adolescence. Although a person's identity is established in ways that differ from culture to culture, the accomplishment of this developmental task has a common element in all cultures. In order to acquire a strong and healthy ego-identity the child must receive consistent and meaningful recognition of his achievements and accomplishments (Muuss, 1975).

Adolescence is described by Erikson as the period during which the individual must establish a sense of personal identity and avoid the dangers of role diffusion and identity confusion (Erikson, 1950). The implication is that the individual has to make an assessment of his or her assets and liabilities and how they want to use them. Adolescents must answer questions for themselves about where they came from, who they are, and what they will become. Identity, or a sense of sameness and continuity, must be searched for. Identity is not given to the individual by society, nor does it appear as a maturational phenomenon; it must be acquired through sustained individual efforts. Unwillingness to work on one's own identity formation carries with it the danger of role diffusion, which may result in alienation and a lasting sense of isolation and confusion. The virtue to be developed is fidelity. Adhering to one's values contributes to a stable identity.

Of great concern for many adolescents is the need to settle the question of vocational identity (Erikson, 1950). During the initial attempts to establish a vocational identity some role diffusion frequently exists. Adolescents at this stage hold glamorized and idealized conceptions of their vocational goals, and it is not uncommon that goal aspirations are higher than the individual's ability warrants. Frequently, vocational goal models are chosen that are attainable for only a few: movie heroes, rock
musicians, athletic champions, car racers, astronauts, and other glamorized ‘heroes’. In the process the adolescent over identifies with and idolizes his heroes to the extent that he yields his own identity and presumes he has theirs. At this point, according to Erikson (1950), a youth rarely identifies with his or her parents; they often rebel against their dominance, their value system, and their intrusion into their private life, since they must separate their identity from that of their family. The adolescent must assert their autonomy in order to reach maturity (Muuss, 1975).

The positive outcome of the identity crisis is dependent on the young person's willingness to accept his past and establish continuity with their previous experiences. If the adolescent fails in his search for an identity, he will experience self-doubt, role diffusion, and role confusion; and the adolescent may indulge in self-destructive one-sided preoccupation or activity. Such an adolescent may continue to be morbidly preoccupied with what others think of them, or may withdraw and no longer care about themselves and others. This leads to ego diffusion, personality confusion and can be found in the delinquent and in psychotic personality disorganization. In its most severe cases, according to Erikson (1965), identity diffusion can lead to suicide or suicide attempts. Once the personal identity is established, then the adolescent can move on to find intimacy or isolation in interpersonal relationships (Muuss, 1975).

Marcia’s (1967) extension of Erikson’s theory includes a definition of identity as an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history. Marcia (1967) interviewed student’s aged between 18 to 22 years, about their occupational choices, religious, political beliefs and values - all central aspects of identity. He classified students into 4 categories of identity status based on: 1) whether they had gone through an identity crisis as described by Erikson, and 2) the degree to which they were now committed to an occupational choice and to a set of values and beliefs. The four categories of identity statuses as defined by Marcia are as follows:

- **Identity diffused or identity confused**: Individuals who had not yet experienced an identity crisis, nor made any commitment to a vocation or set of beliefs.
- **Foreclosure**: Individuals who have not experienced crisis, but has made commitments, however, these commitments are not the result of his own searching and exploring, but they are handed to him, ready-made, by others, frequently his parents.
• Moratorium: Individuals who are in an acute state of crisis. They are exploring and actively searching for alternatives, and struggling to find their identity; but have not yet made any commitment or have only developed very temporary kinds of commitment.

• Identity Achieved: Individual’s who have experienced crises but have resolved them on their own terms, and as a result of the resolution of the crisis had made a personal commitment to an occupation, a religious belief, a personal value system; and, has resolved their attitude toward sexuality.

Most adolescents seem to progress towards a status of identity achieved. Identity achievement is rare among early adolescents. It is more frequent among older high school students, college students and young adults. During junior and senior high school, identity diffusion and identity foreclosure are the most common. Few differences are found between males and females on measures of identity.

Some social scientists believe that schools may be encouraging foreclosure, since they demand conformity to the way things are and submission to authority rather than aiding the adolescent in his search for a unique individuality and a personal identity. Many have maintained that schools require adolescents to submit and suppress their creativity, individuality, and identity to the demands of the skill-and knowledge-oriented curriculum in order to succeed (Muuss, 1975).

1.2.6 Philosophy of Culture Theory

Springer (1928) describes three developmental patterns:

The first pattern is a form of rebirth in which the individual sees himself as another person when he reaches maturity. Like Hall (1916), Spranger (1928) believes that this is a period of storm, stress, strain, and crisis, and results in basic personality change. It has much in common with a religious conversion, also emphasized by Hall.

The second pattern is a slow, continuous growth process and a gradual acquisition of the cultural values and ideas held in the society, without a basic personality change.

The third pattern is a growth process in which the individual actively participates. The youth consciously improves himself or herself and contributes to his or her own development, overcoming obstacles and crises by his own energetic and goal-directed efforts. This pattern is characterized by self-control and self-discipline, which Spranger related to a personality type that is striving for power (Muuss, 1975).

It is reported that Spranger (1928) is one of the few psychologist who directs most of his work to the period of adolescence. It is believed that he saw adolescence as a
specific developmental period that has unique characteristics different from childhood and adulthood.

1.2.7 Cultural Anthropology Theory

Mead (1952, 1961) maintains that the major task facing adolescents today is the search for a meaningful identity. This task is immeasurably more difficult in a modern democratic society than in a primitive society. The behavior and values of parents no longer constitute models, since they are outmoded as compared with the models provided by the mass media. Furthermore, the adolescent in the process of freeing the self from dependency on parents is not only unresponsive, but frequently antagonistic to their value system. Since the adolescent has been taught to evaluate his behavior against that of his age-mates, he now discards his parents' value system and exchanges it for the standard of his peers. Rapidity of social change, exposure to various secular and religious value systems, and modern technology make the world appear to the adolescent too complex, too relativistic, too unpredictable, and too ambiguous to provide him with a stable frame of reference (Muuss, 1975). Mead (1950) does advocate greater freedom for the adolescent and less conformity to family, peer and community expectations to allow the adolescent to realize his creative potential (Muuss, 1975).

Benedict (1950) provides an explicit theory of development from a cultural anthropological point of view which she relates directly to Mead's (1950) study of adolescence in Samoa. It is from these theoretical writings that a systematic statement about the importance of cultural factors in the developmental process was summated. ‘Cultural relativism’ - a term more appropriate to the earlier than later writings of Mead - contributes new and important ideas to the understanding of the phenomenon of adolescence. It emphasizes the importance of social institutions and cultural factors in human development and describes the rituals of puberty as well as adolescent experiences in primitive societies. Theory of continuities and discontinuities in cultural conditioning has important educational implications according to Muuss (1975). Our educational practices at home as well as in school should emphasize continuity in the learning process so that the child becomes conditioned to the same set of values and behavior in childhood that will be expected from him in adulthood. The child should be taught nothing that he will have to unlearn in order to become a mature adult. Changes in behavior, often constituting a discontinuity, are expected as the individual
moves from elementary to high school, from college into the labor market and thus into adulthood.

