CHAPTER VI
DISCUSSION

In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the relationship between family environment, perfectionism, coping behaviour, and career decision making among university students.

Earlier findings have suggested that families vary widely in the quality of their interpersonal relationships; in their expectations for performance and the emphasis on social integration; and in their level of structure (Moos & Moos, 1994). The family has an extremely important environmental influence on the development of different aspects of personality. Specially, theorists have focused on the influence of parents on the personality characteristics of children (Moos & Moos, 1986; 1994).

An environment of non-approval or inconsistent approval breeds neurotic perfectionists, as can conditional positive approval, whereas an environment of positive modelling combined with not linking self-worth to all performances can lead to more normal perfectionism (Hamachek, 1978). Thus, parents who practice an authoritarian style combined with conditional love may contribute to perfectionism in their children (Castro & Rice, 2003).

However, at different age levels, individuals would be subject to different pressures and exposure to imitative models influencing levels of perfectionism (Bandura & Cervone, 1986).

Family member’s personal characteristics, coping skills, and well-being can affect and be affected by the quality of family relationships (Moos & Moos, 1994). Supportive, structured families facilitate the development and use of effective coping skills (Stern & Zevon, 1990). Also, parents pass on their coping skills to their children.

It has been further pointed out that early childhood experiences play an indirect role in shaping later career behaviour (Roe, 1957; Brown et al., 1997). Besides, the self-defeating thoughts and behaviours aimed at reaching excessively high unrealistic goals (Counselling centre, 1996), limits an individual’s capacity to
learn effective career problem solving and decision making skills (Sampson et al., 1996).

For the present purpose, in the first phase, means and standard deviations were calculated for the male and female as well as for students in arts, science, and professional stream from the university. Secondly, correlational analysis was computed to see the type of relationship between family environment, perfectionism, coping behaviour, and career decision making for both genders as well as for all the three streams taken separately. After this, factor analysis was employed to see the pattern of relationship between all the above mentioned variables. Factor analysis may be applied to a group of variables in which none has been specified as dependent variable or independent variable. It helps to explain test correlates to the extent that they measure common traits by observing and analysing the pattern of correlations. The operation of one or more underlying traits or other source of common variance is inferred. Finally, t-test was used to study the significant gender differences in the total samples. Since, the present research is a pioneering attempt to see the above mentioned relationships, not much research evidence is available supporting these findings. Hence, effort has been made to theoretically examine and explain these relationships.

6.1 FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND PERFECTIONISM

All aspects of family environment can have different effects on the development of children. The overall development of a child is influenced by the kind of relationship one shares with different family members. In fact, various aspects of family environment are associated with personality traits (Habke & Flynn, 2003). Perfectionism is considered as an aspect of a personality trait (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

Million (1996) defined perfectionism as “a complex pattern of deeply embedded psychological characteristic that is largely non conscious and not easily altered, expressing themselves automatically in almost every facet of functioning” (as cited by Seipel & Apigian, 2005). Hence, in order to understand perfectionism, it is necessary to examine its dimensions separately (Frost et al., 1990). Perfectionist
personality style is multidimensional with personal aspects (self-oriented perfectionism) and social aspects (socially prescribed perfectionism) components (Flett et al., 1995; Hewitt & Flett, 1991b).

According to Neumeister (2004), self-oriented perfectionists attribute their perfectionism to social learning due to their parents modelling of perfectionist behaviours. On the contrary, socially prescribed perfectionists believe that their perfectionism develops due to the pressure they experience from their perfectionist parents. It may be said that high expectations, greater pressure for achievement, criticism, and unsatisfying behaviour by parents' and family members on the accomplishment of a child may breed/reflect perfectionistic behaviour in children (Bousman, 2007).

Perfectionism tends to run in families and probably has a genetic component (Castro & Rice, 2003). Furthermore, children learn perfectionism by observing and imitating the perfectionist behaviours of their parents. When children believe their parents are perfect, they may idolize and model their parents' evaluative standards (Flett, Hewitt, Oliver, & MacDonald, 2002). Or perhaps the child exposed to a harsh environment (such as abuse, psychological mistreatment, or love withdrawal) may respond to the environment with perfectionist behaviours. The child's belief about his perfection (something which a child can conceivably control), may prevent hurt (from emotional or physical abuse etc.) (see Enns et al., 2002; Flett et al., 2002). Enns et al. (2002) further suggested that perfectionism of parents influence a child well into adulthood.

### 6.1.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND PERFECTIONISM FOR MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis I (a) of the present study states that “the different factors of family environment will be significantly and positively related to all the aspects of perfectionism for male and female university students.”

Based on the correlational as well as factor analysis results, with regard to male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students, following discussion has been put forth.
COHESION

Cohesion for both male and female students is related positively to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism. It appears that both the genders reported to have experienced high degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another, at the same time they are also reporting high levels of self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism. Hamachek (1978) argued that perfectionism can be normal and the striving associated with it may lead to positive adjustment. Recently, the concept of positive perfectionism (adaptive or healthy perfectionism) has been highly referred to. It is concerned with perfectionist behaviour in which the individual has a willingness to approach stimuli, and strives to achieve high standards (Ram, 2005). Seen as being more adaptive, positive perfectionism encourages positive and active striving toward goals and the individual is able to regulate their perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002b). Thus, families help and support can be regarded as a significant variable for positive perfectionism of both kinds – self-oriented as well as socially prescribed. It is only natural for individuals to actively strive not only towards their own goals, but also try to meet the standards set by significant others who are standing beside them with total help and support when needed.

However, results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on cohesion, self-oriented positive perfectionism, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with achievement orientation, social coping, and problem-focused coping on factor III for only males (table 5.4) and not for females (table 5.6). Thus, indicating a positive relationship between cohesion and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism for only male students. This finding stands for both male and female students.

Further for females, cohesion has also been found to be negatively related to self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism. In their case, higher the cohesion lesser is the self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Negative perfectionism involves avoiding aversive outcomes (Slade & Owens, 1998). Perhaps, when family members are highly supportive and helping, then females would avoid setting unattainable standards so as to meet the expectation of these significant others as well as their own goals without fear of failure and
social criticism. Thus, female students in more cohesive families appear to benefit both in terms of developing positive perfectionism with decrease in negative perfectionism, self-oriented and socially prescribed.

(ii) CONFLICT

Conflict is positively related to self-oriented negative perfectionism for male students but, negatively related to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for female students. This implies that males not only perceive high conflict in their family environments they are also reporting higher level of self-oriented negative perfectionism (tendency to set unrealistic standards for oneself, to be self-critical, to overly focus on their flaws, and to avoid failure). Negative perfectionism is driven by a desire to avoid disapproval of others and a fear of failure (Slade & Owens, 1998). Self-oriented negative perfectionism is regarded as maladaptive. In this, perfectionists pursue extreme standards across a variety of life domains (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). They seem to be more self-critical and less satisfied with their accomplishments (Grzegorek et al., 2004). Since in a family environment where high levels of conflict exist, there is a possibility of greater amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, criticism and conflict among the family members (Moos & Moos, 1994). When students receive mixed signals from family and friends, they may use cognitions and behaviours to avoid negative reinforces as imperfection, disapproval by others, mediocrity and failure.

On the contrary, females of our sample reported perception of significant lesser conflict in their families as compared to their male counterparts (see table 5.1), and a greater socially prescribed positive perfectionism. Socially prescribed perfectionism involves the perceived need to attain perfectionist standards and expectations prescribed by significant others. The lesser the conflict (the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict) perceived among family members, the need to obtain these standards become higher for females. Perhaps under this situation, female students are able to evaluate even the unrealistic standards set by significant others less stringently. Positive perfectionism refers to cognitions and behaviours that are directed towards the achievement of certain high level goals to obtain positive consequences. Thus, positive perfectionism is driven by positive reinforcement and a desire for success (Slade & Owens, 1998) especially when there
is less conflict in the family. Flett et al. (1990) have clearly stated that socially prescribed perfectionism promotes increased levels of extrinsic motivation and decreased levels of intrinsic motivation, with a desire to succeed, to avoid punishment and disapproval of others, and to please others. However, in the case of present sample, the need to please others and to avoid punishment or disapproval of significant others does not arise as females are experiencing less conflict in their families. Thus, not only a clear gender difference is perceived but, less conflict in the family appears to play an important role in easing the pressure from socially-prescribed perfectionism. Hence, less conflict in the family environment can be seen as one of the factors leading to socially prescribed positive perfectionism. The results of factor analysis do not support this relationship for entire males or females. However, much future research is required for firm conclusions.

(iii) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related negatively to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism for males alone, while no such relationship is observed for females. It appears that more the male students experience higher assertiveness, more self-sufficiency, and more freedom to make their own decisions in their family environments, less is their report of self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Negative perfectionism is driven by the desire to avoid disapproval of others and a fear of failure (Slade & Owens, 1998). Often, because of the assumptions about the expectations that the others hold, as well as setting excessively high personal standards for oneself, the individual strives for standards that are unattainable. They are motivated by the fear of failure and often social criticism. This form of perfectionism is self-defeating as fear of failure and worrying still occurs even when standards have been met (Blackburn, 2003, as cited by Ram, 2005). However, with high independence in the family, perhaps the males of the present study are reporting lesser degree of above mentioned characteristics. Perhaps because of their independence, they do not have any pressure due to fear of failure or social criticism. Hence, much further research is recommended for firm conclusions.

(iv) ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism for both males and females. According to
Maslow, striving for perfection through self-actualization is really an “indication of the absence of neurosis” (Peters, 2005:3), while Silverman (2005) believes the root of excellence is perfectionism and that this is what urges the individual toward achieving higher goals (in Peters, 2005; also cited by Ram, 2005). Thus in view of the present finding, for both the genders, the role of highly achievement oriented family environments cannot be underestimated with regard to positive perfectionism as perceived by them.

However, the positive relationship of achievement orientation with self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism is also perceived only for females. It highlights that along with higher positive perfectionism, the higher orientation towards achievement, excellence, and competitiveness by their families is also reflected through their higher avoidance of failure, imperfection, disapproval etc. (aspects of negative perfectionism).

Further, the results of factor analysis also support the above relationship where, significant and positive loadings have been perceived on achievement orientation and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with cohesion, social coping, and problem-focused coping on factor III for male students (table 5.4). While between achievement orientation and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed both positive and negative perfectionism on factor III for females (table 5.6). Thus, implying that a positive relationship is evident for males between achievement orientation and positive perfectionism (self-oriented as well as socially prescribed, whereas, for female students a positive relationship is seen between achievement orientation and all the four aspects of perfectionism.

(v) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is positively related to self-oriented positive perfectionism for both male and female students, whereas only for females, it is also related positively to socially prescribed positive perfectionism. No such relationship has been observed for males.

It implies that perception of intellectual-cultural orientation (promoting interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities) in the families is perhaps reflected in higher self-oriented positive perfectionism for both the genders, and in socially prescribed positive perfectionism only for females. In the present study, females are higher on intellectual-cultural orientation as compared to their male
counterparts (see table 5.1). This highlights that females from families with higher intellectual-cultural orientation are reporting higher levels of both self-oriented positive perfectionism and socially prescribed positive perfectionism. Perhaps, since family provides them with higher intellectual-cultural orientation, their desire to meet their own standards (self-oriented) as well as those imposed by significant others (socially prescribed) holds priority for them. While the, perfectionism of both above mentioned types is viewed as positive striving factor, reflecting positive aspect of perfectionism (Frost et al., 1993). However, this concern for significant others is only evident in females and not in males of our sample. Therefore, pointing towards a major personality difference generally seen in a society. Hence for firm conclusions, much future research is needed.

(vi) ACTIVE-RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION

Active-recreational orientation is related positively to self-oriented positive perfectionism for females alone. The active-recreational orientation taps the extent of participation in social and recreational activities (going out, receiving guests for dinner, watching movies with family members etc.). This aspect is perceived high in the families by only females of our sample who are also reporting high self-oriented positive perfectionism. In our society, mostly such activities fall in the domain of females who in most situations have to conduct themselves according to the desires of significant others. How they conduct themselves will reflect their resourcefulness, perceived control, self-assurance, assertiveness, and altruistic social attitudes. Self-oriented perfectionism has been associated with all these qualities (Blankstein & Dunkley, 2002; Burns & Fedewa, 2005). Recently, Tung & Dhillon (2006) reported that in our society the socialization is different for males and females. Where, the males are encouraged to be more assertive and autonomous while females are rewarded for passivity and dependence.

It has also been observed that for females, socialization in India is generally geared towards competence in household and social tasks (Saraswati & Datta, 1985). The responses of the females are more directed towards pleasing and meeting the expectations of parents (significant others) (Sud & Sharma, 1990). A most striking correlation has been seen for females having self-oriented perfectionism and ratings of parental behaviour by Flett et al. (1995). Females with high levels of self-oriented
perfectionism reported both the parents to act in warm and authoritative manner. A
gender difference which is generally perceived in our society is that while males may
avoid active-recreational participation in the families, females mostly comply with
their parents’ desire. Although speculative, present finding may indicate that females
are particularly prone to raise their own goals and aspirations when they perceive the
presence of active-recreational orientation in their family environment. Thus, the
present relationship is in the expected direction but supportive research evidence is
required.

(vii) MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

Moral-religious emphasis is related positively to self-oriented and socially
prescribed positive perfectionism for both the genders indicating that those
belonging to families with higher emphasis on ethical and religious issues and values
perhaps, are also experiencing higher positive perfectionism (self-oriented and
socially prescribed). Perhaps in such families with high moral-religious emphasis,
people seem to not only stringently evaluate and sensor their own behaviour, but also
desire to attain standards and expectations prescribed by significant others as their
self-esteem and self-efficacy rests on both these positive aspects of perfectionism.
Hence, in view of above the relationship seems quite relevant for our sample. However, for firm conclusions, further research is recommended.

(viii) ORGANIZATION

Organization is related positively to self-oriented and socially prescribed
positive perfectionism for both the genders. It may be interpreted that perhaps both
males and females belonging to families higher on organization and structure in
planning activities and responsibilities, experience higher positive perfectionism of
both self-oriented and socially prescribed types. Since, families are involved in
providing organization and structure in planning activities and responsibilities
perhaps, it is not unusual for individuals to direct their cognitions and behaviours
toward the achievement of such goals to obtain positive consequences. In return for
this kind of support from their family members, it is also not unusual for both the
genders to strive positively towards their own standards as well as towards the
standards set by significant others. However, females of our sample are also
experiencing lesser self-oriented negative perfectionism in such an environment.
Thus for females, not only the positive striving factor is functional, they are also low
in self-oriented negative perfectionism. This shows that their perfectionist tendencies are not at all maladaptive (Neumeister, 2004). They are not trying to outperform others but, they are simply trying to meet the standards they have planned along with the significant others in the family.

(ix) CONTROL

Control is related positively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism among both male and female students. This indicates that both the genders from highly controlled family environments reported high level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism. In order to avoid or escape from the negative consequences of not being able to follow the rules set by the family; their cognitions and behaviours are directed towards the achievement of those standards to avoid punishment. According to Tangney (2002), when the standards/rules are imposed by others then individuals constantly feel that they have little choice in the task in which perfection is required. Perhaps, an element of pressure combined with helplessness and hopelessness (Benson, 2003) leads to higher level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

The results of factor analysis also support this relationship where significant and positive loadings have been perceived on control and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed perfectionism in factor V for males (Table 5.4) and not for females (Table 5.6). Thus, it implies that for only males, a positive relationship is evident between control and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed. However, much future research is recommended for firm conclusions.

In the view of the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis, it may be concluded that the hypothesis I (a) is partially accepted with regard to both male and female university students.

6.1.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND PERFECTIONISM FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARTS, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis I (b) of the personal study states that “the different factors of family environment will be significantly and positively related to all the aspects of perfectionism for arts, science, and professional stream university students.”
Based on the results of correlational and factor analysis with regard to arts (table 5.7 & 5.8), science (table 5.9 & 5.10), and professional (table 5.11 & 5.12) streams following interpretation has been put forth.

(i) COHESION

Cohesion is positively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism for arts, science, and professional students. It appears that students of all the three streams are experiencing high degree of commitment, help, and support from family members. They are also reporting high levels of positive perfectionism, both self-oriented and socially prescribed. Positive perfectionism is seen as being more adaptive, as it encourages positive and active striving toward goals and the individual is able to regulate their perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Roedell (1984) argued that in a positive form, perfectionism can provide the driving energy which leads to great achievement. The meticulous attention to details and the commitment which pushes the student to keep working till the goal is achieved, all results from positive perfectionism. In the present sample, the high degree of help and support from the family has been found to be highly related to both self-oriented and socially prescribed positive perfectionism for students of all the three streams. The university students in general, regardless of their streams, appear to strive actively not only towards their own goals but also towards the standards set by significant others who are always beside them with total help and support whenever required.