**1.2.8 Continuity of Development Theory**

Hollingworth (1928) was even more pronounced than were Mead (1952) and Benedict (1950) in her attack on Hall's idea of adolescence as a period of storm and stress. She dismissed his works as of little scientific or practical value. Her views were influenced by the work of cultural anthropologists (Muuss, 1975). Hollingworth (1928) emphasized the idea of continuity of development and the gradualness of change during the adolescent period. She indicates that the child grows by imperceptible degrees into the adolescent, and the adolescent turns by gradual degrees into the adult (Hollingworth, 1928). She challenged the idea that there were distinct stages and sharp dividing lines among the different epochs, stages, and phases of development. Hollingworth (1928) also asserted that the sudden change in social status that results from puberty initiation rites and ceremonies of primitive people has become confused with the biological changes of organic development; and believed that there is no connection between the biological changes and the changes in social status; she attributes these changes to social institutions and ceremonies only (Muuss, 1975).

**1.2.9 Field Theory**

Lewin (1935) explains and describes the dynamics of behavior of the individual adolescent without generalizing about adolescents as a group. His constructs help to describe and explain, and predict the behavior of a given individual in a specific situation. In a sense, the field theory of adolescence is expressed explicitly and stated more formally than other theories of adolescent development. Lewin's (1935) theory of adolescence is a period of transition in which the adolescent must change his group membership. While both the child and the adult have a fairly clear concept of how they fit into the group, the adolescent belongs partly to the child group, partly to the adult group, without belonging completely to either group. Parents, teachers, and society reflect this lack of clearly defined group status; and their ambiguous feelings toward the adolescent become obvious when they treat him at one time like a child and at another time like an adult. Difficulties arise because certain childish forms of behavior are no longer acceptable. At the same time some of the adult forms of behavior are not yet permitted either, or if they are permitted, they are new and strange to the adolescent (Muuss, 1975).
Field theory defines adolescence as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Lewin, 1939). This transition is characterized by deeper and far-reaching changes, a faster rate of growth, and differentiation of the life space as compared with the preceding stage of late childhood. The transition is also characterized by the fact that the individual enters a cognitively unstructured region that results in uncertainty of behavior. Transition from childhood to adulthood is obviously a universal phenomenon, since children become mature adults in all societies. However, the shift from childhood to adulthood can occur in different patterns. It can take the form of a sudden shift, such as has been observed in primitive societies in which the puberty rites end childhood and signify the beginning of adulthood (Muuss, 1975).

According to Lewin (1935), there are also cultural differences in adolescent behavior. He attributes these differences to several factors: the ideologies, attitudes, and values that are recognized and emphasized; the way in which different activities are seen as related or unrelated (for example, religion and work are more closely related in Mennonite society than in American society as a whole); and, the varying length of the adolescent period from culture to culture and from social class to social class within a culture. Moreover, the degree to which the child group and the adult group are differentiated in a given culture has far-reaching consequences for adolescent behavior. The more clearly they are separated, the more difficult the transition (Lewin, 1942).

1.2.10 Somatopsychological Theory

Barker et al. (1953) uses the field theory to illustrate the effects of physiological changes on behavior during adolescence. According to Barker et al. (1953), dimensions of the body, physique, and endocrinological changes occur at an accelerated speed during adolescence as compared to the preadolescent years. As a result, some corresponding psychological situations occur. First, new psychological situations arise during adolescence; and second, experiential psychological situations will take place in which overlapping of the psychological field occurs. Barker et al., (1953) state that in the United States, the child group is clearly separated from the adult group, for whom different forms of behavior are accepted. Children have a social position equivalent to that of a minority group; this increases the difficulty of moving from one group to the other. The possibility of moving from one social group to the other is determined informally by one's physique: looking like an adult makes it easier to get adult privileges (Muuss, 1975).
1.2.11 Socialized Anxiety Theory of Adolescence

Davis (1944) defines socialization as the process by which an individual learns and adapts the ways, ideas, beliefs, values, and norms of his culture and makes them part of his personality. He sees development as a continuous process of learning socially acceptable behavior by means of reinforcement and punishment. Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour are defined by each society, or its socializing agents, the subgroups, social classes, or castes. Cultural behavior is acquired through social learning. Understanding the effects of social learning on adolescents is the crucial issue in Davis' theory (Muuss, 1975).

It is the characteristic of middle-class youth that his social anxiety increases with the onset of adolescence, since he faces new developmental and behavioral tasks, such as preparation for work and heterosexual adjustment. Furthermore, since the middle class is more concerned with normality, success, morality, and status, the amount of socially instilled anxiety is greater than in the other classes. It is characteristic of middle-class youth that his social anxiety increases with the onset of adolescence, since he faces new developmental and behavioral tasks, such as preparation for work and heterosexual adjustment. Furthermore, as he becomes increasingly aware of his own social needs - having prestige, friends, being accepted by the peer group, relating to the opposite sex - he becomes more sensitive to social cues and social pressures. Since he depends greatly upon social acceptance, prestige, and status, his social anxiety increases. This produces an increased striving for socially desirable goals. Adolescents with a strongly developed social anxiety, therefore, usually strive for the approved social goals most eagerly and learn most successfully (Davis, 1944).

1.2.12 Developmental Task Theory of Adolescence

Havighurst’s (1951) developmental tasks for adolescence (from about 12 to 18 years) are:

- Accepting one's physique and accepting a masculine or feminine role.
- New relations with age-mates of both sexes.
- Emotional independence of parents and other adults.
- Achieving assurance of economic independence.
- Selecting and preparing for an occupation.
- Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
- Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.
• Preparing for marriage and family life.
• Building conscious values in harmony with an adequate scientific world-picture.

1.2.13 Cognitive Theory
Piaget (1947a) states that while the child at the concrete operational stage becomes able to reason on the basis of objects, the adolescent begins to reason on the basis of verbal propositions. He can make hypothetical deductions and entertain the idea of relativity. Formal thought reaches its fruition during adolescence. An adolescent, unlike the child, is an individual who thinks beyond the present and forms theories about everything, delighting especially in consideration of that which is not (Piaget, 1947b). The adolescent not only thinks beyond the present, but can analytically reflect upon own thinking. The adolescent thinker can leave the real objective world behind and enter the world of ideas. They are able to control events in their mind through logical deductions of possibilities and consequences; direction of thought processes change also. The pre-adolescent begins by thinking about reality and attempts to extend thoughts toward possibility. The adolescent, who has mastered formal operations, begins by thinking of all logical possibilities and then considers them in a systematic fashion; reality is secondary to possibility. The most distinctive property of formal thought is this reversal of direction between reality and possibility; formal thought begins with a theoretical synthesis implying that certain relations are necessary and thus proceeds in the opposite direction. This type of thinking proceeds from what is possible to what is empirically real (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958). This reversal of the direction of thought between reality and possibility constitutes a turning point in the development of the structure of intelligence, since it leads to an equilibrium that is both stable and fixed (Muuss, 1975). Formal operations allow the adolescent to combine propositions and to isolate variables in order to confirm or disprove his hypothesis. He no longer needs to think in terms of objects or concrete events, but can carry out operations of symbols in his mind (Muuss, 1975).

1.2.14 Cognitive-Developmental Theory
For Kohlberg (1963), cognitive development precedes moral development. Morality is an idea of justice that is primitive, undifferentiated, and social as the adolescent moves through specific stages of moral thinking. In some individuals, it may reach an awareness of universal values and ethical principles. Kohlberg (1963) distinguishes three basic levels of moral development: the pre-conventional or pre-moral level; the
conventional level; and the post-conventional or autonomous level. Morality is an idea of justice that is primitive, undifferentiated, and egocentric in young children. This becomes more sophisticated and social as the adolescent moves through specific stages of moral thinking; it may reach, in some individuals, an awareness of universal values and ethical principles (Muuss, 1975).

1.2.15 Social Learning Perspective Theory

As children grow older they tend to imitate different models from their social environment. The young child usually identifies with his parents and attempts to imitate their behavior, including language, gesture, and mannerism, as well as more basic attitudes and values. Identification with his teacher is not uncommon for the child entering school or for the preadolescent. The child imitates speech patterns and mannerisms that he has observed in the teacher (Muuss, 1975). Ideas about social or community issues the child expresses in dinner conversations and that are new to the family are often those of his teacher. With the onset of adolescence parents and teachers frequently decline as important models, at least in regard to issues and choices that are of immediate consequences (Muuss, 1975). During adolescence it is the peer group and selected entertainment heroes who become increasingly important as models, especially if communication between parents and adolescents break down. The adolescent peer group is particularly influential as a model in the use of verbal expressions, hair style, clothing, food, music and entertainment preferences, as well as in regard to decisions related to rapidly changing social values (Brittain, 1963).

1.2.16 Adolescence as a critical stage

Of all life-stages adolescence is arguably the one most marked by rapid and potentially tumultuous transition (Cook & Furstenberg, 2002; Brockman, 2003). This is to be seen not just in the domain of biological development where changes are externally manifest (Siefert & Hoffnung, 2000) but is equally evident in the progression of both cognitive (Eccles et al., 2003) and psychosocial (Muzi, 2000) maturity from that of childhood to that of the fully functioning adult. While the transition through adolescence is inevitable (Price, 1985) the speed and magnitude of these changes overtax the capacity of many young people to cope (Jessor, 1993; Collins, 2001; Davis, 2003) and the resulting phenomenon of adolescent stress is now well recognized (Byrne & Mazanov, 2002).
2. STRESS

2.1 Introduction

Stress has been viewed in three ways: Stimulus, Response, and Process.

Stimulus refers to stress, which can be categorised as emanating from three sources:

- Catastrophic events, such as tornadoes and earthquakes;
- Major life events;
- Chronic circumstances, such as living in crowded or noisy conditions.

Response refers to how somebody responds to a particular stress, for example sitting an examination. There are two components:

- Physiological, heightened bodily arousal - your heart pounds, mouth goes dry your stomach feels tight and you perspire;
- Psychological, involving behaviour, thought patterns, and emotions. Feeling nervous.

Process views stress as a series of interactions and adjustments between the person and the environment. These interactions and adjustments are called transactions. Stress is not seen as a stimulus or a response, but rather as a process. The person suffering stress is seen as an active agent, who can influence the impact of a stressor through behavioural, cognitive and emotional strategies.

A good definition of stress would be that stress is the condition that results when the person/environment transactions lead the individual to perceive a discrepancy - whether real or not - between the demands of a situation and the resources of the person’s biological, psychological, or social systems. Success and failure in previous transactions would determine the amount of stress perceived.

2.2 Theories of Stress

2.2.1 Cognitive aspects of stress

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) propose a model that emphases the transactional nature of stress. Stress is a two way process; the environment produces stressors and the individual finds ways to deal with these. Cognitive appraisal is a mental process by which people assess two factors - whether a demand threatens their well being and whether a person considers that they have the resources to meet the demand of the stressor.

There are two types of appraisal namely primary and secondary. During the primary appraisal stage a person will be seeking answers as to the meaning of the situation with
regard to their well being. One of three types of appraisals could be made: either, it is irrelevant, it is good (benign-positive) or it is stressful.

Harm-loss refers to the amount of damage that has already occurred. There may have been an injury. The seriousness of this injury could be exaggerated producing a lot of stress. Threat is the expectation of future harm, for example the fear of losing one's job and income. Much stress depends on appraisals that involve harm-loss and threat. Challenge is a way of viewing the stress in a positive way. The stress of a higher-level job could be seen as an opportunity to expand skills, demonstrate ability, and make more money.

The stress transaction can be vicarious. An example of vicarious stress is a study, which involved showing college-student subjects a film, called sub-incision (Speisman et al., 1964). The film showed a rite of passage for young adolescent boys in a primitive society in which the underside of the penis is cut deeply from the tip to the scrotum using a sharp stone. The subjects were divided into four groups. One group saw the film with no sound. Another group heard a soundtrack with a ‘trauma’ narrative emphasising the pain, danger, and primitiveness of the operation. A third group heard a ‘denial’ narration that denied the pain and potential harm to the boys, describing them as willing participants in a joyful occasion who ‘look forward to the happy conclusion of the ceremony’. The fourth group heard a ‘scientific’ narration that encouraged viewers to watch in a detached manner - for example, the narrator commented, ‘as you can see, the operation is formal and the surgical technique, while crude, is very carefully followed’. Physiological and self-report measures of stress were taken. The physiological measure was of the heart rate during the viewing of the film. The self-report measures were questionnaires that evaluated feelings of stress immediately after the film was shown. Those who heard the trauma narration reacted with more stress than the control group (no sound); those who heard the denial and scientific narrations reacted with less stress than the control group.

Secondary appraisals occur at the same time as primary appraisals. A secondary appraisal can actually cause a primary appraisal. Secondary appraisals include feelings of not being able to deal with the problem. Stress can occur without appraisal such as when your car is involved in an accident and you have not had time to think about what has happened. Accidents can often cause a person to be in shock. It is difficult for people to make appraisals whilst in shock as their cognitive functioning is impaired.
Stressful events depend on two factors - those that relate to the person and those that relate to the situation (Cohen and Lazarus, 1983). Personal factors include intellectual, motivational, and personality characteristics. People who have high self-esteem are likely to believe they have the resources to meet demands. Stressful events are seen as challenges rather than as threats (Cohen and Lazarus, 1983).

Ambiguity can cause stress; there are two types of ambiguity: role ambiguity and harm ambiguity. Role ambiguity can occur in the workplace, for instance when there are no clear guidelines, standards for performance and no clear consequences. Role ambiguity is stressful because people are uncertain about what actions and decisions to make. Harm ambiguity occurs when people are not sure what to do to avoid harm. Stress will depend upon the person's personality, beliefs and general experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A person who is seriously ill and has no clear information might draw hope from this ambiguity, believing that they will get well. Another person in the same situation may believe that people are deliberately giving ambiguous information because the prognosis is poor.

The desirability of the situation is also another important factor, for example, an event like losing your home is undesirable and therefore stressful. Buying and selling a house could be because one is moving to a more desirable house but still there will be many demands that tax or exceed the individuals resources. Many of life's events, whether desirable or undesirable, can produce stress (for example getting a parking ticket or preparing to throw party). Generally, undesirable events are more likely to be appraised as stressful (McFarlane et al., 1980).

Controllability is another factor that will affect the perception of stress, for example, people tend to appraise uncontrollable events as being more stressful than controllable events (Miller, 1979). There are two types of control: behavioural and cognitive. Behavioural control means performing some action. For example, being unable to take a tablet for a headache will make experiencing a headache less stressful. In the case of cognitive control, we can affect the impact of the events by using some mental strategy, such as distraction or by developing a plan to overcome the problem.

People who have a strong sense of personal control report experiencing less strain from stressors (Cohen et al., 1986). There are various types of personal control:

- Behavioural control involves the ability to take concrete action to reduce the impact of a stressor. An example of this would be special breathing techniques that reduce the pain of labour.
• Cognitive control is the ability to use thought processes or strategies to defy the impact of a stressor. Such strategies would be thinking about the event differently or focusing on a pleasant or neutral thought or sensation.