However for arts stream alone, cohesion has also been found to be negatively related to self-oriented negative perfectionism. The self-oriented perfectionism is considered as a debilitating construct rather than an adaptive one (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). It reflects the pursuit for exceedingly high standards in conjunction with the harsh self-critical appraisal (Flett & Hewitt, 1991). With regard to arts students it appears that when family support is high, not only individuals actively strive towards their own goals as well as prescribed by family members but, the negative aspect of self-oriented perfectionism also becomes less for them. Perhaps, this is the reason why perfectionism can drive people to accomplishments and provide the motivation to persevere in the face of obstacles. The role of family cohesion cannot be underestimated for these students.
However, results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on cohesion, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with organization and problem-focused coping. While, negative loadings along with avoidance coping and decision making confusion in factor II for arts students (table 5.8) ; on cohesion and socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with achievement orientation, organization, moral-religious emphasis, problem-focused coping, and social coping whereas, negative loadings along with conflict and decision making confusion in factor II for science students (table 5.10). Further, factor analysis reveals that factor V shows significant and positive loading on cohesion along with organization and independence while, negative loadings on self-oriented negative perfectionism along with conflict for professional students (table 5.12) showing that cohesion and self-oriented negative perfectionism are negatively related to each other. Thus, lack of supportive evidences highlight the need for much future research.

(ii) EXPRESSIVENESS

Expressiveness in family environment is related negatively with self-oriented negative perfectionism for arts students. It appears that the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly, is negatively related to the extent to which arts students are self-critical and less satisfied with their accomplishments (Grzegorek et al., 2004). That is, more is the opportunity for expressiveness; less negatively the arts students perceive their performance even though it is directed towards achievement of certain high level goals. Perhaps, expressiveness among the family members can be relevant factor for the generation of lower self-oriented negative perfectionism.

However, for science students, expressiveness is found to be positively related to socially prescribed positive perfectionism. In Indian society, being a science student itself is a matter of high self-esteem where, parental expectations are quite high from such children. Probably through their expressiveness, family members not only add to the self-esteem of their children but, children also report higher use of socially prescribed positive perfectionism. Socially prescribed perfectionism involves the perceived need to attain standards and expectations prescribed by significant others. In the case of science students of our study, socially prescribed perfectionism is positive hence, adaptive. Rice and Ashley (2007), Rice
and Dellwo (2002), and Rice and Slaney (2002) have reported in their research that adaptive perfectionists experienced high expectations from others (with less parental criticism) but did not report acute worry and stress over meeting those expectations. Further, it appears that instead of pressurising them, socially prescribed positive perfectionism might have increased the level of extrinsic motivation for the science students of our sample with a desire to succeed especially, when significant others have expressed their expectations from them openly.

Thus from this finding, a clear stream difference has emerged where arts students from highly expressive families are reporting less self-oriented negative perfectionism (i.e., less self-criticism, self-deprecation, concern over mistakes, self-doubt, etc.) and science students are reporting high socially prescribed positive perfectionism (i.e., more driving energy, meticulous attention to details, commitment, etc.). In a way, both are the positive aspects of perfectionism.

(iii) CONFLICT

Conflict is related negatively to both self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism only for science students and not for students from other streams. This implies that higher the conflict perceived by them in their family environments, less is the level of positive perfectionism whether self-oriented or socially prescribed. Hence, high conflict in families can exert negative influence by leading to maladaptive behaviour. Thus, instead of driving them to accomplishment and providing the motivation to persevere, conflict might act as a hindrance to meet their goals. Hence in conflicting environments, even the positive aspects of perfectionism may become damaging and maladaptive.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion along with significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, achievement orientation, cohesion, organization, moral-religious emphasis, problem-focused coping, and social coping in factor IV for science students (table 5.10). This implies that a negative relationship exists between conflict and socially prescribed positive perfectionism for science students. Further the results of factor analysis also reveal significant and negative perfectionism (along with significant and positive loadings on cohesion, independence, and organization in factor V for professional students (table 5.12), showing a positive relationship between conflict and self-oriented negative
perfectionism. However, the relationship between conflict and self-oriented negative perfectionism is not evident in correlational analysis for professional students. Hence for firm conclusions, much further research is recommended.

(iv) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related negatively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism only for professional students. It appears that the professional students belong to families where independence (encouraged to be assertive, self-sufficient, and to make their own decisions) is highly encouraged and they are reporting lower levels of socially prescribed negative perfectionism. The focus of socially prescribed perfectionist is pre-dominantly on gaining approval or avoiding the disapproval of others. It is the perceived recognition of others which socially prescribed perfectionists perceive in order to validate the sense of self (Hall, 2006). With high independence in the family, the need to seek approval from others and please others is comparatively less; hence a negative relationship as perceived above is not unusual.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on self-oriented negative perfectionism and conflict along with positive loadings on cohesion, organization and independence in factor V for professional students (table 5.12). This reveals a negative relationship between independence and self-oriented negative perfectionism which is not seen in correlational analysis perhaps, self-oriented negative perfectionism can be significant factor related to socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Probably, the perception of socially prescribed negative perfectionism is determined by self-oriented negative perfectionism. Campbell and De Paula (2002) suggested that which type of perfectionism the individual is going to use depends on the particular set of perfectionistic chooses to examine. However, much future research is required for firm conclusions.

(v) ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to self-oriented and socially prescribed, positive as well as negative perfectionism for arts and professional students, while for science students, the positive relationship has emerged only for self-oriented and socially prescribed positive perfectionism.

The suggestion that setting high and demanding goals for oneself can either be a positive or negative force in one's life has facilitated the recognition of the
terms positive and negative perfectionism (Campbell & Di Paula, 2002; Flett & Hewitt, 2002b, Peters, 2005; Slaney et al., 2002; Terry-Short et al., 1995). Positive perfectionism refers to the willingness that the individual has to approach stimuli and strives to achieve high standards resulting in rewarding outcomes which enhances self-esteem and self-satisfaction. The individual sets high goals and personal standards, and strives for the rewards associated with achievement, while retaining the ability to be satisfied with one’s performance (Accordino, Accordino, & Slaney, 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Davis, 1997; Hamachek, 1978; Rheaume, Freeston, Ladouceur, Bouchard, Gallant, Talbot, & Vallieres, 2000) and also to satisfy the standards set by others (socially prescribed positive perfectionism). This sense of pleasure in accomplishment generates positive affect which reflects the extent to which person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert.

In contrast, negative perfectionism occurs when individuals strive for unrealistically high standards and is overly critical and evaluative of their behaviours (Frost et al., 1990). Further, due to high need for external validation, they are attacked by the fear of failure and are unable to feel satisfied even when the tiniest flaw occurs. This leads to uncertainty and anxiety about their capabilities in them. Negative perfectionism is regarded as maladaptive which involves avoiding aversive outcomes. Often because of the assumptions about the expectations that the others hold the individual strives for the standards that are unattainable. They are often also motivated by social criticism (Blackburn, 2003). Negative perfectionism is largely unregulated and is associated with adverse and punishing outcomes (Blackburn, 2003; Flett & Hewitt, 2002b; Lynd-Stevenson & Hearne, 1999).

Thus in the present study, family environment geared towards high achievement orientation is showing high level of positive relationship with both positive as well as negative (self-oriented and socially prescribed) perfectionism. It appears that when the family environment in which the work is casted into competitive framework and where the individuals have to decide how important it is for them to do their best and get ahead, both positive and negative aspects of perfectionism can play their roles. Neumeister (2004) has also suggested that the achievement motives in perfectionists determine whether the perfectionist tendencies are maladaptive or not. It is suggested that performance goals based on the desire to outperform others may have a detrimental outcome on motivation, and may lead to
maladaptive behaviours (e.g., avoiding challenging tasks; Dai, Moon, & Feldhusen, 1998 in Neumeister, 2004). While, perfectionist behaviour rooted in a need for achievement motives and masterly goals for learning the material may not be unhealthy, as these motives stimulate further motivation to achieve (in Ram, 2005). It can be suggested that which type of perfectionism the individual is going to use will depend on the particular set of perfectionistic self-beliefs that an individual chooses to examine (Campbell & Di Paula, 2002). Further according to Frost, high standards might be adaptive in one situation but not another, or for certain people but not others (cited in Benson, 2003).

However for students of science stream, no relationship was perceived between achievement orientation and negative aspects of perfectionism. Perhaps, precision and exactitude required by science does not allow them to fall into the trap of maladaptive cognitions and behaviours. The meticulous attention to details, considered necessary for scientific investigation is one of the positive aspects of perfectionism (Roedell, 1984).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on achievement orientation and socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with moral-religious emphasis, cohesion, organization, problem-focused coping and social support and negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict in factor II for science students (table 5.10). The factor analysis results also support the above relationship for professional students (table 5.12) where, significant and positive loadings have been perceived on achievement orientation and positive and negative perfectionism both, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed along with moral-religious emphasis and problem-focused coping in factor II. However, for arts students (table 5.8) no such relationship was revealed. Hence in view of the lack of research evidences, no firm conclusions can be drawn on this part of research.

(vi) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is positively related to self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negatively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism for professional students. However for science students, intellectual-cultural orientation is only related positively to self-oriented positive perfectionism. It appears that where families highly promote interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities, the professional students from such
families are reporting high positive perfectionism (both self-oriented and socially prescribed) and low socially prescribed negative perfectionism whereas, science students are reporting only high self-oriented positive perfectionism.

Neumeister (2004) pointed out that self-oriented perfectionists had an underlying motive to achieve, rather than to avoid failure, which influenced them to set mastery goals, and adopt healthy achievement motivation strategies such as seeking out challenges, time management, and asking for help. This holds valid for both science and professional students of our present sample who belong to the families with higher intellectual-cultural orientation.

The focus of socially prescribed perfectionist is predominantly on gaining approval or avoiding disapproval of others. It is the perceived recognition of others which socially prescribed perfectionist seeks in order to validate the sense of self (Hall, 2006). Such perfectionists also fear disapproval by others and believe that if they let others see their flaws, they will not be accepted. This highlights that professional students from families with higher intellectual-cultural orientation are not only reporting higher levels of self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism; they are also reporting lower level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Since family provides with higher intellectual-cultural orientation, their desire to meet their own standards as well as standards imposed by significant others hold priority for them. Thus, both these positive striving factors are higher in them. Kottman et al. (1999) suggested that maladaptive perfectionists may be more inclined to use social comparison as a measure of achievement, and be motivated by a fear of failure, which may negatively affect academic importance (in Slaney et al., 2002). Further, Blankstein and Dunkley (2002) found an association between socially prescribed perfectionism and maladaptive motivation. They also observed that socially prescribed perfectionists are largely motivated by fear of failure rather than intrinsic motivation to achieve, which can leave an influenced on their goals and behaviour with regard to their academic achievement. However, professional students of the present study belonging to families of high intellectual-cultural orientation are reporting lower level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Hence, they are low on negative aspect of perfectionism. Thus, role of high level of intellectual-cultural orientation is highly visible in this group/stream and not in other groups. For firm conclusions, much future research is recommended.
(vii) ACTIVE-RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION

Active-recreational orientation is related positively to self-oriented positive perfectionism for arts as well as science students, and is negatively related to socially prescribed negative perfectionism for only professional students. It appears that in the families where there is high participation in social and recreational activities, both arts and science students appear to report high degree of resourcefulness, perceived control, self-assurance, assertiveness, and altruistic social attitudes (characteristics associated with self-oriented perfectionism) (see Blankstein & Dunkley, 2002; Burns & Fedewa, 2005). However in the present study high active-recreational orientation in the family is related to low level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism for professional students. The view of closeness in the family environments where family participates together in social and recreational activities, the negative aspect of socially prescribed perfectionism cannot be higher. Hence, this finding is also in the expected direction.

(viii) MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

Moral-religious emphasis is related positively to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for all the three streams, to self-oriented positive perfectionism for only professional students, and to socially prescribed negative perfectionism for only arts students. This indicates that all the students from different streams who belong to families with high emphasis on ethical and religious issues and values are also experiencing high positive socially prescribed perfectionism. Thus, it appears that all these students desire to attain standards and expectations prescribed by significant others. Further along with the above, professional students are also orienting their behaviour in positive direction, with the commitment which is required for greater accomplishments.

On the contrary, while the arts students desire to meet the expectations and motives of significant others since they are high on socially prescribed negative perfectionism perhaps, they also fear high disapproval by others and believe that if they let others see their flaws they will not be accepted. Perhaps, they also engage in overly critical self-evaluation. It has been reported by Ram (2005) that perfectionists often experience all-or-none thinking, where they believe they are a failure if all their goals are not completed without any mistakes. They measure their self-worth in terms of productivity and accomplishment (Blankstein, Flett, Hewitt, & Eng, 1993;
Broday, 1988; Brophy, 2005; Ellis, 2002; Frost & Marten, 1990; Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn, 2002). The fear of not being able to live up to the expectations of others, can cause an overwhelming feeling which allows the individual to avoid less than perfect performance (Frost & Marten, 1990; Frost et al., 1990; Peters, 2005).

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on moral-religious emphasis and socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with achievement orientation, cohesion, organization, problem-focused coping, and social coping and negative loadings on conflict and decision-making confusion for science students in factor II (table 5.10). On the other hand, the factor analysis also reveals significant and positive loadings on moral-religious emphasis and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive and negative perfectionism along with achievement orientation and problem-focused coping for professional students in factor II (table 5.12). However, no such relationship appeared for arts students (table 5.8). It implies that a positive relationship exists between moral-religious emphasis and socially prescribed positive perfectionism for science and professional students while a positive relationship is also evident between moral-religious emphasis and negative perfectionism (self-oriented and socially prescribed). Hence, much further research is recommended for firm conclusions.

(ix) ORGANIZATION

Organization is positively related to self-oriented positive perfectionism for students of all the three streams, and is positively related to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for arts and science students only. However, for professional students, it is also related negatively to self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

It implies that all the students (regardless of the streams) belonging to families higher on organization and structure in planning activities and responsibilities, experience higher self-oriented positive perfectionism and only for arts and science students experienced high socially prescribed positive perfectionism. Thus, in view of involvement of families in organizing and planning activities, it is not unusual for individuals to direct their cognitions and behaviours toward the achievement of such goals. Perhaps in return from this kind of support from family members, students from all the streams wish to strive positively towards their own standards so that positive consequences can be attained. However, arts and science
students are also motivated to strive positively towards the standards set by significant others.

Further with regard to professional students, high organization in the family is also related to less self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Thus for them, not only positive striving factor is functional, they are also low on negative striving factors (both self-oriented and socially prescribed). This highlights that only among the professional students, the perfectionist tendencies are not at all maladaptive (Neumeister, 2004). Therefore, the families where activities and responsibilities are highly structured and planned provide a very positive environment for professional students. However, no relationship has been seen between organization and negative aspects of perfectionism for arts and science students.

Further, the results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on organization and self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with cohesion and problem-focused coping, and, negative loadings on avoidance coping and decision making confusion for arts students (table 5.8) in factor II. Hence implying a positive relationship between organization and positive perfection (self-oriented and socially prescribed for arts students). Moreover for science students (table 5.10), factor analysis reveals significant and positive loadings on organization and socially prescribed positive perfectionism, along with cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, problem-focused coping, and decision making confusion in factor II. It implying a positive relationship between organization and socially prescribed positive perfectionism for science students. Finally for professional students (table 5.12), the results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on organization along with cohesion and independence and , negative loadings on self-oriented negative perfectionism and conflict in factor V implying that a negative relationship is evident between organization and self-oriented negative perfectionism.

(x) CONTROL

Control is related positively to socially prescribed negative perfectionism for students of all the three streams. This indicates that students from all these three streams, who perceived high control in their family environments, also reported high level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Control in a family indicates the
extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run a family life. In such an environment, when there is high emphasis on following the family rules, and when the students are unable to follow these rules, they highly utilize the negative cognitions and behaviours (e.g., doubt about actions, social anxiety, less positive affectivity etc.) in order to avoid punishment and fear of disapproval. This fear of disapproval by others might lead to the feelings of shame, guilt, and embarrassment (Tangney, 2002). Further, Tangney (2002) also observed that when the standards/rules are imposed by others then, individuals constantly believe that they have little choice in the task in which perfectionism is required. The element of pressure combined with helplessness and hopelessness may lead to higher level of socially prescribed negative perfectionism.