• Decisional control is the opportunity to choose between alternative procedures or courses of action. This would occur when the patient is allowed to make a decision between alternative treatments.

• Informational control involves the opportunity to get knowledge about the stressful event.

• Retrospective control involves reflecting upon what caused the stressful event. An example of this would be blaming somebody.

The most effective type of control is cognitive control (Cohen et al., 1986). Lundberg (1976), Using urine samples, commuters on crowded trains were more stressed than in empty trains, but those that had been on the train since the start, showed less stress, even though they had been exposed to the crowded condition longer. Being able to choose seat, control the situation, reduced the stress.

People who believe they have control over their successes and failures are described as possessing an internal locus of control. Other people believe that their lives are controlled by forces outside themselves, for example, by luck; they have an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

Self-efficacy is the belief that we can succeed at something we want to do (Bandura, 1977). People estimate their chances of success and failure on the basis of their prior experiences. A decision to attempt an activity depends on a belief that their behaviour would produce a favourable outcome and a belief that they are able to perform the behaviour properly. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy show less psychological and physiological strain in response to stressors (Bandura et al., 1982).

Experiencing stress over a long period of time can produce a feeling of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975). Kobasa (1979) states that people who can handle stress possess hardiness. There are three components: control - can events be controlled, commitment - sense of purpose, involvement and challenge - problems seen as an opportunity for personal growth. Kobasa’s (1979) study divided high stress executives into two groups - high illness and low illness; Kobasa found that the low illness group, were more hardy.
2.2.2 Biological aspects of Stress

Cannon (1929) describes the fight or flight response of the body after perceiving danger or stress. This response mobilises the organism to respond quickly to danger but the state of higher arousal can be harmful to health if it is prolonged. Selye (1956) observed in laboratory animals and in human patients the body's reaction to stress. He found that the fight or flight response was only the first in a series of reactions, which he called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). The GAS consists of three stages: alarm reaction, stage of resistance, and stage of exhaustion.

The alarm reaction is like the fight or flight response to an emergency. The body is mobilised. At the beginning of the arousal blood pressure drops below normal for a moment, but then quickly rises to above normal. This arousal is produced by the release of hormones by the endocrine system: the pituitary glands secrete ACTH (Adrenocorticotropic Hormone), which causes a heightened release of adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol by the adrenal glands into the bloodstream. The body cannot stay in this state for long without serious consequences. Some organisms in a continuous state of alarm have died within hours or days.

Stage of resistance occurs when the reaction continues and is not strong enough to cause death the physiological reaction enters the stage of resistance. The body tries to adapt to the stressor. Physiological arousal declines but remains higher than normal and the body replenishes the hormones released by the adrenal glands. The organism may show few outward signs of stress. However, the body may not be able to resist new stresses. The body becomes increasingly vulnerable to health problems. These health problems include ulcers, high blood pressure, asthma, and illnesses that result from impaired immune function.

Stage of exhaustion occurs with severe long-term or repeated stress; this will cause the organism to enter the third stage, the stage of exhaustion. The immune system and the body's energy reserves are weakened until resistance is very limited. If the stress continues, disease and physiological damage become increasingly likely and death may result.

A problem for GAS is that some stressors elicit a stronger emotional response than others do. The theory does not take account of psychosocial processes. A sudden increase in temperature, for example, would produce more emotion than a gradual increase. Another problem for GAS is that cognitive appraisal is not taken account of.

A study by Tennes and Kreye (1985), found that intelligent school-children
experienced more stress on the day of an exam than unintelligent schoolchildren. Cortisol levels were measured in urine samples taken on regular school days and on days when tests were given. Intelligence test scores were obtained from school records. The results suggest that brighter children are more concerned about academic achievement.

To summarise, the GAS incorrectly assumes that all stressors produce the same physiological reactions and fails to take account of psychosocial factors in stress. Even so the GAS appears basically to be a valid model of stress.

**2.2.3 Psychosocial aspects of stress**

Psychosocial aspects of stress include memory and attention, noise, fear, anger and helping behavior. A high level of stress impairs people’s memory and attention during cognitive activities such as when taking examinations (Cohen et al., 1986). Noise can be a stressor, for example when people live next to a busy railway or motorway. People cope by tuning out the noise. Cohen (1980) has proposed that children who tried to tune out chronic noise may develop generalised cognitive deficits because they have difficulty knowing which sounds to attend to and which to tune out. One study tested primary school children who lived in a block of flats that was built on bridges spanning a busy highway. The children in noisy flats had more difficulty discriminating between pairs of words (for example, house and mouse) (Cohen et al., 1973).

Cognitive processes can influence both the stress and the emotional experience (Schachter & Singer, 1962; Maslach, 1979); for example, one person coming across a poisonous snake might be frightened whereas another person, who studied poisonous snakes, would be excited. Fear is a common emotional reaction that can be classified into two categories such as phobias and anxiety. Phobias are intense and irrational fears that are associated with specific events and situations. An example of this would be claustrophobia, a fear of being enclosed in small rooms. Anxiety is a vague feeling of uneasiness or apprehension. People may not be aware of the situations that seem to arouse anxiety or to know how the doom will manifested itself. Patients awaiting surgery or the outcome of diagnostic tests generally experience high levels of anxiety. Anxiety may result from appraisals of low self-worth and the anticipation of a loss of self-esteem.

The things children fear tend to become less concrete and more abstract and social as they get older (Sarafino, 1986). A study of children’s fears of dental treatment found
that the most frightened children were those who had not experienced invasive procedures, such as having a tooth extracted during the prior few years (Murray et al., 1989). Children who see themselves as less able than their peers are likely to appraise their own resources as insufficient to meet the demands of stressors.

Harmon-Jones & Sigelman (2001), state that, another emotional reaction to stress is anger. This often occurs when the person perceives the situation as harmful or frustrating. Anger can produce aggressive behaviour. When stress is accompanied by anger, negative social behaviours tend to increase (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). Stress-produced anger increases aggressive behaviour, and these negative effects continue after the stressful event is over.

Stress also affects helping behavior (Cohen & Spacapan, 1978). Social support refers to the perceived comfort, caring, esteem, or help the person receives from other people or groups (Cobb, 1976). There are five basic types of social support:

- Emotional support refers to the expression of empathy, caring and concern toward the person.
- Esteem support occurs through people's expression of positive regard for the person, encouragement or agreements with the individual's ideas or feelings, and positive comparison of the person with others such as people who are less able or worse off. This kind of support serves to build the individuals feeling of self-worth, competence and of being valued. Esteem support is especially important during the appraisal of stress, when the individual is assessing whether the demands exceed their personal resources.
- Tangible or instrumental support involves direct assistance.
- Informational support includes giving advice, suggestions or feedback.
- Network support provides a feeling of membership in a group of people who share interests.

The type of support depends upon the stressful circumstances, for instance, emotional and informational support is particularly important for people who are seriously ill. Students who received more frequent esteem support tended to report less depression following stressful experiences. People are unlikely to receive support if they are unsociable, if they do no help others, and do not let others know that they need help (Sarason et al., 1983).
2.3 Causes for Adolescent Stress

The experience of stress at whatever age is acutely uncomfortable (Ursin & Olff, 1993); what is more important however is the capacity of stress to adversely affect individual states of health either through direct impact or through the mediation of health risk behaviours (Rice, 1999). The time course over which stress might be expected to influence the development of significant physical pathology is probably too great for any reliable association between stress and somatic illness to become evident in adolescence (Mandler, 1984). There is persuasive evidence however, that the experience of adolescent stress relates consistently to the occurrence of psychiatric symptomatology of clinical significance (West & Sweeting, 2003; Grant et al., 2004), including depression (Diaz et al., 2002; Deardorff et al., 2003; Van der Wal et al., 2003), suicidal ideation (Diaz et al., 2002) and actual risk of suicide (Johnson et al., 2002). In this regard, and in line with the broader base of evidence on adolescent stress (Byrne & Mazanov., 2002) girls seem to be more vulnerable in the face of adversity than boys (Brooks et al., 2002; Stevens et al., 2003).