From the findings based on both correlational and factor analysis it can be deduced that the hypothesis I (b) is partially accepted with regard to arts, science, and professional university students.

6.2 FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND COPING BEHAVIOUR

Coping is essentially a dynamic phenomenon which is defined as a set of cognitive and affective actions which arise in response to a particular concern. Coping responses represent attempts made by the individuals to restore the equilibrium or remove the turbulence for the individual. This may be done by solving the problem (that is removing the stimulus) or accommodating to the concern without bringing about the solution (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a). Coping styles are generally considered to be environmentally driven, primarily by family influences (Busjahn et al., 1999). Environmental influences include qualities of the family environment such as level of cohesion, conflict, organization, expressiveness, or adaptability; social support from family or friends; the adaptation of other family members; and beliefs and coping strategies of parents (as cited by Wolchik & Sandler, 1997). The child first begins to acquire his/her coping strategies, both adaptive and maladaptive, from direct observation of family members (Skinner & Wellborn, 1994). A family also influences an individual by teaching and modelling strategies of coping with stress. In addition, Patterson and Mc Cubbin (1987) maintain that coping practices of family members, as well as parental instructions, help adolescent acquire coping behaviour. Empirical data also support the notion that
the nature of the family environment (e.g., level of cohesion, degree of conflict, and organization) is strongly associated with adolescent coping style (Rutter, 1983; Shulman et al., 1987; Siddique & D'Arcy, 1984).

Lazarus and Folkman (1985) have identified problem-focused and emotion-focused coping as two general types of coping. Additional coping strategies include social coping (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Sandler et al., 1996), and avoidance coping (Endler & Parker, 1990; Sandler et al., 1996).

Coping strategies have been linked to family environment to the extent that the family provides the context in which the individual first experiences various coping strategies. Furthermore, the individual can then begin to test coping strategies with family members. Finally, the individuals can return to family for particular types of coping such as advice seeking and social support. It follows, that one’s chosen coping strategies are likely to be influenced by the conflict or cohesion that characterizes his or her family environment (Compas, 1987; de Anda et al., 2000; Lohman & Jarvis, 2000; Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Skinner & Wellborn, 1994; Stern & Zevon, 1990). High cohesion and low conflict in the family predict problem-focused coping (Lohman & Jarvis, 2000).

Thus, family functioning (i.e., how well groups of people live with and depend on each other) lets a person learn how to effectively cope with problems and conflicts that occur and also to learn to be responsible to his/her family and society (Carlson, 1995).

### 6.2.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND COPING BEHAVIOUR FOR MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis II (a) states that “the different factors of family environment will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and social coping while, negatively related to avoidance coping for male and female university students.”

Based on the correlational as well as factor analysis, results obtained for male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students, following discussion has been put forth.
Cohesion is related positively to problem-focused coping for male as well as female students. It appears that higher degree of commitment, help, and support the family members provide for one another is associated with the higher use of problem-focused coping for both the genders. Problem-focused coping is aimed at problem solving or doing something constructive to alter the source of the stress. It involves distinct activities such as planning, taking direct action, sometimes even forcing oneself to wait before acting, acceptance etc. (Carver et al., 1989). Perhaps, when both the genders experience high level of help and support in their family environments, they also use more positive and adaptive coping strategies to deal with the stressful situation either by changing the source of the stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) through direct action or by planning and actively reframing the stress situation positively.

Further for only males (not females), cohesion is also related negatively to avoidance coping. It indicates that male students from high cohesive families reported greater use of problem-focused coping and lesser use of avoidance coping. Avoidance coping involves reactions or responses which have the effect of distracting or diverting individuals attention from stressful situation (Endler & Parker, 1990) (e.g., substance use, denial, behaviour disengagement etc.). Murphy (2002) reported that college students’ active coping strategies were related to high family cohesion. Also, college students in their late adolescence are strongly influenced by family and their peer environments and their choice of active rather than avoidant coping. Thus, in the present study it appears that more cohesion in the families of males is characteristic of the use of more adaptive coping (problem-focused coping) and less maladaptive coping (avoidance coping). It could be interpreted that the individuals’ efforts to cope with stress/situation by choosing from various coping strategies is influenced by the way family as a whole manages difficulty and success (cohesion).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on cohesion and problem-focused coping along with organisation, independence, moral-religious emphasis and negative loading on conflict and control in factor II. In factor III also, positive loadings have been seen on cohesion and problem focused coping along with social coping, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive
perfectionism and achievement orientation for only male students (table 5.4). Thus, indicating a positive relationship between cohesion and problem-focused as well as social coping only for males and not for females (table 5.6).

(ii) CONFLICT

Conflict is negatively related to problem-focused coping for both the genders. It implies that greater the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, and conflict among family members in a family environment, lesser is the attempt to regulate the stressful situation through active coping, direct problem-solving, and planning by both male and female students (Carver et al., 1989, Eisenberg et al., 1992; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Sandler et al., 1994). Thus, rather than adaptive coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Matheson et al., 2007) maladaptive coping has also been observed in highly conflictual families (Anshel, 2000; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Klein et al., 2004; Walker et al., 2005; Zuckerman & Gagne, 2003 as cited by Blasko, 2007).

Further in the present study, males from more conflictual families not only reported lesser use of problem-focused coping but, also reported more use of emotion-focused coping as well as avoidance coping. Sharma (2006) observed that male students generally use less problem-focused strategies (specifically, active coping and planning). Lazarus & Folkman (1984) have suggested that those events that constitute stress deemed by the individual to be somewhat controllable, such as family or work related stresses, generally lead the individual to employ problem-focused coping strategies. Conversely, individuals generally use emotion-focused coping strategies to manage uncontrollable stressors. Even avoidance coping (uncontrollable stressors) may help as, it involves to either not think about the stressors or to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991) (which might also result from conflict in the family).

The problem-focused strategy clearly sounds like a better choice. However, in some situations as perceived by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), emotion-focused coping can be more effective. Especially perhaps, when the stress is unavoidable, managing the emotions that accompany the perception of stress (e.g., conflict in families may be the best option. Sometimes inhibition and avoidance may also be effective coping strategies (Eisenberg et al., 1992; Kliewer, 1991; Roth & Cohen, 1986). Emotion-focused responses involve venting of emotions, self-distraction, turning to religion, and being humorous (Carver, 1997). Monga (2006) also observed
that males were higher on venting and humour. On the other hand, avoidance coping responses involve self-blame, substance use, behaviour disengagement, and denial (Carver, 1997). Monga (2006) as well as Sharma (2006) also observed that males were higher on denial, self-blame, and substance use. Further higher family conflict was associated with adolescent boys' reliance on aggression to resolve conflict (Rubenstein & Feldman, 1993).

However, negative relationship between conflict and problem-focused coping as well as social coping was seen for female students of the present study. Female students of our sample are also reporting lesser conflict in the family as compared to their male counterparts (table 5.1). Thus in view of lesser conflicts, more use of problem-focused coping and social coping is not surprising. It appears that in less conflictual families they feel free to utilize problem-solving strategies (such as planning, positive reframing etc.) to alter actively whatever little stress they are experiencing. In fact source of stress will be much less in families with less conflict.

Social coping aid individuals to mobilize their psychological resources, master strain, share tasks and obtain necessary supplies such as information and skills (Caplan, 1974), or sympathy and moral support (Carver et al., 1989). Apart from an individuals' psychological coping resources, support from interpersonal networks, such as family and friends, is an important coping resource (Folkman et al., 1979; Pearlin & Schooler, 1987). In addition, Patterson and Mc Cubbin (1987) maintain that the coping practices of family members as well as parental instructions, help adolescents acquire coping behaviour (see Hamid, Yue, & Leung, 2003). Thus, it appears that perhaps female students who perceive lesser conflict in their family environments are perhaps also experiencing lesser and are able to mobilize their social coping resources of the type mentioned above freely. Hence, while the lower conflict in the family may enhance the use of both problem-focused coping and social coping, but higher conflicting environments may hinder the use of both and may become maladaptive. No such relationship was seen for males and whatever relationship was seen for males with regard to emotion-focused coping was not seen for females. Hence, a clear gender difference is perceived.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on conflict and control along with positive loadings on problem-focused coping,
cohesion, organisation, moral-religious emphasis and independence in factor II for male students (table 5.4), showing that a negative relationship exists between conflict and problem-focused coping. However for females (table 5.6) no such relationship appeared. However for firm conclusions, much future research is recommended.

(iii) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related positively to problem-focused coping for only male students and not for female students. It indicates that males who are reporting high independence (the extent to which family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions) in their families are also reporting higher use of problem-focused coping. Dusek and Danko (1994) in their study found adolescent boys' (but not girls) perceptions of their parents as warm and supportive were related to practical coping (e.g., problem-focused). Further, Eisenberg et al. (1991) also found that boys whose parents encourage them to engage in direct problem-solving when anxious or sad seemed to manage their vicariously induced distress in a relatively optimal manner. Thus, male students who are encouraged by their family members to be independent, assertive, and also free in making decisions are likely to engage in such coping behaviours aimed at problem-solving or doing something to alter the source of stress. However, no other relationship was seen for females.

The results of factor analysis reveal a significant and positive loadings on independence and problem-focused coping along with cohesion, organisation, moral-religious emphasis while, negative loadings on conflict and control in factor II. Also in factor VI, positive loadings are evident on independence, emotion-focused coping, problem-focused coping, and avoidance coping for only male students (table 5.4) and not for female students (table 5.6) in both the factors it is indicative of a positive relationship between independence and problem-focused, emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping for only males.

(iv) ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to problem-focused coping for both the genders. However for only females (not males), it is also related positively to emotion-focused coping, social coping as well as avoidance coping. It could be implied that females who are perceiving higher focus on achievement orientation in their families (i.e., the extent to which activities, such as school and work, are casted
into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework by families) are also reporting higher use of all types of coping behaviours (problem-focused, emotion-focused, social, and avoidance coping). Brannon and Feist (2007) proposed that one way to both feel better and be healthier is to develop a variety of coping strategies to help one to deal with inevitable stresses of life, so that a person can use any coping strategy required by the situation in order to avoid or minimise stress. While, it is generally accepted that coping is a process that varies from one situation to another (Folkman & Lazarus, 1998), there is also evidence of consistency and stability in coping styles over time and across different stressful situations (Costa et al., 1996; Hewitt & Flett, 1996).

In extremely high-stress as well as in uncontrollable stressful situations, avoidance may be adaptive in lowering the level of negative arousal, perhaps allowing the person time to mobilize for more active problem solving or positive cognitive reappraisal (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Suls & Fletcher, 1985). Also, social support has been found to predict career aspirations (Flores & O’Brien, 2002), as cited by Orozco, 2007. Current research on adolescent coping strategies has suggested that traditional two factor theories do not clearly describe strategies typically employed by adolescents, for the same behaviour may be classified as avoidance in one situation while, active and problem-focused in another. Furthermore, coping strategies can all be applied in various degrees depending on the context and type of stressor confronting the adolescent (Carver et al., 1989 as cited by Murphy, 2002). Family environment influences adolescent coping ability via its effect on self-esteem and a sense of mastery and in avoidance coping environment, where person’s self-esteem and sense of mastery is challenged, individual has to put effective personal efforts to overcome stressful situations and use active strategies to cope with stress (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Carver et al., 1989; Compas, Banez, Malcarne, & Worsham, 1991). Perhaps when the family members (of females students) stressed more upon achievement-oriented and competitive framework, female students try using different coping strategies in order to free themselves from the distress it would otherwise cause. It may be the reason why, perhaps the pressure to do well (caused by their family environments) lead females of our sample to use problem-focused coping (e.g., taking direct action, planning etc.), and when they did not perceive control over situation/stress they seem
to be using emotion-focused coping (e.g., venting their emotions, turning to religion etc.), as well as avoidance coping (e.g., self-blame, behaviour disengagement etc.), and when this also seemed not working they also seek emotional (e.g., sympathy) as well as instrumental (e.g., advice, help, information etc.) social support (i.e., social coping).

However, male students of our sample from high achievement-oriented families are reporting high use of problem-focused coping but, less use of avoidance coping. Coping comprises those cognitive and behavioural efforts made by an individual, to reduce the stress created by either external or internal demands which, according to the individual's perceptions, exceed his or her resources for dealing with the demands (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When employing a problem-focused coping strategy, the individual attempts to do something to improve the stressful situation or to reduce the influence of the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, avoidance coping strategies involve cognitive or behavioural efforts. Where either the individuals do not think about the stressor or they tend to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991). Furthermore, male adolescent more often report fear of academic failure and other items that assess social expectations than do their female peers (Gullone & King, 1993, Merckelbach et al., 2000), whereas female adolescents more often report fear of criticism and other social evaluative concerns (Ollendick, 1983; Taylor, 1998). Thus, individuals with more family resources are more likely to apply approach coping and less likely to use avoidance coping (Holahan & Moos, 1987a).

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on achievement orientation, problem-focused coping and social coping along with cohesion, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism in factor III for only male students (table 5.4) and not for female students (table 5.6). It means that for males alone, a positive relationship is evident between achievement orientation and problem-focused as well as social coping. However, since the females appear to use problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance and social coping, their variance was distributed among these coping strategies. Hence, no clear results were seen in factor analysis.
(v) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is related negatively to avoidance coping only for male students and no such relationship is seen for females. It indicates that male from families having high degree of interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities are reporting lesser use of avoidance coping strategies such as self-blame, substance use, denial, etc. As life becomes more complicated, many university students who experience numerous psychological, physiological, and social difficulties, develop several unhealthy lifestyle choices like, smoking, alcohol, eating too much that are often used for coping or as an avoidance to struggle with life stresses (Walker & Fraizer, 1993 as cited by Sari, 2003). Researchers have consistently demonstrated that parental rearing and family environment can either facilitate or hinder the development of autonomy and psychological health as well as, coping strategies in adolescents (Muris et al., 2000 in Murphy, 2002). In the present study where family members are encouraged to participate in intellectual and cultural activities by their families, male students are actively facing the problem by using lesser avoidance coping. However, much future research is needed for firm conclusions.

(vi) MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

Moral-religious emphasis is related positively to problem-focused coping for both the genders. However for only females (and not males), it is also related to emotion-focused, avoidance, and social coping. It implies that female students from family environments where higher degree of emphasis is given on ethical and religious issues and values are reporting high use of all kinds of coping (problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance, and social coping). Coping strategies have been linked to family environment to extent that the family provides the context in the individual first experiences various coping strategies (Lohman & Jarvis, 2002 in Murphy, 2002). Recent research has suggested that male and female adolescents use different types of coping strategies to manage their stressors (Byrne, 2000 in Murphy, 2002). Coping responses represent attempts made by the individual to restore the equilibrium or remove the turbulence for the individual. This may be done by solving the problem (i.e., removing the stimulus) or accommodating to the concern without bringing about a solution (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a as cited by Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). In our society emphasis is given to moral as well as
religious values. They are considered as vehicles for positive reinterpretation and growth. Generally, it is expected from females to hold moral and religious values. However, in the face of stress induced by not being able to uphold moral, ethical, and religious standards, they might turn towards using any or all types of coping resources required by the demands of situation (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Suls & Fletcher, 1985; Flores & O’Brien, 2002 as cited by Orozco, 2007; Carver et al., 1989 as in Murphy, 2002).

However, male students who perceived their family environments high on moral-religious emphasis are reporting only the high use of problem-focused coping (i.e., positive reframing, planning, acceptance etc.). In general, findings suggest that females appear to favour social support, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping strategies relative to males (Ptacek et al., 1992; Stone & Neale, 1984). In addition, male youth have been found to employ more problem-solving and personal coping efforts than do their female peers (Band & Weisz, 1988; Byrne, 2000; Carver et al., 1989). Further, Sari (2003) observed no significant difference between problem solving skills of male and female university students (see also Taylan, 1990). This holds for both male and female students of our study.

The results of the factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on moral-religious emphasis and problem-focused coping along with cohesion, organisation and independence while, negative loadings on conflict and control in factor II for only male students (table 5.4) and no such relationship appeared for females (table 5.6). Thus, a positive relationship between moral-religious emphasis and problem focused coping exists for males. Since the females appear to use problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance and social coping, their variance was distributed among these coping strategies. Hence, no clear results were seen in factor analysis. However for firm conclusions, further future research is recommended.

(vii) ORGANIZATION

Organization is related positively to problem-focused coping for male as well as female students. However only for females, it is also related positively to social coping. On the other hand, it is negatively related to avoidance coping for only males and not females.
It appears that females from families where organization is highly stressed are also reporting high use of problem-focused as well as social coping. Coping styles are generally considered to be environmentally driven, primary by family influences (Busjahn et al., 1999). Within a family, parents may foster constructive coping by directly instructing children on how to appraise stressful events, suggesting various courses of action to deal with problems and reinforcing appraisals and coping behaviour. Moreover, parents model coping behaviours and shape the family environment within which coping is learned (Hoffman & Levy-Shiff, 1994; Kliwer et al., 1994). Supportive and structured families facilitate the development and use of effective coping skills (Stern & Zevon, 1990). Children with adequate social support may cope better with stress (Wolchik & Sandler, 1997). Supportive relationship with peers (Cauce et al., 1982) and one’s family (Holahan & Moos, 1987) appear to foster effective coping (see Compas, 1987). Individuals raised in healthy family will have better problem-solving capabilities and abilities to trust and give support when needed to others (Bray, 1995). Shields (2004) found that emotional support exerted a buffering effect for women but not for men. However in the present study, females who perceived their families as more structured, orderly, and organized, are more oriented towards taking a direct action to solve a problem when something constructive can be done (planning, positive reframing etc.), and they also turn to others for help (seeking instrumental social support) and comfort (seeking emotional social support) when necessary. Perhaps, their need for social approval moves them toward both problem-focused as well as social coping.

On the contrary, male students who perceive their families high on organization are also reporting greater use of problem-focused coping and lesser use of avoidance coping. When employing problem-focused coping, the emphasis is on the achievement of problem resolution through purposeful efforts or cognitive restructuring the problem or altering the situation (Endler & Parker, 1990). Conversely, avoidance coping involves reactions or responses that distract or divert individuals attention from stressful situation (also Endler & Parker, 1990). Wills et al. (1996) found that parental support was related to increased adaptive coping, decreased non adaptive coping, and decreased substance use over time (i.e., avoidance coping). Further, a growing body of studies indicates that family/parental support is inversely related to later behaviour problems as well as drug and alcohol
use (e.g., Du Bois et al., 1992; Slavin & Rainer, 1990; Windle, 1992). Thus, it is likely that parents and other socialisers play a relatively direct role in shaping children’s preferred coping responses (Miller et al., 1994).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on organisation and problem-focused coping along with cohesion, independence, moral-religious emphasis, and negative loadings along with conflict and control in factor II for male students (Table 5.4) and not female students (Table 5.6). This shows a positive relationship between organisation and problem-focused coping for only males.

(viii) CONTROL

Control is related positively to emotion-focused coping for only female students (not males). It appears that greater is the control (i.e., extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life) perceived by females in their families, greater is the use of emotion-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping strategy involves anything a person does to feel less stressed. This strategy does not change the reality of the situation. It is used simply to avoid painful or difficult feelings or to help the person feel better. It includes expressing emotions to a trusted/an empathetic friend, going to movies, going to shopping, transcendental meditation etc. (in Mishara, 2008).

Emotion-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that the stressor is something that must be endured (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). It tries to manage the distressed emotions (as might be due to highly controlled family environments) rather than dealing with the stressor per se (Stanton et al., 1994). Perhaps in the present study for females, rigid rules and control in their families might have been responsible for the greater use of emotion-focused coping responses such as turning to religion, venting of their suppressed emotions, self-distraction etc. All these tactics may not be intrinsically maladaptive, but may become dysfunctional if it is relied on for long periods (Carver et al., 1989). However, these emotion-focused coping strategies might serve as a tactics of active coping with a stressor when a person perceives the stressor as uncontrollable as well as unavoidable.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on control and conflict along with positive loadings on problem-focused coping,
cohesion, organisation, independence, and moral-religious emphasis in factor II for only male students (*table 5.4*), implying a negative relationship between control and problem-focused coping. However, no such relationship is evident for female students (*table 5.6*).

Thus, from the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis it is clear that while the hypothesis II (a) is partially accepted for both males and females university students.

### 6.2.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND COPING BEHAVIOUR FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARTS, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis II (b) states that “the different factors of family environment will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused, emotion-focused, and social coping, and negatively related to avoidance coping for arts, science, and professional stream university students.”

Based on the results of correlational analysis as well as factor analysis with regard to the students of arts (*table 5.7 & 5.8*), science (*table 5.9 & 5.10*), and professional (*table 5.11 & 5.12*) streams, following discussion has been put forth.

#### (i) COHESION

Cohesion is related negatively to avoidance coping for arts, science, and professional students. It appears that students of all the three streams are experiencing high degree of help and support from their family members and they are also reporting lesser use of avoidance coping. In today’s society, parents have become very conscious about the education of their children. Therefore, regardless of their streams, cohesion in the family is perceived by all the students. Avoidant strategies involve cognitive or behavioural efforts to either not think about the stressor or to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991). The findings of Lohman and Jarvis (2000) indicated that congruent knowledge about stressors and coping strategies among family dyads found to be a positive predictor of adaptive coping, cohesion in the family environment, and overall adolescent psychological health. Specifically, congruence between parents’ and adolescents’ reports predicted less avoidance strategies when stressors are uncontrollable. Support and cooperation of family members to rely on each other when stressors
arise is characteristic of adaptive coping and healthy family functioning. Thus, in the present study it appears that more cohesive family environments (marked by such characteristics as warm, affective ties, supportive), lesser is the use of avoidance (maladaptive) coping.

However for arts the stream alone, cohesion has also been found to be positively related to problem-focused coping. Problem-focused coping attempts to regulate the situation through direct problem-solving, active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance (Carver et al., 1989; Eisenberg et al., 1992; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Sandler et al., 1994). Perhaps, when arts students experience high cohesion, they try to improve the stressful situation by doing something constructive or giving more benign interpretation of the stressor (cited by Wolchik & Sandler, 1997). This adaptive coping serves to minimize stress in the short as well as long term (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Matheson et al., 2007).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on cohesion and problem-focused coping along with organisation, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on avoidance coping and decision making confusion in factor II for arts students (table 5.8), implying that cohesion is positively related to problem-focused coping and negatively related to avoidance coping for arts students. On the other hand for science students (table 5.10), significant and positive loadings are seen on cohesion, problem-focused coping and social coping along with organisation, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion in factor II; indicating a positive relationship between cohesion and problem-focused and social coping. However, no such relationship appeared for professional students (table 5.12).

(ii) EXPRESSIVENESS

Expressiveness is related negatively to avoidance coping for only arts students. It appears that the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly, is negatively to related to the extent to which arts students are managing distress by taking drugs or alcohol, blaming oneself, denying the stressor, and indulging in such behaviour as to reduce one’s effort to deal with stressor or giving up one’s attempts to attain goals with which
stressor is interfering. It implies that when there is more opportunity for expressiveness in family environments of arts students, less use of avoidance coping strategy is predicted.

Further for professional students, expressiveness is found to be positively related to social coping. Social coping/support refers to a variety of material and emotional supports a person receives from others (Brannon & Feist, 2007). Social support may help people gain confidence in the ability to handle stressful situations; thus, when they experience stress, they may appraise the stressors as less threatening than people who have fewer coping resources (Wills, 1998). Wills (1989), and Wills and Vaughn (1989) found that in a sample of adolescents seeking support from adults was positively related to self-esteem. Perhaps, the encouragement given to professional students by their family members to act openly and to express their problems and feelings directly is so high that in order to maintain their self-esteem, they report higher use of social coping.

Thus, a clear stream difference has emerged from this finding where arts students from highly expressive family environments are reporting less use of avoidance coping, and the professional students are reporting greater use of social coping. Both types of coping experienced by these students have an adaptive aspect.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on expressiveness, emotion-focused coping, social coping, and avoidance coping in factor IV for only science students (table 5.10) showing a positive relationship between them. However, no such relationship is evident for either arts (table 5.8) or professional (table 5.12) students.

(iii) CONFLICT

Conflict is related negatively to problem-focused coping and positively to avoidance coping only for arts and science students. It implies that high and the conflict (openly express anger and aggression) is perceived by arts and science students in their families, lesser is the use of problem-focused coping, but higher use of avoidance coping. Hence, highly conflictual family environments can exert negative influence (stress) on their children by leading them to use more of maladaptive behaviour rather than adaptive one (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Matheson et al., 2007; Klein et al., 2004; Walker et al., 2005; Zuckerman & Gagne,
The effectiveness of one’s coping will influence whether an event is appraised as stressful, benign, or challenging (Cohen & Lazarus, 1979). Hence, as life becomes more complicated by several factors (e.g., conflictual family environment, social criticism etc.), many university students whole experience numerous psychological, physiological, and social difficulties, develop several unhealthy lifestyle choices like, drug-abuse, the denial that are often used for coping or as an avoidance to struggle with life stresses (Walker & Fraizer, 1993).

Perhaps the students who are highly critical of their conflictual family environments, might find conflictual situation so unavoidable and uncontrollable that even the adaptive coping (e.g., taking direct action to solve the problem, positive reappraisal, acceptance etc.) may become maladaptive (e.g., avoiding the situation, substance-use, denial etc.).

However for only science students, conflict is also related positively to emotion-focused coping as well as avoidance coping. It implies that in high conflictual families, science students are not only reporting lesser use of problem-focused coping (as seen earlier) but also greater use of emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping. Coping is a series of transactions between a person who has a set of resources, and a particular environment with its own resources, demands, and constraints (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Emotion-oriented coping delineates a set of reactions (e.g., tension, anger) of a self-oriented nature which occurs in response to a problematic event (Endler & Parker, 1990). Such responses include humour, turning to religion, venting of emotions, and self-distraction like going to shopping, watching movies etc. (Carver et al., 1989; Carver, 1997). Perhaps, when the stress from conflicting family environments become unavoidable and uncontrollable, science students resort to more use of emotion-focused and avoidance coping strategies even though, problem-focused coping is a better option.

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on problem-focused and social coping along with achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, cohesion, organisation, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on conflict along with decision making confusion in factor II for only science students (table 5.10) and not for arts (table 5.8) or professional (table 5.12) students. Thus, for science students, a negative
relationship is evident between conflict and problem-focused as well as social coping.

(iv) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related positively to problem-focused coping for all the three stream students. It implies that students from all the three streams belong to families where family members are assertive, are self-sufficient, and make their own decisions (i.e., more independence), are reporting higher use of problem-focused coping. Problem-focused forms of coping include aggressive interpersonal efforts to alter the situation as well as cool, rational, deliberate efforts to solve problems (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Such coping is used when some control is perceived over the stressful situation (Stanton et al., 1994). According to Stern and Zevon (1990), youth who saw their families as more supportive, independent, socially integrated, and organized tend to rely more on approach coping. Thus, when family environments of students (arts, science, and professional streams) encourage independence in them, perhaps they feel free to engage in coping behaviours that emphasizes the achievement of problem resolution through purposeful efforts or cognitive restructuring of the problem or alter the situation (Endler & Parker, 1990).

However in the present study, professional students who perceived their families high on independence not only reported higher use of problem-focused coping, but also reported higher use of social coping. Social support/coping can be a powerful force that helps buffer the deleterious effects of stress and that has positive effects of its own (Wills & Fegan, 2001 as cited by Weiten & Lloyd, 2000). In reality, social support fluctuates over time and evolves out of individuals' interactions with others (Newcomb, 1990). Some people have more support than others because they have personal characteristics that attract more support or because they make more effort to seek support (cited by Weiten & Lloyd, 2007). Perhaps, it could be viewed that in trying to tackle problems directly, it pays to keep in mind the value of seeking aid from friends, family, or others (also in Weiten & Lloyd, 2007). No such relationship was seen for others stream students. However, lack of supporting evidences highlights the need for much future research.

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ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to problem-focused coping for arts and science students. However, it is also related positively to emotion-focused coping for arts students.

In the present study, arts and science students from high achievement oriented families are reporting high use of problem-focused coping. Coping consists of the cognitions and behaviours that people use to assess and reduce stress and to moderate the tension that accompanies it (Billings, Cronkite, & Moos, 1983 in Husain & Rashid, 2004). When employing a problem-focused coping strategy, the individual attempts to do something constructive so as to improve the stressful situation, or to reduce or alter the influence of the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Researchers have reported that problem-focused coping significantly related to several positive developmental outcomes such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and perceived competence in multiple domains (Brodzinsky et al., 1992; Causey & Dubow, 1992; Wills, 1985, 1988). In family environments, where activities such as school and work, are cast it into an achievement oriented or competitive framework, and where person’s self-esteem and sense of mastery is challenged, individual has to put effective personal efforts to overcome stressful situation and they use of active strategies (such as positive reframing, planning, acceptance etc.) to cope with stress (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Compas et al., 1991; Carver et al., 1989), might enable them to achieve well.

However, arts students of our sample from high achievement oriented families not only reported the greater use of problem-focused coping, but also the higher use of emotion-focused coping. Lazarus and Folkman (1985) suggested that problem-focused coping is aimed at problem solving or doing something to alter the source of stress–internal or environmental. Conversely, emotional-focused coping is aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress associated with (or cued by) the situation or stress. According to Lazarus (1976), both actions and thoughts may make a person feel better even if he or she cannot change the source of stress. Although, most stressors elicit both types of coping, problem-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that something constructive can be done, whereas emotion-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that the stressor is something that must be endured (Carver et al., 1989; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).
Most researchers suggest that neither emotion-focused coping nor problem-focused coping is invariably effective and that their success may depend on the particular situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 in Husain & Rashid, 2004). Furthermore, problem-focused and emotion-focused coping can often be used together (Kaplan, Sallis, & Patterson, 1993). Maltlin, Welhington, and Kessler (1990) have documented that situational influences can be found not only on the use of particular coping strategies but also on their effectiveness. Hence, when the families of arts students stressed highly on achievement-oriented and competitive framework, they try using both problem-focused coping (positive reframing, active coping etc.) and emotion-focused coping (venting of emotions, turning to religion etc) so as to ward off their distress.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on achievement orientation, problem-focused coping and social coping alongwith moral-religious emphasis, cohesion, organisation, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion in factor II for science students (table 5.10). It implies that a positive relationship exists between achievement orientation and problem-focused as well as social coping. Further for professional students (table 5.12), the results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on achievement orientation and problem-focused coping along with moral-religious emphasis, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed both, positive and negative perfectionism in factor II showing that a positive relationship appears between achievement orientation and problem-focused coping. However for arts students (table 5.8), no such relationship appeared.

(vi) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is related negatively to avoidance coping for only professional students (not arts or science students). It appears that where families highly promote the interests in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities, the professional students from such families are reporting lesser use of avoidance coping. Avoidance coping involve reactions or responses (e.g., denial, behaviour disengagement, substance-use, and self-blame) which have the effect of distracting or diverting individuals attention from the stressful situation (Endler & Parker, 1990). The adaptive value of a coping technique depends on the exact nature
of the situation (Weiten & Lloyd, 2007). Also, the nature of the family environment is strongly associated with adolescent coping style (Rutter, 1983; Shulman et al., 1987; Siddique & D’Arcy, 1984). Thus in the present study, the family environments of only professional students favour high intellectual and cultural orientation, who are also reporting lesser use of avoidance coping which, thereby minimize stress experienced by them. However, much future research is required for firm conclusions.

(vii) MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

Moral-religious emphasis is related positively to problem-focused coping for science and professional students and not arts students. A coping behaviour is a specific effort by which an individual or family attempts to manage or reduce a demand which has been placed upon it (Beresford, 1994). This may be done but either solving the problem (that is, removing the stimulus) or by accommodating to the concern without bringing about a solution (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a as cited by Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). It could be interpreted that upholding moral and religious standards are considered highly important in the families of science and professional students. To meet the demands of family, they rely more on active coping, positive reframing, acceptance and planning strategies of problem-focused coping. Such an approach is believed to facilitate positive growth and reinterpretation, highly required by science and professional students.