However, adolescence is also a time when risks are laid down for chronic conditions which will only become manifest in later adulthood. The experience of adolescent stress has been systematically associated with a range of health compromising lifestyles and behaviours (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 1997; Larouche, 1998; Murphy et al., 2001) including the failure to control obesity (Mellin et al., 2002), physical inactivity (Allison et al., 1999), early and possibly heavy alcohol use (Allison et al., 1999; Udry et al., 2003) and the onset of cigarette smoking (Tyas & Pederson, 1998; Byrne & Mazanov, 2003). There can be no doubt therefore that the experience of adolescent stress constitutes an issue of central importance to the broader understanding of adolescent health.

2.3.1 The Gender Shift

Before adolescence, equal numbers of boys and girls are depressed (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). About 10 to 15 percent of all children report moderate to severe signs of depression. By age 13, a dramatic shift occurs, and more than twice as many girls as boys are depressed, a proportion that persists into adulthood (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). This two-to-one ratio exists regardless of racial or ethnic background and has been reported in other countries. What changes occur in early adolescence to cause this disparity? Although a number of explanations have been proposed, it is not likely that the gender difference is due to only one cause. Multiple processes are at
work, and research is currently being conducted into the interactive effects of biological, genetic, psychosocial, and family factors (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994).

Frey & Rothlisberger (1996) argue that parental relationships have been found to be more important for boys than girls. Some cultures are marked with less parent-adolescent conflict than others; in India, adolescents’ continue to have a closer, more subordinate relationship with parents, and many families could be described as authoritarian (Larson, 1999). Larson observed that adolescents do not go through a process of breaking away from their parents and that parents choose their marital partners.

Since hormone levels increase dramatically during adolescence, it seems obvious to question whether depression is caused by hormonal fluctuations. Although researchers report that hormones have an effect on the brain chemistry that controls emotions and moods, a specific biological mechanism explaining the role of hormones in depression has not been identified. Furthermore, the effects of hormone levels on depression have been found to be minimal compared to the influence of social factors (Brooks-Gunn & Warren, 1989).

Research (Piccinelli & Wilkinson, 2000) focused gender differences in depression. They suggest that the functioning of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) glands in females is more reactive to stress, than males, possibly contributing to an increased vulnerability to depression.

Puberty has different meanings for boys and girls, although both experience simultaneous changes in biological functioning and social demands Individual girls develop at different rates, and pubertal age is more accurate than chronological age in predicting depression. Girls who mature physically earlier than their peers are more likely to feel self-conscious and to experience depressed moods (Rierdan & Koff, 1997). For some girls, menstrual cycles are associated with behavioral and physical changes, and menstruation can be accompanied by feelings of tension, the perception of loss of control over their bodies, and irritability. Girls view body changes, such as increased fat layers, as negative. Boys, on the other hand, view body changes, such as increased muscular development, as positive.

Some studies suggest that the lower social status of females and the traditional upbringing of girls foster certain traits that may increase the vulnerability of adolescent girls to stress and depression. Sex roles take on new importance as adolescents' bodies
become more sex-differentiated (Obeidallah et al., 1996; Wichstrom, 1999). In early adolescence girls compare themselves with the standard female stereotypes; many become dissatisfied with their body-image, which in turn, leads to an increase in depressed mood, lowering of self-esteem and disappointment with their physical appearance. Emphasis on weight diverts girls from developing their own interests, talents and internal character to obsessing over their appearance. During adolescence, the self-esteem of many formerly self-confident and assertive girls gradually becomes eroded. Self-esteem, in girls, peaks at the age of nine, then, for some, it begins to plummet. In addition to low self-esteem, some adolescent girls develop certain characteristics - pessimistic thinking, a sense of having little control over life events, and proneness to excessive worrying - which place them at risk for depression. These attributes may exaggerate the effect of stressful life events or interfere with taking action to cope with them.

It has also been hypothesized that higher depression rates among girls occur when they start to interact with boys more frequently. Intelligence, assertiveness, and competence are seen as liabilities rather than assets by some adolescent girls. Fearing that competition with boys may interfere with their relationships, some girls are likely to minimize their capabilities. These attitudes are subtly encouraged by society and reinforced by the media.

Montgomery (2011), states that academic performance is just one of the many challenges and stressors faced by adolescents. The evolutionary and developmental process of stress and coping must be examined more closely. Adolescents seem to refine their self-regulatory coping strategies over time. Female and male adolescents experience high school differently with females perceiving interpersonal stressors more acutely than male adolescents. Adolescents who have experienced a troubled upbringing have a more difficult time coping with the stress of home and school life, and self-regulatory refinement is more problematic. In fact, these adolescents may tend to drop out of school compared with their peers. However, more research is necessary to examine the relationship between self-regulation and dropout. Further, the link between stress, depression and anxiety is salient and preventive programs for health and well being offer promising future research avenues.

### 2.3.2 Negative Life Events

There are several negative life events that occur in the life of an adolescent namely, depression, sexual abuse, suicidality, depression and the use of alcohol. Adolescent
boys and girls react in different ways to stressful life events, which are considered by most researchers to play a critical role in the development of depression (Ge X et al, 1994). The increase in depressed mood of adolescent girls, not boys, correlates with stressful life events. Childhood sexual abuse is an important early stressor, and the rates of sexual abuse in girls increase substantially in early adolescence with the greatest increase occurring between ages 10 and 14 (Weiss et al, 1999).

Some researchers attribute teenage suicide to the weakening of the family unit. They argue that economic and political institutions have penetrated it, reducing it to a consumer unit no longer able to function as a support system, and no longer able to supply family members with a sense of stability and rootedness (Suicide and Attempted Suicide, 1974). Awareness of the existing state of the world, now threatened by sophisticated methods of destruction, can cause depression which contributes to the adolescent's sense of frustration, helplessness, and hopelessness (Smith, 1979). Faced with these feelings and lacking coping mechanisms, adolescents can become overwhelmed and turn to escapist measures such as drugs, withdrawal, and ultimately suicide.

Contrary to popular belief, suicide is not an impulsive act but the result of a three-step process: a previous history of problems is compounded by problems associated with adolescence; finally, a precipitating event, often a death or the end of a meaningful relationship, triggers the suicide (McBrien, 1983). Long-term problems can include: losing a parent or close relative at a young age; coming from a family of divorce, or one in which there is much discord; being a victim of domestic violence or child abuse; or living with an alcoholic in the family. Hyperactivity or undiagnosed learning disabilities also pose serious long-term problems for adolescents. These problems can create further difficulties for the adolescent, causing social isolation and withdrawal, poor school performance and attendance, and repeated suicide attempts.

The precipitating event which triggers a suicide attempt is usually a family crisis, a significant personal loss, or an upset to self-esteem (such as failing a course, losing one's place on a sports team or being fired from a part-time job). The anniversary of a loss can also evoke a powerful desire to commit suicide (Frederick, 1976).