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on moral-religious emphasis, problem-focused coping and social coping along with achievement orientation, cohesion, organisation, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion in factor II for science students (table 5.10), showing that a positive relationship is evident between moral-religious emphasis and problem focused as well as social coping. On the other hand for professional students (table 5.12), significant and positive loadings appeared on moral-religious emphasis and problem-focused coping along with achievement orientation, self oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented and socially prescribed negative perfectionism in factor II, implying a positive relationship between moral-religious emphasis and problem-focused coping. However, no such relationship is evident with regard to arts students (table 5.8). However for conclusions, much future research recommended.
(viii) ORGANIZATION

Organisation is related positively to problem-focused coping for arts and professional students and not science students. It implies that arts and professional students belonging to families higher on organisation and structure in planning family activities and responsibilities reported higher use of problem-focused coping. Coping strategies have been linked to family environment to the extent that the family provides the context in which the individual first experiences various coping strategies (Lohman & Jarvis, 2000 in Murphy, 2002). Thus, it is likely that parents and others socialisers play a relatively direct role in shaping children’s preferred coping responses (Miller et al., 1994). Moreover, parents model coping behaviours and shape the family environment within which coping is learned (Hoffman & Levy-Shiff, 1994; Kliewer et al., 1994). Perhaps, more organization (e.g., careful planning of activities, well define duties of each family members etc.) in the family environments of arts and professional students is predicted of more positive and adaptive coping strategies (planning, positive reframing, active coping etc.) to ward off stress/situation.

However, organisation is also related negatively to emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping for only professional students. It implies that the professional students from highly organized and structured families are not only reporting higher use of problem-focused coping (as seen earlier), but are also reporting lesser use of emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping. Thus, combination of all three may work as an effective coping style to ward off the negative impact of stress more effectively.

Further for only science students, organisation is related positively to social coping and no such relationship has emerged for arts or professional students. It implies that greater organization in family environments of science students are predictive of greater use of social coping [mobilizing the psychological resources, master strain, share tasks, and obtain necessary supplies such as information and skills (Caplan et al., 1974), or gain sympathy and moral support (Carver et al., 1989)]. Social support may not only enable people to cope more successfully with stressful events, but also may influence stress-related behaviours that can function proactively to eliminate stressful events before they occur and/or to prevent a stressful event from intruding into other aspects of life (Umberson, 1987 as cited by
Skinner and Wellborn (1994) argued that a social context in which adults are involved with the child (i.e., express affection and dedicate time and resources) both buffers the effect of stress and allows the child to turn to others for help and comfort when necessary. Thus, supportive relationships with peers (Cauce et al., 1982) and one’s family (Holahan & Moos, 1987) appear to foster effective coping (see Compas, 1987).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on organisation and problem-focused coping along with cohesion, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative-loadings on avoidance coping along with decision making confusion in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). It shows that a positive relationship of problem-focused coping and a negative relationship of avoidance coping with organisation. Further for science students (table 5.10), significant and positive loadings is evident on organisation and problem-focused as well as social coping along with achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, cohesion, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative-loadings on conflict and decision making confusion on factor II, implying that a positive relationship appeared between organisation and problem-focused as well as social coping. However for professional (table 5.12), no such relationship was seen.

(ix) CONTROL

Control is related positively to emotion-focused coping for only science students and no such the relationship has been found for arts of professional students. It appears that greater is the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life, as perceived by science students, greater is the use of emotion-focused coping (e.g., religion, venting of emotions, self-distraction, and humour). Folkman (1984) suggested that emotion-focused coping strategies might be more effective when people are powerless to reduce environmental hazards or stressors. Similarly, Baun, Fleming, and Singer (1983) argued that it is easier to control emotions than it is to control the stressor (see Husain & Rashid, 2004). Several researchers have noted the importance of the family context in understanding adolescent coping responses. The quality and nature of the family and environmental climate is strongly associated with the style of coping (Rutter, 1983; Shulman et al.,
Emotion-focused coping helps an individual to manage the distressed emotions rather than dealing with the stressor per se (Stanton et al., 1994), especially when stress is unavoidable as well as uncontrollable. Perhaps high control in family environment is perceived as unavoidable and uncontrollable by them hence, emotion-focused coping is used by them to the greater extent.

It may be concluded from the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis that the hypothesis II (b) with regard to arts, science and professional stream university students is partially confirmed.

6.3 FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

Career decision making is a key life task of adolescents and adult development. Effective career decision making requires a variety of exploratory behaviours, such as obtaining and using assessment and information resources, speaking with individuals in specific occupations, reality testing alternatives, and completing education and training programs (Sampson et al., 1996). Making a career decision is a complete task, and the deliberation involved often leads to discomfort, anxiety, and confusion (Osipow et al., 1980 cited by Gati & Asher, 2001).

Cognitions are generally recognized as important factors in decision making. Cognitive processes have an impact on the quality of career decisions made by individuals. Given the interactions among cognition, behaviour, and emotion, the chances for successful exploratory behaviour decline as dysfunctional career thinking increases (Sampson et al., 1996). Career thoughts are therefore, outcomes of an individual’s thinking about assumptions, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, feelings, plans, and/or strategies related to career problem-solving and decision making. Dysfunctional thinking limits an individual's capacity to learn effective career problem solving and decision making skills. The greater the level of dysfunctional thinking, the greater is the difficulty in career decision making. Therefore, dysfunctional career thoughts are a significant factor in career decision making (also Sampson et al., 1996).

An individual’s career thoughts are influenced by a combination of biological and environmental factors. The specific career thoughts of an individual are a product of individual experience, mediated by personal characteristics and by family
environment as well as significant others in a cultural context (Sampson et al., 1996). Dysfunctional career thoughts are learned in families, in peer groups, at school and at work through exposure to misinformation, lack of information, or misinterpretation of information, beginning in childhood and continuing through adolescence and adulthood in response to negative learning events (also Sampson et al., 1996). According to Whiston and Keller (2004) family variables and career variables are related. Family systems play a crucial role in the career decision making of individuals. The results of several studies indicate that one’s career choices influenced by the various aspects of his/her family-of-origin (Carr, 2000, Marso & Pigge, 1994; Hargrove et al., 2002; Keller & Whiston by Patrick et al., 2005; Trice, 1991; Ozdemir & Hacifazlioglu, 2008).

Parents along with other family members provide valuable learning experience through their own role models and supporting activities that assist in exploring career interests (Ferry, 2006). Roe (1957) proposed that early childhood experiences play an indirect role in shaping later career behaviours (Brown et al., 1997). Early parent-child interactions result in a child learning preferences for people rather than things. These early choices later resurface in the adult’s occupational selects (Ozdemir & Hacifazlioglu, 2008). Philips et al. (2001) suggested that the role others play in individual’s decision making process is significant, complex, predominantly positive and appreciated. Thus, the career choice that adolescents make is a decision that is influenced not only by their development but also by the context in which they live (Chen, 1997).

In the present study career decision making process is inclusive of dysfunctional career thoughts in career thoughts inventory total, decision-making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict. Career thoughts inventory total score is a single global indicator of dysfunctional thinking in career problem-solving and decision making (Sampson et al., 1996). Hence, the relationship between family environment and career decision making has been reported for all these four variables for both the genders as well as for all the streams of university students.
6.3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND CAREER DECISION MAKING FOR MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis III (a) of the present study states that "all the factors of family environment except conflict and control will be significantly and negatively related to career decision making for male and female university students."

Based on the correlational and factor analysis result with regard to male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students, following discussion has been presented.

(i) COHESION

Cohesion is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for both male and female university students. It appears that both the genders who perceive their family environments high on cohesion (the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another) are reporting lower dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion.

Ketterson and Blustein (1997) support the relational context of career development. The secure parent-child relationship has been found to be associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career planfulness. Even the day-to-day patterns of family functioning such as decision making styles and degree of cohesion have been shown to be related to the development of career maturity among adolescents (Penick & Jepsen, 1992). Thus in the view of the present finding, it is clear that both male as well as female students belonging to cohesive families are reporting lower levels of dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion. That is, these aspects of career thoughts inventory do not influence both the genders negatively, which can be the proof of their career maturity. Hence, supporting Hall et al. (1996) observation that parents serve as significant interpreters of information about the world and their child's abilities. Bowlby (1982) also noted that life decisions and planning appears to be easier when made in context of relationships with supportive, trustworthy family members or significant others. Lopez and Andrews (1987) believed that a person's career indecision is a symptom of conflict with parent support (see Chope, 2002). Career indecision is often the result when, individuals do not receive much or any
support for the choices that they made in childhood and early adolescence (Chope, 2000). These findings are supportive of the present result.

Further for female students only, cohesion is also related negatively to commitment anxiety and external conflict. It means that females from highly cohesive families are experiencing lower level of commitment anxiety as well as external conflict. Middleton and Loughead (1993) suggested that adolescents feel greatest anxiety about their career decisions or exploration when their parents are negatively involved. Children of such parents often pursue the career selected by their parents so as not to disappoint them or to go against their wishes. Ferry (2006) found that lack of family involvement in the career choice process appeared to lower youths’ ability to make decisions. The effect of family-of-origin interaction pattern has been found to play significant role in the formation of clear and stable career goals and the promotion of self-confidence in completing career planning activities (Hargrove et al., 2002). It has also been seen that females having less self-esteem in decision making, feel more stressful (Güçray, 2001). Castle-Kroll (2004) also found that career indecisiveness was greatest when daughters felt their mothers were unsupportive of their autonomy. However since, females of our sample perceived high cohesion in their family environment, they do not suffer from commitment anxiety or external conflict. In the supportive or cohesive family environment, females perhaps feel less frustration and guilt even when they do not meet their parents’ expectations (Middleton & Loughead, 1993). Or perhaps, because of the support of family members, they are able to accept their choice as the best choice. Also, they do not experience any conflict in differentiating which perceptions from others are important inputs for career decision making. Further, females reported greater career maturity than males across all ages (Patton & Creed, 2001). Even Blenkinsop et al. (2006) noted that young people made decisions in different ways and that mindsets changed over time, and that they would benefit from personalized and individualized support. However, lack of supportive evidences requires a need for much future research.

(ii) EXPRESSIVENESS

Expressiveness is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion for both the genders. It implies that greater the family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly, lesser is
the dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion for both the genders. Ozdemir and Hacifazlioglu (2008) revealed that parents and environment had a great influence on students' occupational preference. Individuals who express and verbalize positive cognitions regarding the career decision making process tend to make effective decisions. On the other hand, individuals who express and verbalize negative or dysfunctional cognitions regarding the career decision-making process tend to experience difficulty, confusion, and avoidance. Thereby, making career problem solving and decision making more complex (Sampson et al., 1996). Kinnier and Krumboltz (1986) observed that biased, misinformed, or distorted career beliefs generally remain unnoticed and lead to self-defeating experiences.

Furthermore, verbal persuasion in the form of encouragement could be an effective means of increasing a person's judgments about his/her ability to make career decisions (Solberg, Good, Fischer, Brown, & Nord, 1995). Hargrove, Inman and Crane (2005) revealed that the quality of family relationships (that is, degree to which family members are encouraged to express feelings and problems) played a small yet significant role in predicting career planning attitudes of adolescents. Hence for the present finding, it may be interpreted that both the genders who are highly encouraged by their families to act openly and to express their feelings and problems directly are reporting less dysfunctional career thoughts and less decision making confusion.

However for female students only, expressiveness is also related negatively to external conflict. It implies that females who perceive their family environment as more expressive also experience less external conflict. External conflict reflects the individual's ability to balance the importance of one's self-perception with the importance of input from significant others, resulting in reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making. From the present study, it is apparent that this reluctance is less evident for females who are allowed to be more expressive within their families. Hence, the scope of negative self-talk and accompanying anxiety does not exist in an expressive family environment.

In earlier socialization practices, females were not given freedom of expression in the families. Mostly parents made decisions for them. With changing time, where both the genders are required to support their families economically, parents are now encouraging their daughters to be career oriented and are giving
them freedom to express their opinions (Monga, 2006). Such an expressive family environment helps to build strong identity and more willingness to assume responsibility for career decision making. Moreover in the present study, females have been found to be high on expressiveness as compared to their male counterparts (see Table 5.1). Also, Tung and Dhillon (2006) found that females perceive their home environments as more expressive.

Way and Rossmann (1996a) pointed out that interactions between parent and child and among family members include positive behaviours such as showing support and interest and communicating openly. By sharing work-place stories and expressing concern for children's future, parent-child connection facilitates risk-taking and exploration, which are needed for identity formation in general as well as for the formation of vocational identity (Altman, 1997; Blustein, 1997). Gati and Saka (2001) found that girls reported less difficulty regarding external conflicts and dysfunctional beliefs than did boys. In addition, the degree of difficulty involving external conflicts decreased with age, indicating that significant others, such as parents, became less salient to the career development process over time.

(iii) CONFLICT

Conflict is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for both male and female students. It indicates that greater is the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression, criticism, and conflict perceived among family members, greater is the dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion experienced by both the genders. Gainor and Lent (1998) pointed that many students receive mixed signals from family and friends and this adds to their level of indecision. Penick and Jepsen (1992) suggested that day-to-day patterns of one's family functioning, such as decision making styles and the degree of conflict, are related to the development of career maturity among adolescents. Sometimes an individual may respond to a stressful or negative family environment by making hasty, unreflective career choices in an attempt to escape or survive (Fisher & Griggs, 1994 cited by Kerka, 2003). Even lack of familial support can also take the form of conflict, whereas parent who pressurise a child toward a particular career, may withdraw financial and emotional, support for a career path not of the parent's choice (Altman, 1997 in Kerka, 2003). Constantine and Flores (2006) found that greater levels of psychological distress predicted higher levels of career
indecision, which in turn was associated with lower career certainty and greater perceive family conflict. Lower levels of perceived family conflict predicted high career aspiration in students. The ibid findings are supportive of the present result.

Further for male students, conflict is also related positively to commitment anxiety as well as external conflict. It means that males who are perceiving their family environment as highly conflictual are also reporting greater commitment anxiety (e.g., inability to prioritize from a set of plausible alternatives, failing to commit to a “best” choice, generalized anxiety etc.) as well as external conflict (e.g., inability to differentiate the perceptions of others from self-perception, unwillingness to assume responsibility for decision making etc.). Chope (2000) noted that young people, who were unattended to, criticized, abused, or negated, experienced marked degrees of anxiety when they had to make decisions. Their histories of criticism often made it extraordinarily difficult for them to develop a clear and simple understanding of even their most basic interests, values, goals, and options. Family dysfunction appeared to result in a loss of self-esteem and a vision of what one hopes to be or become (see Chope, 2002). Penick and Jepsen (1992) observed that students' vocational identity was negatively associated with students' perception of family conflicts and family external locus of control. Further, Gati and Saka (2001a) found that boys reported more difficulty regarding external conflicts and dysfunctional beliefs. Perhaps in an attempt to escape or survive their conflictual family environments, many students might make hasty and unreflective career choices. Or perhaps, males from conflictual families may experience lower self-esteem or confidence, weak identity, discouragement, negative effect, and indecisiveness in their career decision making process.

(iv) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related negatively to decision making confusion for male as well as female students. However for only females, it is also negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts. It appears that both the genders who belong to families with high independence are reporting less decision making confusion. Further with regard to only females, higher level of independence is also related to lower level of dysfunctional career thoughts.

Positive family interactions (e.g., Felsman & Blustein, 1999; Guerra & Braungart-Rieker, 1999) have been negatively related to career indecision. Lent,
Brown, Brenner et al. (2001) noted that social influences can be seen in the career choice encouragement that adolescents or adults obtain from influential others. Guay et al. (2003) observed that the less autonomy (i.e., deciding one's own fate and making decisions independently) supportive are parents, the less positive are students' perception of self-efficacy and autonomy towards career decision making activities. Thus, if a college student has never had the freedom to make choices for themselves, they cannot be expected to have the confidence needed to make major life decisions (see Daigle, 2003).

Further, Güçray (2003) believed that adolescents are especially not encouraged to give important decisions about their lives. In case where they are given the responsibility to make decisions they have provided with too little support and help. Therefore, they mostly develop the habit of not being able to give effective decisions, which they carry with them to adulthood. As a result, many adolescents may take faulty decisions, which will affect their future. Whiston (1996) found that both male's and female's career decision making self-efficacy is positively related to the degree to which families encourage and support independence. Guerra and Braungart-Reiker (1999) revealed that specifically, students whose mothers were more encouraging of their independence in childhood experienced less career indecision than those who found their mothers overprotective. Research on gender differences has typically shown that women present higher levels of autonomy than do men (Vallerand, 1997; Vallerand et al., 1997; Tung and Dhillon, 2006).

Generally, females experience three types of dependencies. In childhood, they are dependent on their fathers; they married on their husbands; and when they age, they are dependent on their sons. Hence, they experience total lack of autonomy and freedom. Monga (2006) pointed out that the socialization practices are changing over time. Parents are becoming more supportive and they wish to give equal opportunity and independence to children of both the genders. Looking at so many problems females had to undergo after marriage, parents want their female child to be independent and self-sufficient. Tung and Dhillon (2006) observed that now the women's roles are changing as they also oriented towards career. This somewhat reflects greater cognitive maturity of females over males. Thus, it is not surprising that females from family environment that supports independence are experiencing
less dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion, during the career decision making process.

(v) ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to external conflict for both the genders. It indicates that both male and female students are from families where, high achievement orientation and competitive framework is encouraged. However, they are also reporting greater confusion about the appropriate balance between the importance of their own self-perception and importance of input from significant others, resulting in a reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making. It has been reported that people with many interests and abilities find decision making difficult because they believe that they will have to sacrifice appealing options (Career Centre, 1998-2008). In a family environment, where they (both male and female students) are required to do their ‘best’ with many interests and abilities, they can find it difficult to decide which one would produce the ‘best’ result, hence might result in external conflict. Daigle (2003) observes that the more involved the parents are, the more in depth and comprehensive the search for career occupational data will become. Perry (2003) claimed that periodically student’s sense of personal control and mastery is undermined by low-control, arising from a greater emphasis on success and failure, increased pressure to excel, critical career choices etc. (p. 312). Even Altman (1997) observed that siblings can be a source of challenge and competition, and a basis for comparison of abilities, which can provide an important context for identity formation. All these aspects can be seen highly in achievement oriented environment provided by the family. If a person is unable to differentiate the perceptions of others from self-perceptions, it may lead to weak identity formation. Many a times, students have to articulate the choices which can negatively interact with parental expectations. Hence, the dilemma of whether to please others or oneself can create external conflict. However, lack of research evidence highlights a need for much future research.

(vi) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion for both male and female students. It appears that both the genders are belonging to families that are promoting high degree of interest in political, social, intellectual, and cultural activities and are
reporting less dysfunctional career thoughts as well as less decision making confusion. Dysfunctional career thinking has been characterized as irrational expectations (Nevo, 1987), self-beliefs (Borders & Archadel, 1987), dysfunctional cognitions (Corbishley & Yost, 1989), dysfunctional career beliefs (Krumboltz, 1990), and faulty self-efficacy (Brown & Lent, 1996). Decision making confusion is the inability to initiate or sustain the decision making process as a result of disabling emotions and/or lack of understanding about the decision making process itself (Sampson et al., 1996).

In families with high intellectual-cultural orientation, perhaps a lot of discussion goes among family members about political and social problems, they are encouraged to develop interest in going to library, and to enhance interest in music, art, and literature etc. With so much exposure towards intellectual activities, it is quite natural for them to experience less dysfunctional career thoughts. Parental support and guidance can influence specific career or educational suggestions as well as experiences that indirectly support career development, such as provision of resources like books (Altman, 1997). Ferry (2006) pointed that the family involvement in the career choice process appears to influence youth’s ability to make decisions.

Furthermore, with so much study and exposure, perhaps male and female students are also able to sustain the decision making process. As such a family environment (high intellectual-cultural orientation) may provide a person with an opportunity to explore and understand the nature of individual’s career problems. Schulthesis et al. (2001) found that relational influences such as emotional, social, information, and tangible support have an impact on career exploration and decision making process. It is apparent that the regular use of library and frequent discussions among the family members may bring clarity in the minds of both the genders in understanding how to go about the process of career decision making and to understand the magnitude of problem which can bring down decision making confusion. Hence, the families of those male and female students who have an interest in intellectual and cultural activities may serve as significant interpreters of information about the world as well as children’s abilities (Hall et al., 1996). Such an environment probably, may help students enhance their self-confidence, self-belief,
self-esteem, and self-efficacy which may result in the reduction of dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion for both the genders.

Further for male students, intellectual-cultural orientation is also negatively related to commitment anxiety. It implies that males from high intellectual-cultural oriented family environments are also reporting less commitment anxiety. That is perhaps, in such an environment they do not find it difficult to make a commitment to a specific career choice as they do not feel any anxiety about the outcome of decision making process. They also do not find it difficult to let go of less appropriate alternatives in favour of a potentially more appropriate choice. Since, they are able to commit to a ‘best’ option; therefore commitment anxiety does not exist for them. The male adolescents as compared to female adolescents are more likely to feel discouraged, lack necessary information about careers, perceive external barriers, and lack interest in making choices (Rojewski & Hill, 1998). For both males and females, career decision-making self-efficacy as well as self-esteem is positively related to the degree to which families encourage and support participation in a variety of family activities (Whiston, 1996). More particularly, adolescents’ great anxiety about their career exploration and/or decisions is related to parents’ negative involvement (Middleton & Longhead, 1993). However, since in intellectual-cultural oriented family environment, entire family is showing high interest in all the above mentioned activities they do not suffer from commitment anxiety. Hence, much future research is recommended for firm conclusions.

(vii) ACTIVE-RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION

Active-recreational orientation is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for female students (not males). This indicates that female students who perceive their families high on active-recreational orientation (e.g., going out, receiving guests for dinner watching movies with family, family vacations etc.) are also reporting less dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion. Parents and other family members provide valuable learning experiences through their own role models and supporting activities that assist in exploring career interests (Ferry, 2006). Further, the career decision making self-efficacy is positively related to the degree to which families encourage and support participation in a variety of activities (Whiston, 1996) such as family vacations (Altman, 1997). Young and Friesen (1992) observed that parents are now
known to initiate a number of different kinds of intentional career related interactions with their children. Perhaps, social and recreational activities may become a platform for making informal contacts for exploration of occupational choices, for encouraging children to take challenging classes, providing opportunities to instil confidence and expectations of the availability of fully support from family members in difficult situations (Way & Rossmann, 1996a).

In the present study, females perceive their family environment higher on active-recreational orientation than their male counterparts (table 5.1). Tung and Dhillon (2006) also reported that females perceive their home environments promoting social and recreational activities. Saraswathi and Datta (1985) also pointed out that in India, socialization for females is generally geared towards competence in household and social tasks. Perhaps for the female sample of our study, their active participation in social and recreational activities with their family members—is providing them with social network that might be helpful in lowering their dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion. However for firm conclusions, much future research is required.

(viii) MORAL-RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

Moral-religious emphasis is related negatively to commitment anxiety for only male students. It means that male students from families high on moral, ethical and religious issues and values are reporting less commitment anxiety in career decision making process. Commitment anxiety reflects the inability to make a commitment to specific career choice, accompanied by generalized anxiety about the outcome of the decision making process, and this anxiety perpetuates indecision (Sampson et al., 1996). Apparently in the present study, the generalized anxiety that perpetuates indecision is less evident for males. When their families emphasize on ethical and religious values, it may enhance external locus of control in them. The emphasis on morals and religion by families may help males to commit to a “best choice” from a set of alternatives. Since they do not have to take full responsibility for the accomplishment of the choice in such an environment, this may lower the anxiety associated with indecision. The values, beliefs, traditions, and myths are among the most influential systemic issues likely to affect one’s career decisions and choice (Chope, 2002). However, much future research is required for firm conclusions.
(ix) ORGANIZATION

Organization is negatively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety for both the genders. It implies that both male and female students belonging to families high on organization and structure in planning activities and responsibilities, experience less dysfunction career thoughts, less decision making confusion, and less commitment anxiety. Since, the family environments of both the genders are involved in providing clear organization, structure and orderliness in planning activities and responsibilities. In such an environment it is not at all difficult for students to direct their cognitions and behaviours towards the career decision making process to obtain positive consequences.

Organization in the family environment helps in the formation of clear and stable career goals and the promotion of self-confidence in regard to completing career planning activities (Hargrove et al., 2002). Phillips et al. (2001) showed that the role relevant others play in one's life is significant, predominantly positive and appreciated; hence it may influence an individual's career decision in general. However, lack of supportive evidences points towards much future research for firm conclusions.

(x) CONTROL

Control is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion and external conflict for only female students. No such relationship has been found for male students. It indicates that females from highly controlled family environments (where set rules and procedures are used to turn family life) reported high dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and external conflict. Lopez and Andrews (1987) theorized that certain family interactions enhanced effective career decision making, whereas other family interactions promote and maintain indecision (see Chope, 2002). Whiston (1996) observed that only women's career indecision was negatively related to the degree of control and within the family. However, this relationship is opposite to the present finding.

Tung and Dhillon (2006) suggested that excessive directionality by the parents may develop a tendency in adolescent to develop their attitude and preferences apart from their parents. Greater controls in the family may somewhat
increase disagreements between the parents and the adolescents. Thus, high control can lead to "floundering", the inability to develop and pursue a specific career focus (Kerka, 2003). Enmeshment in one's family of origin—for example, feeding pressured to spend most of one's free time with one's family—has also been shown to be associated with career indecision among university students (Kinnier et al., 1990). Guay et al. (2003) suggested that the more controlling are parents, less positive are students' perception of self-efficacy and autonomy toward career decision making activities.

Research suggests that females tend to have higher levels of dysfunctional career cognitions and perceptions that may contribute to higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1996). Sampson et al., (1996) observed that negative emotions (like anxiety and discouragement) may impede their engaging in the problem-solving process. The person is so overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem that he/she does not understand how to go about the process of career decision making. Further with regard to high level of external control in our sample, it can be stated that too much controlled by the family members may make it difficult for the person to create an appropriate balance between pleasing others and pleasing oneself due to weak identity formed by inability to differentiate which perceptions from others are important input for decision making. However, much future research is required for firm conclusions.

From the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis, it may be concluded that the hypothesis III (a) is partially accepted with regard to both the genders of university students.

6.3.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND CAREER DECISION MAKING FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARTS, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis III (b) of the present study states that “all the factors of family environment except conflict and control will be significantly and negatively related to career decision making process for arts, science, and professional stream university students.”
Based on the correlational results with regard to arts (table 5.7 & 5.8), science (table 5.9 & 5.10), and professional (table 5.11 & 5.12) students, following interpretation has been put forth.

(i) COHESION

Cohesion is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and career decision making confusion of all the three stream students. It implies that all the students are from families where family members provide help and support to one another and these students are also reporting lesser dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion. Positive family interactions have been found to be negatively related to career indecision (Felsman & Blustein, 1999; Guerra & Braungart-Rieker, 1999). Bowlby (1982) cited that with supportive and trustworthy family members, the life decision and planning becomes much easier. The degree of cohesion in one's family environment has been found to relate to the development of career maturity (Penick & Jepsen, 1992). Phillips et al. (2001) suggested that the role others play in an individual's career decision making process is significant, complex, predominantly positive, and appreciated. Schulthesis et al., 2001) found that support (such as emotional, social, esteem, information, or tangible) has its influence on career exploration and decision making processes of young adults. Thus, it is apparent that high help and support from family members have positive influence on the students of all the streams, as they are reporting less dysfunctional career thoughts as well as less decision making confusion, which is pointing towards their career maturity.

However for only arts students, negative relation between cohesion and external conflict indicates that arts students belonging to highly cohesive family environments also reporting less external conflict. The secure parent-child relationships has been found to be associated with progress in career decision making, affirmative career self-efficacy beliefs, and career planfulness by Ketterson and Blustein (1997). In view of the above, it can be pointed out that cohesive family environment of arts students provide secure relationships between students and their family members. Thus, perhaps students from more cohesive families are also able to create appropriate balance between their own perceptions and the perceptions of significant others. Hence, are not reluctant to assume career decision making responsibility.
Further, only professional students from families high in cohesion are also reporting less commitment anxiety. It has been observed that when the parents are negatively involved in the career decision making process, it can lower youth's ability to make decisions (Ferry, 2006) and may enhance their anxiety about their career decisions (Chope, 2000; Middleton & Loughead, 1993). Further, the interaction pattern of the family has been found to be significantly related to promoting self-confidence and in completing career planning activities (Hargrove et al., 2002). Thus, perhaps those in a cohesive family environment are able to make commitment regarding career choices and planning without any anxiety.

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on cohesion along with organisation, problem-focused coping, self-oriented and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and, significant and negative loadings on decision making confusion along with avoidance coping in factor II for arts students (table 5.8), on the other hand the results of factor analysis for science students (table 5.10), also reveal significant and positive loadings on cohesion along with achievement orientation, problem-focused coping, moral-religious emphasis, organisation, social coping, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and, negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict on factor II. Thus implying that for both arts and science students, negative relationship is evident between cohesion and decision making confusion. However, no such relationship appeared for professional students (table 5.12). Hence, much future research is recommended for from conclusions.

(ii) EXPRESSIVENESS

Expressiveness is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion for all the three stream students. It means that students who are perceiving their family environments high on expressiveness, are also reporting less dysfunctional career thinking as well as less confusion in decision making. Cognitions are based on attitudes or assumptions in the form of schemata developed from past experiences. Individuals who express as well as verbalize positive cognitions regarding the career decision making process tend to make effective decisions without any difficulty and confusion (Sampson et al., 1996). It may be highlighted that the family environment encouraging open talk and discussion about personal problems with family members can be an effective means
in increasing one's judgments about one's ability to make career decisions (Solberg et al., 1995). Hence, the possibility of dysfunctional career thinking and decision making confusion is less under such situations. Further, only arts students from highly expressive families are also experiencing lower levels of commitment anxiety and conflict. The family operates as a system or unit, where patterns of instructions evolve and are maintained and relational aspects of the system have a significant influence on individuals' career decision making (Bratcher, 1982; Carr, 2000; Whitson, 1996). Perhaps, when they are able to express their feelings directly to their family members, they are not afraid to make any commitment to specific career choices. Also, they do not experience any confusion in assuming responsibility about career decision making (external conflict). Probably because of the expressive nature of the family environment, any kind of judgment from the family members is not feared by them. As observed by Middleton and Loughead (1993), even if they fail to catch up to the parental expectations they perhaps, does not experience any guilt due to expressive nature of the family environment.

(iii) CONFLICT

Conflict is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety for arts and science students. This is, students (arts and science) who perceive their family environments as more conflictual are reporting more dysfunctional career thinking, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety. Individuals at different stages of their lives are preoccupied with career choices (Gati & Tal, 2008). Penick and Jepsen (1992) found that perceptions of conflict in families predict vocational identity and career planning involvement as well as career maturity. Constantine and Flores (2006) observed that higher level of perceived family conflict predict higher career uncertainty and indecision.

Sometimes even hasty and unreflective career choices are attempted by an individual to either escape or survive the conflictual family environment (Fisher & Griggs, 1994). Also, young people experienced marked degrees of anxiety while making decision (about career) when they feel negated unattended to, criticized or abused in their families (Chope, 2000). Thus, it is not unusual for both arts and science students from conflictual family environments to experience, great dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety.
Further for only arts students, conflict is also related positively to external conflict. It implies that arts students belonging to families where, family members openly criticize as well as expressed anger and aggression are also experiencing external conflict. External conflict reflects the inability to balance the importance of one's self-perception with importance of input from significant others, resulting in reluctant to assume responsibility for decision making (Sampson et al., 1996). Zingaro (1983) also found that individuals may have difficulty making career decisions when they may not be able to differentiate their own expectations from their parents expectations. Chope (2000) cited that histories of criticism often make it extraordinarily difficult for young people to develop a clear and simple understanding of even their most basic interests, goals, and options. In the view of the above, it can be interpreted that when in the families of arts students, anger, aggression, criticism, and conflict is expressed openly among family members, the negative self-talk increases which can have a detrimental influence on all aspects of career problem solving as well as decision making (Sampson et al., 1996).

Further, the results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion along with positive loadings on achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organisation, problem-focused coping and social coping in factor II for only science students (table 5.10) and not for either arts (table 5.8) or professional (table 5.12) students. It shows that for science students a positive relationship appeared between conflict and decision making confusion. However, much future research is recommended for firm conclusions.