Teachers play an especially important part in prevention, because they spend so much time with their students. Along with holding parent-teacher meetings to discuss teenage suicide prevention, teachers can form referral networks with mental health professionals. Peers are crucial to suicide prevention. According to one survey, 93% of
the students reported that they would turn to a friend before a teacher, parent or spiritual guide in a time of crisis (Teens in crisis, 1983).

2.3.3 Relationship with Peers

Frey and Rothlisberger (1996) found that adolescents had twice as many relationships with peers than family. Piaget (1932) argued that parent-child relationships consist of unilateral control whereas peer relationships are more egalitarian. Children conform to parents’ rules and regulations because parents have authority and greater knowledge. Peers evolve standards of behaviour that are mutually acceptable.

Blos (1967) offered an explanation for the importance of the peer group. He suggested that peers provide a ‘way-station’ on the road to achieving separation and individuation because they help the adolescent to avoid feelings of loneliness without having to make any commitment. Steinberg & Silverberg (1986) suggest that the security of peer acceptance provides adolescents with the necessary confidence to break away from parental dependence. Erikson (1968) suggested that peers are important for healthy identity development because they allow adolescents to explore ideologies, test their ability to form intimate relationships with others and help them to relinquish their psychological dependence on parents. Brown & Lohr (1987) assessed self esteem in students in US high school and found that those who did not have a clique did not have as high self esteem as those in popular cliques.

Berndt (1979) conducted a classic study of peer conformity with American adolescents. He asked questions about the likelihood of conformity in particular situations. From early to mid-adolescence there is an increase in anti-social conformity but this then declines. Peer conformity probably declines in later adolescence because there is a growing focus on individual identities and individual romantic attachments, so interest in the peer group wanes. Arnett (1999) reviewed research on adolescence and concluded that some of the difficulties reported during adolescence might be related to living in an individualistic society.

2.3.4 Family Factors

In addition to genetic issues, family factors such as the quality of the parents' marriage, parenting style, role modeling and the emotional status of the parents are related to depression in girls. Research shows, that daughters whose parents have an egalitarian relationship, and daughters whose parents are supportive, attentive, receptive to emotions, rather than punishing and restricting, show lower levels of depression (Powers & Welsh, 1999). Research results also indicate that girls are more likely than
boys to react to negative events in the family (Hankin & Abramson, 1999). Adolescent girls, closely bound to their families, are more likely to be exposed to family stresses over a longer period of time. Girls learn about being female from modeling themselves on their mothers. In addition to the genetic factor, children of depressed mothers are vulnerable to emotional problems. In a 10-year follow-up study of the children of depressed mothers, the daughters, not the sons, were found to have low self-esteem (Miller et al., 1997). Female development throughout the lifespan, according to self-in-relation theorists, is based on the importance of attachment and relationships. Some experts think that females' tendency to place greater value than males do on interpersonal connection and relationships with other people renders them more vulnerable to losses and depression.

Although the extent of actual disruption in parent-adolescent relations is not as great as one might expect, given stereotypes about this period of life, there is little question that parent-child relations do change during adolescence. As adolescents become physically mature they often seek more independence and autonomy and may begin to question family rules and roles, leading to conflicts particularly around such issues as dress and appearance, chores, and dating. Despite these conflicts over day-to-day issues, parents and adolescents agree more than they disagree regarding core values linked to education, politics, and spirituality. Nonetheless, parents and adolescents do interact with each other less frequently than they did in middle childhood. Some researchers have argued that this distancing in parent-adolescent relations has great functional value for adolescents, in that it fosters their individuation from their parents, allows them to try more things on their own, and develops their own competencies and confidence in their abilities. But it is important to bear in mind that, in most families, this distancing takes place in the context of continuing close emotional relationships. And in many cultural groups, adolescents play an increasingly central role in family life and family maintenance.

Adaptive parenting strategy may be the best approach - where a parent responds to different situations with permissiveness, authoritativeness and authoritarianism as appropriate (Santrock, 2001). This is a two way process - parents are socialised by their adolescent children and parents benefit from their relationships with adolescent offspring.
2.3.5 School Transition

In most Western countries, and in India also, adolescents experience at least one major school transition (e.g., the transition into high school) and often two major school transitions (e.g., an additional transition into either middle or junior high school). Several scholars and policymakers have argued that these school transitions are linked to negative changes in the functioning of many adolescents, particularly in the realm of academic achievement. For example, a number of researchers have concluded that the junior high school transition contributes to declines in interest in school, intrinsic motivation, self-concepts/self-perceptions, and confidence in one's intellectual abilities. Drawing upon person-environment fit theory, Eccles et al. (2003) proposed that the negative motivational and behavioral changes associated with these school transitions stem from many junior and senior high schools not providing appropriate educational environments for youth in early and middle adolescence. According to person-environment theory, individuals' behavior, motivation, and mental health are influenced by the fit between the characteristics individuals bring to their social environments and the characteristics of these social environments. Individuals are not likely to do very well, or be very motivated, if they are in social environments that do not fit their psychological needs. If the social environments in the typical junior and senior high schools do not fit very well with the psychological needs of adolescents, then person-environment fit theory predicts a decline in the motivation, interest, performance, and behavior of adolescents as they move into this environment. Evidence from a variety of sources supports this hypothesis. These school transitions usually involve the following types of contextual changes: (1) a shift from a smaller school to a larger school; (2) a shift to a more bureaucratic social system; (3) a shift to a more controlling social system; (4) a shift to a more heterogeneous social system; (5) a shift to a social context with less personal contact with adults and less opportunity to be engaged in school activities and responsible school roles; (6) a shift to a more rigid, socially comparative grading system; and (7) a shift to a more lock-step curriculum tracking system. Along with these changes, evidence from more micro-classroom-based studies suggests that the teachers in junior and senior high school feel less able to teach all of their students the more challenging academic material and are more likely to use exclusionary and harsh discipline strategies that can effectively drive low achieving and problematic students away from school. Work in a variety of areas has
documented the impact on motivation of such changes in classroom and school environments.

3. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Introduction

Development takes place in many contexts. Schools are recognized to be one of the major social contexts of development. As a central context, schools offer enough duration as well as space to try and modify different behavioural strategies, affecting students and the adults who serve students through the schools.

The school system has been created with the intention of providing opportunities for youngsters in a planned manner so that they learn life-skills and make a meaningful contribution to society. This is the place where they are exposed to many extra-curricular and co-curricular activities that are an integral part of the school environment (Gadre, 2010).

School environment has been defined in numerous ways. Dave (1963) defined educational environment as the conditions, process and psychological stimuli which affect the educational achievement of the child. Haynes et al. (1994) define school climate as ‘the quality and consistency of interpersonal interactions with the school community that influence children’s cognitive, social and psychological development’. Moos (1979) defines school climate as the social atmosphere of a setting or learning environment in which students have different experiences, depending upon the protocols set up by the teachers and administrators.

The following definition emerged from a collaborative consensus during discussion among member of the National School Climate Council (NSCC, 2010) regarding a healthy school climate. ‘When a school climate is healthy, people feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe; they are engaged and respected; students, families, and educators work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision; educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction from learning; and everyone contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.’

All these definitions suggest that school climate or environment is multi dimensional in nature and it is a relatively stable phenomenon which is largely unaffected by changes in the student and teacher population (Gadre, 2010).
3.2 A Positive School Environment or Climate

A positive school environment or climate exists when all students feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted, and secure in an environment where they can interact with caring people they trust. A positive school climate affects everyone associated with the school – students, staff, parents, and the community. It is the belief system or culture that underlies the day-to-day operation of a school. Improved school climate is a goal to pursue. Educators need to constantly work toward improving their school climate, culture, and conditions so that student learning is improved.

The physical environment includes all of the factors that can affect students in a physical way (e.g., noise, light, air quality, visual, smell and taste, ease of movement and touch). The social/emotional environment includes all of the factors that can affect how the child interacts with others (e.g., respect for all, clear expectations, safe and caring atmosphere).

The learning environment includes all of the factors that can affect the learning in the classroom (e.g., method of presentation, involvement of students, materials, and resources).

Characteristics of schools, such as the physical structure of a school building and the interactions between students and teachers, are two diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. School climate has been researched for many years and continues to be examined and redefined as a result of its significant influences on educational outcomes. The elements that comprise a school’s climate are extensive and complex. As a result, researchers have identified the following factors that influence school climate:

- The number and quality of interactions between adults and students (Kuperminc et al., 2001).
- Students’ and teachers’ perception of their school environment, or the school’s personality (Johnson et al., 1996).
- Environmental factors (such as the physical buildings and classrooms, and materials used for instruction).
- Academic performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1993).
- Feelings of safeness and school size (Freiberg, 1998).
- Feelings of trust and respect for students and teachers (Manning & Saddlemire, 1996).
Cohen (2007) states that virtually all researchers suggest that there are four areas that need attention, when we speak about school climate: safety (which includes physical; social-emotional safety), relationships (which includes respect for diversity; school and community collaboration; morale), teaching and learning (quality of instruction; social, emotional and ethical skills and education; professional development; leadership) and the environment (which includes environmental adequacy). He gives sub dimensions and indicators for each of them.

Tableman & Herron (2004) have mentioned four aspects of school climate:

- A physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to Learning: A school building contains a limited number of students. Students are, and feel, safe and comfortable everywhere on school property. Classrooms are orderly. Classrooms and grounds are clean and well-maintained. Noise levels are low. Areas for instruction and activities are appropriate for those uses. Staff members have sufficient text-books and supplies.

- A Social Environment that promotes communication and interaction: Teachers are collegial. Student groups are diverse. Parents and teachers are partners in the educational process. Participation of teachers. Teacher’s are open to students’ suggestions; students have opportunities to participate in decision-making. Staff and students are trained to prevent and resolve conflicts.

- An affective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem: Interaction of teachers and staff with all students is caring, responsive, supportive and respectful. Students trust teachers and staff. Morale is high among teachers and staff. Staff and students are friendly. The school is open to diversity and welcoming to all cultures. Teachers, staff, and students are respected and valued. Teachers, staff and students feel that they are contributing to the success of the school. There is a sense of community. The school is respected and valued by teachers, staff and students and families. Parents perceive the school as warm, inviting and helpful.

- An academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfillment: There is an emphasis on academics, and all types of intelligence and competence are respected and supported. Teaching methods respect the different ways children learn. Expectations are high for all students. All are encouraged to succeed. Progress is monitored regularly. Results of assessments are promptly
communicated to students and parents. Results of assessments are used to evaluate and redesign teaching procedure and content. Achievements and performance are rewarded and praised. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable.

Based on their review of the literature, Cohen and Geier (2010) conclude that virtually all researchers suggest there are four essential areas of focus: Safety (e.g. rules and norms; physical safety; social-emotional safety); Relationships (e.g. respect for diversity; school connectedness/engagement; social support – adults; social support – students; leadership); Teaching and Learning (e.g. social, emotional, ethical and civic learning; support for learning; professional relationships); and the Institutional Environment (e.g. physical surrounding). Hopson and Lee (2011) state that although researchers present competing ideas about the most important dimensions of school climate, most agree that climate is determined by perceptions of safety, relationships within the school, goals related to teaching and learning, and the learning environment, which encompasses school structure and feelings of connectedness to school.

Clearly, school climate is multi-dimensional and influences many individuals, including students, parents, school personnel, and the community. Additionally, school climate can significantly impact educational environments, as Freiberg (1998) notes, school climate can be a positive influence on the health of the learning environment, or a significant barrier to the learning environment. Although this broad term has been researched for many years, a sole definition has yet to be formulated. A positive school and classroom environment can have a major effect on the achievement and behaviour of students. It takes a concerted effort to create a school or classroom that is conducive to learning. Creating a positive school climate requires the working together of community, school teachers, parents, and students. It also requires a major shift in thinking. And when the adolescents face additional stress in their family, school and social environment, what is the combined effect of all this psychological distress? Does it influence their working ability? Does it affect their performance at school? Bell (1995), Dubois & Felner (1992) and Ganesan (1995) have found that stress made significant contribution in poor school performance of adolescents. One may wonder if mental stress can adversely affect the promising adolescents, having above average intelligence, resulting in their poor academic performance.
4. HOME ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction
Apart from school, the home also occupies the first, and the most significant place, for the development of children. It not only provide the hereditary transmission of basic potentials for development, but also provides environmental conditions, personal relationships and cultural patterns, favourable or unfavourable, positive and negative, as reflected from its structure, socio-economic and cultural status and the pattern of mutual relationship and emotional state among its members (Kundu, 1977). Children rely mostly on interactions with their parents to learn the social and cognitive skills required for successful adaptation to school. Through harmonious interaction with their parents, children learn the emotion recognition and self regulatory skills necessary for peer acceptance, social success and academic performance in school (Cassidy et al., 1992; Denham et al., 1990; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; Parke et al., 1994). Therefore, parents become the most potent force in shaping the overall personality of children.

4.2 A Positive Home Environment
The home environment has been conceptualized as ‘quality of human interactions’, from the point of view of the child. It includes those aspects which foster growth and development, such as family trust and confidence, sharing of ideas, parents support, parental approval, parenting, parental encouragement, care, affection and approval and support of siblings. Parents are children's first and most effective motivators for learning. The key to keeping young children’s natural curiosity alive is for parents to take an interest in everything their child does and to talk about it together (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Evidence (Gutman & Feinstein, 2007; Sylva et al., 2004; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003) suggests that parental involvement in early learning has a greater impact on children’s well-being and achievement than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or school environment. Supporting parents to help them provide a positive home learning environment is therefore a vital part of improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Qualities of mother-child interaction predict a variety of academic & social outcomes for children, especially in the early to mid elementary years (Denham, 1993; Hess et al., 1984; Ladd et al., 1999; Parke et al., 1994; Pianta & Harbers, 1996; Pianta et al., 1991; Welsh et al, 2001). Parent especially mother child interactions appears to be a
determinant of children’s initial success in adapting to the scholastic tasks as well as their long term social and academic success in school (Pianta & Harbers, 1996; Pianta et al., 1991). Through interactions with their parents and other caregivers, children learn social skills that generalize from the home to the school context. Parents serve many roles in the socialization of their children. One model of parent child socialization, reported by Parke et al. (1994), describes the parent as taking on three roles: the child’s interactive partner, a direct instructor, and a provider of opportunities to the child. Prior research shows that family experiences have important implications for children’s school adjustment (Barth, 1988; Barth & Parke, 1993). In their study of mother-child relationships and children’s subsequent adjustment to school, Pianta et al. (1991) reported that mother child factors such as parental support, quality of parental instruction, child self-esteem and child affection were associated with child behavior problems and competence in the classroom.