(iv) INDEPENDENCE

Independence is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for only professional students (not arts or science students). It indicates that professional students from families where independence is highly encouraged are experiencing less dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion. One’s career choice is influenced by various aspects of his/her family-of-origin (Keller & Whiston in Patrick et al., 2005; Trice, 1991, Ozdemir & Hacifazlioglu, 2008).
The attitudes and behaviours of parents while working or discussing their work is what, the children respond to and learn (De Ridder, 1990). Thus, family variables and career variables are related (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Guay et al. (2003) pointed out that the more autonomy supportive are the parents, the more positive are students’ perception of self-efficacy and autonomy towards career decision making activities. As expected, the professional students are thought to be more autonomous and this attitude may be due to the level of independence provided to them in their family environment. As cited by Guerra and Braungart-Rieker (1999), students whose mothers are more encouraging of their independence in childhood experienced less career indecision that those who found their mothers overprotective. When individuals talk about themselves as being in control of themselves, there is a feeling of independence that is evoked (Daigle, 2003). Hence the degree of individuals’ confidence that they can successfully perform a variety of career exploration activities (Solberg et al., 1995) is perhaps, enhanced in families where independence is highly encouraged. Probably, this could be the reason why the professional students of our sample who perceive more independence in families, are also reporting less dysfunctional career thinking as well as decision making confusion.

(v) ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION

Achievement orientation is related positively to external conflict for arts and professional streams students. It implies that the greater the extent to which activities, such as school and work, are cast into and achievement-oriented or competitive framework for arts as well as professional students, greater is the external conflict regarding career decision making process. The early childhood experiences play an indirect role in shaping later career behaviour (Roe in Brown et al., 1997). In an individual’s family environment, siblings can also pose varied challenges and competition as well as a basis for comparison of abilities, therefore providing a context for identity formation (Altman, 1997) which can later on help in one's vocation identity (Penick & Jepsen, 1992). When a student perceives that he/she is not in control of their academic environment, this can lead to an increased level of uncertainty and discomfort, which could easily have a negative effect on the students’ entire academic experience. Academic control directly affects (withdrawals and achievement related cognitions and emotions (Perry, 2003). Further, students’
sense of low person control arises from a greater emphasis on success and failure, heightened academic competition, increase pressure to excel etc. (p.312; also Perry, 2003). Hence, the arts and professional students who perceive their families high on achievement orientation are also experiencing high inability to differentiate the perception of others from self-perception (i.e., weak identity) which is further resulting in their reluctance to assume any kind of responsibility for career decision making.

Further, only science students belonging to highly achievement oriented and competitive families are reporting less dysfunctional career thinking and decision making confusion. As pointed out by Fisher and Griggs (1994) and Trusty et al. (1997), family functioning has a great impact on an individual’s career development. It is apparent from the present finding that family environments of science students encourage them to accept challenges, to be competitive, and to give their best in whatever they accomplish or are planning to accomplish. Such behaviours of family members instil confidence, expectations, and enhance self-belief and self-efficacy resulting in less dysfunctional career thinking and less decision making confusion by keeping negative affect at bay.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on achievement orientation along with cohesion, moral-religious emphasis, organisation, problem-focused coping, social and socially prescribed positive perfectionism and negative loadings on decision making confusion along with conflict in factor II for science students (table 5.10) implying that a negative relationship exists between achievement orientation and decision making confusion. However, no such relationship appeared for arts (table 5.8) and professional (table 5.12) students.

(vi) INTELLECTUAL-CULTURAL ORIENTATION

Intellectual-cultural orientation is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for science and professional students but, not for arts students. It appears that science and professional students perceive high intellectual-cultural orientation (i.e., interest in social, intellectual, and cultural activities) in their family environment and are also reporting less dysfunctional career thinking and decision making confusion. Hall et al. (1996) suggested that
parents serve as significant interpreters for their children, of information about the world and children's ability. The more involved the parents are the more in depth and comprehensive the search for career occupational data will become (Daigle, 2003). Also, families with uninvolved parents "seem unable to function well either because they cannot set guidelines, or because they do not pursue interests that involve places and persons outside the family. This makes it more difficult for children to develop self-knowledge and differentiate their own career goals from their parents' goal (Darling, 1999; Kerka, 2003; Ferry, 2006). The students merely need encouragement and direction from their families, to make the proper choices—education or career—when they wish to have a deciding interest in their futures (Perry, 2003). People with undefined interests find decision making difficult because none of the options appear attractive to them (Career Centre, 1998-2009).

Perhaps, family members of science and professional students encourage them to discuss political or social problems, to use library, and even provide resources like books etc. to explore, understand and enhance their interests. All such activities may provide them with an opportunity for career exploration and understanding of career decision making process. Thus, may help students to ward off their dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion.

Therefore, only professional students belonging to highly intellectual-cultural oriented family environments are also experiencing less commitment anxiety as well as external conflict. It may be said that perhaps the professional students from family environments that encourage intellectual and cultural activities are already decided about what career they have to choose or in what direction their career exploration activities will turn. They are able to prioritize from set of plausible alternatives which is the 'best' one for them and are able to let go of the state of indecision. This makes them feel anxiety free about the outcome of the decision making process. Without much confusion, they are also able to maintain the balance between the perception of significant others from self-perception. Since, they have already articulated a choice that has positively interacted with their parents' expectations, they are able to form their own identity and so even external conflict does not exist for them. Hence, it could be pointed out that parents' encouragement and involvement in career exploration and decisions reduce commitment anxiety as well as external conflict, resulting in students assuming the responsibility for career
decision making. However lack of supportive evidences, require a need for much future research.

(vii) ACTIVE-RECREATIONAL ORIENTATION

Active-recreational orientation is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for only professional students. No such relationship has been found for either arts or science stream students. Ferry (2006) observed that the cultural, social, and economic contexts of family and community are instrumental in how youth learn about career and are influential in their choice process. In families with high active-recreational orientation, often friends and relatives come over for dinner or to visit them, family members go out shopping, to watch movies, go on vacations together etc. Such a warm environment perhaps diverts their attention from stressors and worries and makes them fully rejuvenated and fresh. With so much social and recreational activities, it is not surprising for them to experience less dysfunctional career thoughts. Moreover, perhaps such activities in the family can create an informal atmosphere that can enable the professional students to come out of their shell without any inhibition and discuss their problems with their family members. This can further help them initiate, sustain, and clearly understand the process of career decision making, which can further bring down decision making confusion. These activities not only help the students to let go of the state of indecision, they also enable the students to commit to a ‘best’ option therefore, making them less susceptible to commitment anxiety. Also, the confusion to balance the importance of one's own self-perceptions with the importance of input from significant others does not exist for them. It is because such of family environment provides a context for the formation of strong identity. Whiston (1996) pointed out that career decision making, self-efficacy as well as self-esteem are positively related to the degree to which families encourage and support participation in variety of activities. Hence, the professional students who participate in social and recreational activities are also experiencing less dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, as well as external conflict. However, much future research is recommended for firm conclusions.
Organization is related negatively to decision making confusion for all the three streams of students. However, for arts and professional students (not science), it is also related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety. It is clear that when the family environment provides clear organization and orderliness in planning and structuring activities as well as responsibilities, it is not difficult for students to direct their cognitions and behaviours toward the career decision making process. The possibility of confusion does not exist when the family environment itself is involved in planning and structuring the activities and responsibilities. Hargrove et al. (2002) observed that organization in family environment helps in the formation of clear and stable career goals and the promotion of self-confidence with regard to completing career planning activities. Thus, lower level of decision making confusion as well as dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety is not supporting for the present sample. Moreover, no relationship of organization with dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety for science student appeared. It highlights that perhaps, the precision of the subject (science) does not allow dysfunctional career thoughts or commitment anxiety to play their roles in the organized family environment which, itself is providing an infrastructure of precision required by science.

Further, the results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on organisation along with cohesion, self-oriented and socially prescribed positive perfectionism, and negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). On the other hand for science students (table 5.10), significant and positive loadings on organisation along with achievement orientation, cohesion, moral-religious emphasis, problem-focused coping and social coping is evident with negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict, thus for both students (arts and science), a negative relationship appeared between organisation and decision making confusion. However, such relationship was not seen for professional students (table 5.12). Hence, much future research is needed for firm conclusions.
CONTROL

Control is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts for only arts students and no such relationship is evident for science or professional students. It implies that arts students who perceive their family environments high on control (i.e., set rules and procedures which are used to run family life) are experiencing high dysfunctional career thoughts. Bratcher (1982) observed that family’s concepts of rules and boundaries are among the most influential systemic issues likely to affect one’s career. Rigid rules can keep the system closed, preventing family members from new experiences and growth, which might influence young people when they make decisions about career choice (see Chope, 2002). Guay et al. (2003) also pointed out that they less autonomy supportive and the more controlling are parents, they less positive are students’ perceptions of self-efficacy and autonomy towards career decision making activities.

In controlled family environments, perhaps families have set certain ways of doing things and emphasis is always given on following set rules. With so many constrictions, students are less likely to have clear and stable perceptions of their goals, interests, and talents, as well as less confidence as decision makers. They may be less likely to make decisions without unnecessary delay, difficulty, or dependency and may be more worried about their choice. Perhaps, the arts students are more prone not only to be influenced by the high control in family environment, but also to experience feelings of guilt, sadness, hopelessness, and irrational ideas concerning career choice whereas, science and professional students have a clear idea about their career choices. That is why they are not easily discouraged and dejected by the set rules or procedures of their families and hence, do not experience dysfunctional thoughts in those situations. However for supportive evidences, much future research is required.

Thus, from the above findings, based on correlation and factor analysis, it may be concluded that the hypothesis III (b) is partially confirmed with regard to university students in arts, science, and professional streams.

6.4 PERFECTIONISM AND COPING BEHAVIOUR

Perfectionism is considered as an aspect of personality (Frost et al., 1990; Habke & Flynn, 2003; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). The influence of personality factors
and individual differences is believed to be largely mediated by how individuals cope with stressful situations (Brumbaugh, Lepsik, & Olinger, 2007). Stoeber and Otto (in press, p.l. as cited by Vallance, Dunn & Dunn, 2006) states that “perfectionism is commonly conceived as personality style characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting excessively high standards of performance [that are] accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations of one's behaviour.” Irrespective of who sets the perfectionists performance standards (i.e., self or others), and irrespective of whether these standards are real or perceived, when the perfectionists performance endeavours fall short of expected standard (or goal), the likelihood of experiencing a negative affective or emotional response is increased (Griffith & Graham, 2004; Higgins, 1987).

Generalized perfectionism is thought to be motivated by both a need to achieve perfection and to avoid failure (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b), but it is the focus on avoiding failure and associated anxiety, that promotes negative consequences (Lalonde, 2000). Higher levels of perfectionism has been shown to be related to higher levels of stress, difficulties in coping or adjusting, and higher levels of hopelessness (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000; Dunkley et al., 2003; Flett, Hewitt, & De Rosa, 1996; Mitchelson & Burns, 1998; O’Connor & O’Connor, 2003). Perfectionism is an individual difference variable that is stable across time and space (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

Terry-Short et al. (1995) and Slade and Owens (1998) distinguished between positive and negative perfectionism, based on functional differences. Positive perfectionism refers to cognitions and behaviours that are directed towards the achievement of certain high-level goals to obtain positive consequences. It is driven by positive reinforcement and a desire for success. On the other hand negative perfectionism refers to the cognitions and behaviours that are directed towards the achievement of certain high level goals to avoid or escape from negative consequences. It is driven by negative reinforcement and a fear of failure.

Ram (2005) suggested that positive aspects of perfectionism were related to the use of function of coping strategies—such as active coping and planning, and it was negatively related to the use of dysfunctional coping strategies (such as the mental disengagement and behavioural disengagement) whereas, negative aspects of perfectionism were related to the use of dysfunctional coping strategies.
A variety of coping strategies allow people to cope in order to avoid or minimize the distress (cited by Brannon & Feist, 2007). Problem-focused coping attempts to regulate the situation and emotion-focused coping attempts to directly regulate emotions (Wolchik & Sandler, 1997) but, social coping involves seeking support from other (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004) and avoidance coping involves either not to think about the stressor or to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991).

Although, socially prescribed perfectionism is considered to be maladaptive form of perfectionism in many studies (e.g., Flett et al., 1994; Flett et al., 1996; Miquelon, Vallerand, Grouzet, & Cardinal, 2005) but it may involve both adaptive and maladaptive forms. Ram (2005) suggested that self-oriented perfectionism has also been related to both adaptive and maladaptive aspects. In the present study, both the functional (positive and negative) and content (self-oriented and socially prescribed) differences have been studied revealing the positive and negative side of self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Thus, pointing towards the multidimensional aspect of perfectionism in relation to various kinds of coping behaviour.

6.4.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND COPING BEHAVIOUR FOR MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis IV(a) states that "self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and social coping while, negatively related to avoidance coping for male and female university students."

The hypothesis IV(b) states that "self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to emotion-focused coping and avoidance coping while, negatively related to problem-focused coping and social coping for male and female university students."

With regard to correlational and factor analysis results obtain for male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students, following interpretation has been put forth.
SELF-ORIENTED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented positive perfectionism is related positively to problem-focused coping of both male and female students. It implies that both the genders reported to have a high tendency to set excessively high personal standards for oneself to obtain positive consequences, at the same time they are also reporting higher use of problem-focused coping. Self-oriented perfectionism [perfectionistic behaviour directed and one’s self; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a] is usually considered as being more adaptive form of perfectionism because a majority of research has found it to be either associated with positive outcomes or unrelated to negative consequences (Miquelon et al., 2005). Carver et al. (1989) found that function coping strategies are linked to beneficial personality quantities. Burns and Fedewa (2005) found that positive perfectionism was adaptive and reinforcing, and was correlated strongly with positive coping behaviours. Adaptive perfectionists reported greater use of problem-focused coping (Rice & Lapsley, 2000). Problem-focused coping involves distinct activities such as planning, acceptance, taking direct action, positively reframing etc. It is aimed at problem-solving, or doing something to alter the source of stress (Carver et al., 1989; Stanton et al., 1994). By taking steps to engage in their problems actively and to distract themselves emotionally healthy ways, positive perfectionists appear to be more tolerant and effective (Burns & Fedewa, 2005 in Ram, 2005). Positive affect, high self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal control, adaptive coping with stress, positive appraisal of personal projects etc. are some of the positive adaptive qualities of self-oriented perfectionism (Blankstein & Dunkley, 2002; Burns & Fedewa, 2005). Self-oriented perfectionism was found to be associated with positive problem-solving orientation (Flett et al., 1996) and active coping (Dunkley et al., 2000).

Positive perfectionist individual has a willingness to approach stimuli, and strives to achieve high standards, which enhances self-esteem and self-satisfaction (Accordino et al., 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Davis, 1997 as cited by Ram, 2005). They believe that “the organizational features of adaptive perfectionism dispose a person to adopt the sort of planning and other active coping activities that are characteristic of problem-focused coping (Slaney et al., 2002: 77). Atkins (1991) found that male and female children generally tend to use the same types of coping strategies. Further, Basmaç (1998) and Taylan (1990) indicated that gender did not affect
problem-solving skills. In the present study perhaps for both male and female students, high self-oriented positive perfectionism is adaptive and reinforcing as they are using more adaptive as well as positive coping behaviour to deal with the stressful situation either by changing the source of the stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) through direct action or by planning, positively reframing, and engaging in active problem-solving.

However only the males (not females), high in self-oriented positive perfectionism also reported lesser the use of avoidance coping. Avoidance coping involves responses or reactions, distracting or diverting individual’s attention from stressful situations (Endler & Parker, 1990). Such responses may include behaviour disengagement, substance-use, denial, and self-blame aspects of coping (Carver, 1997). Husain and Rashid (2004, vol.2, p.5) cited that men act on their environment instrumentally through constructive (problem-focused coping) or destructive (avoidance coping) way. Flett and Hewitt (2002b) and Flett et al. (1996) associated self-oriented perfectionism with adaptive aspects as it is associated with positive outcomes. Self-oriented perfectionism is under and individual’s control and involves standards that may be changed in a proactive manner (e.g., setting exacting standards for oneself and stringently evaluating or censuring one’s own behaviour) (see Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Miquelon et al., 2005). Edge et al., 2001 in Murphy, 2002) found that adaptive perfectionists have significantly lower scores on immature defences such as denial, acting out, passive aggression and projection compared with maladaptive perfectionists (in Slaney et al., 2002). Additionally, O’Connor and O’Connor (2003) indicated that self-oriented perfectionism was related to a lower avoidance coping. Thus in the present study, it appears that high self-oriented positive perfectionism of male students is characteristic of more use of problem-focused coping (adaptive coping) and less use of avoidance coping (maladaptive coping).

However, the results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping and social coping along with socially prescribed positive perfectionism, cohesion and achievement orientation on factor III for only male students (table 5.4) and not female students (table 5. 6). Therefore, it implies that for only males, a positive
relationship appeared between self-oriented positive perfectionism and problem-focused as well as social coping.