Parenting behaviour influences children’s development from birth (Gutman & Feinstein, 2007; Feinstein, 2003); there is increasing awareness that the first three years provide a window of opportunity for the development of vision, hearing, language, emotions and motor skills (Roberts, 2009); fathers have an important role to play (Flouri & Buchanan, 2001) the influence of the home is ‘enduring, pervasive and direct’ (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003); what parents do is more important than who they are (Sylva et al., 2004); it is possible to engage vulnerable parents and improve the home learning environment (Evangelou et al., 2008). In terms of fathers, there was a 200 per cent increase in the time that they actively engage with children between 1974 and 2000 (Hunt, 2009).

Previous research (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Feinstein et al., 2004; Feinstein & Symons, 1999) shows that parental interest in education to improve the learning that goes on at home will have a major impact on child outcomes, including school readiness and attainment and achievement up to the age of at least 16. Parents’ own level of qualifications is an important predictor of attainment in reading and mathematics in year five (Sammons et al., 2007).

The evidence from the influential Desforges Review and subsequent research (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Harris & Goodall, 2007) into parental engagement shows:
• Children’s optimal early home learning experiences depend on whether parents are actively interested, engaged and talking on a daily basis to each child about the child’s interests.

• The quality and content of fathers’ involvement matter more for children’s outcomes than the quantity of time fathers spend with their children (Goldman, 2005).

• It is possible to engage vulnerable parents and improve the home learning environment (Evangelou et al., 2008).

• Valuable though it is, parents’ involvement in nursery or school life, governing bodies, PTAs, or fundraising activities is not the same thing as engaging with a child’s learning. The two sets of behaviour may or may not be present in the same families (Reynolds, 2006).

A recent survey (TNS-BMRB for DfE, 2010) showed that most parents (93%) were confident when caring for their children. Confidence was highest for full-time working parents, parents of children aged 16-17 and amongst parents who left the education system at a later age (aged 22 or over). In contrast, levels of confidence were lowest amongst parents who did not speak English as a first language (80%). Yet when it came to involvement in their children’s learning, there was a wider variation between parents.

Desforges et al., (2003) suggest that the most involved parents tended to:

• Be higher earners from a higher social class;
• Be mothers with higher level educational qualifications;
• Be married or cohabiting couples who live in two-parent households;
• Have lower material deprivation;
• Be mothers with good physical and mental health;
• Have younger children;
• Have children who take a very active role in communicating with parents about schools.

In addition, Peters et al. (2007) characterised the 'involved' parent as more likely to be a woman, have a child with a Special Educational Needs statement and be from a black or black British background, when compared to men, parents who left education at a younger age and parents from white or Asian backgrounds.
A NCERT report (2006) gave a major thrust to the idea of all-round development of the child’s personality and intellect. It elaborated on the need for physical, intellectual and spiritual development of the child in equal measure. However, parents want their child to shine in academics, no matter at what cost. Teachers see children’s examination performance as a measure of their own worth. Schools rate each other on the basis of their student’s performance at board examinations. In other words, academic achievement seems to be the ultimate goal in every one’s mind. In attempts to pursue this goal, all concerned seem to deny the existence of the role of the affective in student’s performance. They appear to assume that intellectual performance is divorced from any feeling or perceptions the student might have.

A substantial body of evidence confirms the power of the home environment—where children spend a significant portion of their waking hours—in affecting children’s educational outcomes. In fact, family practices in the home that stimulate and support learning have a more significant impact on student achievement than such other factors as family structure (e.g. single parent families) or socio-economic status (Henderson & Berla, 1997). An education-friendly home environment affects not only children’s achievement levels but their interest in learning and future educational plans as well (Kellaghan et al., 1993). Researchers point to a number of supportive home processes that range from strong family values and routines to active involvement by parents in schoolwork. The most frequently cited processes include stable family routines, parental support and encouragement about schoolwork, discussion of ideas and events, high parental aspirations and standards for children’s achievement, quiet places to study, emphasis on family literacy, monitoring of after-school activities, tapping of community resources as needed, communicating or modeling of positive behaviors, and knowledge of school experiences (Kellaghan et. al., 1993; Henderson & Berla, 1997; and U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

There is ample evidence from the field confirming the value of each of the above family practices. Clark’s (1993) study of low-income, African-American families and their high school children finds that parents of high achievers monitored their children's home-study behaviors more rigorously and had higher expectations for their children's education. High achievers also had greater access in the home to such supplemental learning aids as dictionaries (Clark, 1993).

A study of 1,400 Southeast Asia refugee families revealed that family values and home environments that support learning facilitate academic success (Caplan et. al., 1992).
Several researchers observe that the availability of reading material in the home is directly associated with children’s achievement in reading comprehension (Becher, 1984; Hannon, 1995; Lee & Croninger, 1994). The U.S. Department of Education (1987), reports that academic achievement drops sharply for children who watch more than ten hours of television each week. In another study, Clark (1990) found that high achievers from all backgrounds spend roughly twenty hours per week engaged in constructive after-school learning activities. Several studies link frequent, open discussions between parents and their older children to academic success (Barton & Coley, 1992; U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Children living in a poor environment may fail to develop their potential and skills to an optimum extent, this may have a negative effect on their performance in school and achievements in social life; children growing up in a conducive environment may show superior cognitive abilities and academic competence. It is therefore necessary to study the academic learning environment of children in these two different contexts of home and school and trace the causal factor for enhancing the academic accomplishment of children. Children living in rural or urban areas are exposed to different environments. Generally, children from low socio-economic backgrounds attend government schools while children from higher socio-economic backgrounds attend private schools or public schools. These two types of schools have another major difference – difference in medium of instruction.

5. CHANGES IN THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Indian adolescents face a highly competitive examination system that determines their college entrance and access to desirable career choices. The National Advisory Committee Report (Ministry of Human Resource, 1993), states that the stressful effects of this system are a common topic of public discussion in India, and over the last two decades several national educational committees (Government of India’s Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee, 1977; National Council of Educational Research and Training Working Group, 1984; and National Policy on Education (NPE) Review Committees, 1990) made several recommendations to reduce the academic burden on students, but the problem, instead of being mitigated, becomes more acute when a new curriculum is introduced. This has happened in the case of a new curriculum introduced in the wake of implementation of NPE (1986).

Moving to bring some joy back to childhood and high school, Kapil Sibal's first act, as Human Resource Development Minister (The Times of India, 2009), was to remove
the pressure of exams on school-children. As a cornerstone of a larger revamp plan, Sibal proposed making the class X board exam optional in CBSE-affiliated schools from 2010. The radical overhaul of the education system also envisaged replacing marks with grades, establishing an overarching higher education authority under a one-nation, one-board principle and bringing a tough law to prevent, prohibit and punish educational malpractices. Academic reforms, including a semester system and credit transfers has already begun. In another development, the CBSE has introduced a continuous comprehensive evaluation (CCE) system for class IX students from October 2010. The CCE covers all aspects of development and will in effect rid the system of the stressful, annual examination tradition and produce learners with greater skills.

6. SUMMARY

The chapter deals with theories of adolescence, stress, school and home environments. The various theories of adolescence, stress, the school and home environments, indicate that adolescence can be a stressful time for children, for parents and adults who work with adolescents. When a student’s inability to cope goes unnoticed, when stress is not recognized and a student is punished or misunderstood, as a result of the acting-out of negative stress-related behaviours, a vicious cycle is set in motion that has serious consequences for physical, intellectual and emotional development. The present study envisages assessing the impact of the school and home environments on adolescents and to correlate their levels of stress.