(ii) **SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM**

Socially prescribed positive perfectionism is related positively to problem-focused as well as socially coping for both genders. Although, socially prescribed perfectionism [perceived need to attain standards and expectations prescribed by significant others; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a] is considered as being a maladaptive form of perfectionism because it has been found to be consistently associated with negative consequences (Miquelon et al., 2005) but, it may involve both adaptive and maladaptive forms. Flett et al. (1994) found that socially prescribed perfectionism was associated with less adaptive coping and more maladaptive coping strategies. Slade and Owens (1998) observed that the positive perfectionist users approach (pursuit) behaviour. Further, in interpersonal (i.e., social) functioning, the individual high on positive perfectionism is motivated to seek approval and acceptance from everyone. Also, the positive perfectionist experiences satisfaction, pleasure, and even euphoria when they succeed but, may not be unduly affected by failure (also Slade & Owens, 1998). Both male as well as female students of our sample, high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism are reporting higher use of problem-focused as well as socially coping.

Prokopeakova (1995) observed that coping strategies were not determined by the situation itself, but represented a process in which personality interacted with perceived characteristics of the situation. In socially prescribed positive perfectionism, a positive striving factor is functional which is reflecting positive/adaptive aspect of perfectionism (Frost et al., 1993). Rice and Ashby (2007), Rice and Dellwo (2002), and Rice and Slaney (2002) reported that adaptive perfectionists experienced high expectations from others (with less parental criticism) but, did not report acute worry and stress over meeting those expectations. Further, adaptive perfectionists also have high self-esteem and life satisfaction (Rice & Dellwo, 2002). Burns and Fedewa (2005) observed a strong correlation between positive perfectionism and positive coping behaviours. In the present study perhaps, for the both male and female students, high socially prescribed positive perfectionism is an adaptive aspect i.e., perception of unrealistic standards and motives set by significant others for them did not exert excessive pressure on them to
be perfect, and whatever stress it might otherwise cause lead them to use problem-focused coping as well as social coping (i.e., emotional and instrumental social support). As cited by Weiten and Lloyd (2007), in trying to tackle problems directly, it pays to keep in mind the value of seeking aid from friends, family, or others.

More recently, research has suggested that male and female adolescents use different types of coping strategies to manage their stressors (Byrne, 2000 in Murphy, 2002). The female students of the present study are significantly high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism as compared to their male counterparts (see table 5.1). For females (not males) socially prescribed positive perfectionism is also found to be related positively to emotion focused and avoidance coping. It could be implied that female students are high in the belief that others have unrealistic standards and perfectionistic expectations about them and that others will be satisfied only when these standards are attained. Females of the present study are also reporting higher use of all the four types of coping behaviour (i.e., problem-focused, emotion-focused, social, and avoidance coping).

One way to feel better and be healthier is to develop a variety of coping strategies to help one to deal with inevitable stresses of life, so that a person can use any coping strategy required by the situation in order to avoid or minimize stress (Brannon & Feist, 2007). This may be done either by solving the problem (i.e., removing the stimulus) or accommodating to the concern without bringing about a solution (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a as cited by Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). The coping behaviour—emotion-focused, social as well as avoidance coping—may remove some of the distress that can interfere with problem-focused coping efforts and can thereby make problem-focused coping much easier. Similarly, even problem-focused coping can render a threat less forbidding thereby, diminishing emotional distress and insecurity (Carver et al., 1989; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lazarus et al., 1984). Dunkley and Blankstein (2000) suggested that socially prescribed perfectionism was correlated with emotion-oriented, task-oriented, and distraction coping. Flett et al. (2002) suggested that adaptive dimensions of perfectionism can impact positively on stress. In general, findings suggest that females appear to favour social support, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping strategies relative to males (Billings & Moos, 1981; Ptacek et al., 1992).
In the present study perhaps, when female students with high levels of socially prescribed positive perfectionism are so much concerned with meeting standards and expectations imposed by significant others, they try using different kinds of coping strategies in order to free themselves from the excessive stress it would otherwise cause. Probably, it might be the reason that the perceived need to attain standards and motives (prescribed by significant others) might lead the females of the present study to use problem-focused coping (e.g., planning, positively reframing etc.), and when they perceive the stress/stressful situation uncontrollable they turned towards the use of emotion-focused coping (e.g., turning to religion, self-distraction, venting of emotions etc.) as well as avoidance coping (e.g., behaviour disengagement, self-blame, denial etc.), and when nothing seemed working they also turned towards social coping i.e. seeking emotional (e.g. gaining sympathy etc.) as well as instrumental (e.g., advice, information etc.) social support.

Furthermore, the results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping and social coping along with cohesion, achievement orientation, and self-oriented positive perfectionism in factor III for male students (table 5.4) and not females (table 5.6). Thus a positive relationship is evident between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused as well as social coping. However, much future research is required for firm conclusions as this finding stands on its own merit.

Hence, in view of the above findings based on the correlational as well as factor analysis it may be concluded that the hypothesis IV (a) is partially confirmed with regard to gender.

(iii) SELF-ORIENTED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented negative perfectionism is related positively to emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping for both male and female students. It indicates that both the genders high on self-oriented negative perfectionism (tendency to set unrealistic standards for oneself, to be self-critical, to overly focus on their flaws, and to avoid failure) are reporting high use of emotion-focused avoidance coping strategies. Negative perfectionism involves avoiding aversive outcomes (Slade & Owens, 1998). Individuals generally use emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman,
as well as avoidance coping strategies to manage uncontrollable stressors. Emotion-focused coping is oriented towards managing or reducing the emotions that accompany the perception of stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), by using such responses such as venting of emotions, self-destruction, turning to religion or being humorous (Carver, 1997). On the other hand, avoidance coping involves cognitive or behavioural efforts to either not think about the stressor or to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991). Such responses involve self-blame, denial, behaviour disengagement, and substance-use (Carver, 1997). Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggest that perfectionists, relative to non-perfectionists, are exposed to a greater number of stressful events as a result of their unrealistic approach to life. The usual stressors that can occur to any normal person, produces stressors for perfectionists because they seek perfection in many, if not all, spheres of behaviour. Perfectionist behaviour can generate stress that stems partly from the perfectionist’s tendencies to stringently evaluate themselves, focus on negative aspects of performance, and experienced little satisfaction. Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggests that perfectionists have a difficult time accepting failure, and have strong negative reactions to the actual or perceived experience of stressful events.

Studies suggest that self-oriented perfectionism may involve both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. It has been suggested that although self-oriented perfectionists may generally use adaptive coping strategies, using those strategies in certain situations may actually accentuate distressed because they may put a great deal of effort into tasks that are irrelevant or unimportant—they may not know when to stop the task focus, or use strategies in inappropriate situations (Hewitt & Flett, 2002 as cited by Ram, 2005). In the present study, perhaps perfectionist behaviour of both the genders might have generated stress partly from their perfectionist tendencies to stringently evaluate themselves [by setting excessively high personal standards for oneself as well as striving to avoid failures (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b)]. However when the stress becomes unavoidable as well as uncontrollably for them, they might resort in using high levels of emotion-focused as well as avoidance coping. Carver et al., (1989) pointed out that a given coping strategy may not be intrinsically maladaptive, but may become dysfunctional if it is relied on for long periods when other strategies are more useful. However, lack of supportive evidence requires much future research for firm conclusions.
(iv) SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Socially prescribed negative perfectionism is related positively to avoidance coping for both male and female students. However for only female students, it is also related positively to emotion-focused coping. Negative perfectionism is driven by the desire to avoid disapproval of others and a fear of failure (Slade & Owens, 1998). They tend to avoid their problems rather than actively engaging with them. By viewing the world in exaggerated extremes and using a passive coping style, negative perfectionists may be able to avoid discomfort of shifting to more proactive and engaged coping strategies. By focusing on reactions to a stressor rather than on stressor itself, predictive certainty negative perfectionists is in a sense reinforced (Burns & Fedewa, 2005). Socially prescribed negative perfectionists may feel like they have little choice in the tasks in which perfection is required, as standards are imposed by significant others (Tangney, 2002). They are motivated by a fear of failure, and often social criticism, which still occurs even when standards have been met (Blackburn, 2003). The inability of many perfectionists to admit their imperfection may mean that they may not be using appropriate measurements (coping) to deal with stress. This can maintain and prolong the stress (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Flett et al., (2002) suggests that perfectionists have characteristics that will lead to stress enhancement and even the generation of stress. Socially prescribed negative perfectionism has been found to be highly dependent on avoidant behaviour which is the source of many negative behaviours (Burns & Fedewa, 2005). Pessimism and cognitive inflexibility appear to limit them by feeling distressed about things that may be out their control. This interferes with their judgment and their ability to focus on the problem at hand (Burns & Fedewa, 2005; Hewitt & Flett, 2002).

In the present study, when both the genders perceived that significant others are imposing excessively high standards on them and that they must attain such standards to please them, they try using avoidance coping strategies (such as denial, behaviour disengagement, substance use, and self-blame) to avoid disapproval by others (Frost & Marten, 1990; Hall, 2005) as well as shame, guilt, and embarrassment accompanying it (Tangney, 2002). Also, perhaps an element of pressure combined with the sense of helplessness and hopelessness (Benson, 2003) may lead both male and female students to use avoidance coping.
Furthermore for only females (not males), high socially prescribed negative perfectionism also leads them to use emotion-focused coping as well. Coping strategies vary depending upon the type of situation and the individual person's habits and resources (Mishara, 2008). It could be pointed out that excessive levels of socially prescribed negative perfectionism may result in a sense of learned helplessness due to a perceived inconsistency between one's own behaviour and unrealistic standards perceived by others (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Perhaps in order to evade such a stress, female students try to manage the distressed emotions rather than dealing with the stressor per se. However, lack of supportive evidences requires a need for much future research.

Therefore, from the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis it can be concluded that the hypothesis IV (b) has been partially accepted with regard to male and female university students.

6.4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND COPING BEHAVIOUR FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARTS, SCIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis IV(c) states that “self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and social coping; while negatively related to avoidance coping for arts, science, and professional stream university students.”

The hypothesis IV(d) states that “self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to emotion-focused coping and avoidance coping while, negatively related to problem-focused coping and social coping for arts, science, and professional streams university students.”

Based on the correlational results as well as factor analysis with regard to arts (table 5.7 & 5.8), science (table 5.9 & 5.10), and professional (table 5.11 & 5.12) streams, following discussion has been presented.
SELF-ORIENTED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented positive perfectionism is related positively to problem-focused coping for all the three streams. It indicates that the students in all the three streams (arts, science, professional) who are high on self-oriented positive perfectionism (focuses on the standards people set for themselves with a desire for success) are reporting high use of coping aimed at problem solving or doing something to alter the source of stress—internal or environmental. Rice and Lapsley (2001) found that those classed as adaptive perfectionists reported greater use of problem-focused coping. According to Lundh (2004), positive perfectionism is viewed as a dialectic combination of a striving for perfection and acceptance of non-perfection. Slade and Owens (1998) hypothesize that the individual high on positive perfectionism is motivated by a desire to get as close as possible to their ideal self. It encourages positive and active striving towards goals and the individual is able to regulate their perfectionism. It is therefore associated with high achievement and positive effect (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). The high positive affect reflects state of high energy, full concentration, pleasurable engagement, and satisfaction (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988 in Ram, 2005). Blankstein and Dunkley (2002) suggested that perfectionists experience a high amount of stress as they can unrealistically appraise ordinary events as though they are distressing but, the adaptive dimensions of perfectionism can impact positively on stress (Flett et al., 2002 in Slaney et al., 2002). The positive perfectionism is driven by positive reinforcement and a desire for success (Slade & Owens, 1998; Terry-Short et al., 1995) and was found to be strongly correlated with positive coping behaviours (Burns & Fedewa, 2005). In the present study for all the students in three streams, with high self-oriented positive perfectionism, appear to be using problem-focused strategies such as planning, positively reframing, taking direct action, acceptance, and other active coping activities, when they feel that something constructive can be done to alter the distress.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping along with socially prescribed positive perfectionism, cohesion and organisation, and negative loadings on avoidance coping and decision making confusing in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). This implies that for arts students a positive relationship is evident between self-oriented positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping while, a
negative relationship is seen with regard to self-oriented positive perfectionism and avoidance coping. On the other hand for professional students (table 5.12), the results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping along with socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, achievement orientation, and moral-religious emphases in factor II. It is indicative of a positive relationship between self-oriented positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping. However, no such relationship is evident for science stream students (table 5.10). However, much future research is needed for firm conclusions.

(ii) SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Socially prescribed positive perfectionism is related positively to problem-focused coping for all the three streams students. The focus of socially prescribed perfectionist is predominantly on gaining approval or avoiding disapproval of others. It is the perceived recognition of others which socially prescribed perfectionist seeks in order to validate the sense of self (Hall, 2006). Positive perfectionists appear to be more tolerant and effective, as they actively engage themselves in their problems and also distract themselves in emotionally healthy ways (Burns & Fedewa, 2005). It could be interpreted that all the students in three streams who are high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, are reflecting adaptive aspect of perfectionism (Frost et al., 1993) which is perhaps encouraging them to positively and actively strive towards their goals or stressors (Flett & Hewitt, 2002b). Further perhaps being positive perfectionists, the higher perception of other people's imposed expectations do not cause acute worry and distress (Rice & Ashby, 2007; Rice & Dellwo, 2002; Rice & Slaney, 2002; Peters, 2005) in arts, science, as well as professional students. Rather, the fear of not being able to live up to the expectations of others or a fear of disapproval by others (see Frost & Marten, 1990) might be motivating them to use more problem-focused coping tactics. However, only professional students high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism are not only reporting greater use of problem-focused coping, but also a greater use of social coping.

Social coping or social support can be a powerful force that helps buffer the deleterious effects of stress and that has positive effects of its own (Wills & Fegan,
2001). It may help people gain confidence in their ability to handle stressful situations; thus when they experience stress, they may appraise the stressor as less threatening than people who have fewer coping resources (Will, 1998). Wills (1989) and Wills and Vaughn (1989) found that adolescents seeking support from adults were positively related to self-esteem. Perhaps, it could be viewed that professional students high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism are motivated to seek approval and acceptance of everyone (Slade & Owens, 1998) which might lead them to use social coping strategies even when tackling problems directly. No such relationship has been perceived for either arts or science students.

The results of factor analysis have shown significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping, self-oriented positive perfectionism, cohesion and organisation along with negative loadings on avoidance coping and decision making confusion in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). This indicates that problem-focused coping is related positively and avoidance coping is related negatively to socially prescribed positive perfectionism for arts students. Further for science students (table 5.10), factor analysis reveals significant and positive perfectionism, problem-focused coping, and social coping, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, cohesion and organisation, along with negative loadings on conflict and decision making confusion in factor II. It shows that a positive relationship exists between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused as well as social coping for science students. Finally for professional students (table 5.12), the results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping along with self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism, self-oriented positive perfectionism, achievement orientation, and moral-religious emphases in factor II. Thus, implying a positive relationship is evident between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and problem-focused coping. However for firm conclusions, much future research is required.

Thus, from the above findings based on the correlational as well as factor analysis it may be concluded that the hypothesis IV (b) is partially confirmed with regard to arts, science and professional stream students.
(iii) SELF-ORIENTED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented negative perfectionism is related positively to emotion-focused coping for all the three stream students. Difficulties are thought to arise from the characteristics of perfectionist individuals such as the tendency to set unrealistic standards, to strive for these standards, to focus on failures and to think in all-or-nothing terms (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b). Self-oriented perfectionists are often highly critical of themselves, they tend to over-generalize the failure and perceive it as a characteristic of the entire self (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, O'Brien, 2004). Negative perfectionism is largely unregulated, and is associated with adverse and punishing outcomes, failure and negative affect including contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness (Blackburn, 2003; Flett & Hewitt, 2002b; Lynd-Stevenson & Hearne, 1999). Emotion-focused coping strategies do not change the reality of the situation, and are used simply to avoid painful or difficult feelings or to help the person feel better and less stressed (in Mishara, 2008). It includes venting of emotions, turning to religion, being humorous, and even self-distraction like going to movies, going to shopping, transcendental meditation (Carver, 1997; Mishara, 2008). The characteristics of perfectionists (ibid) will lead to stress enhancement as well as to the generation of stress (Flett et al., 2002; Hewitt & Flett, 2002). The negative perfectionist is driven by a desire to get as far away as possible from their feared self, are never satisfied by achieving their goal (Slade & Owens, 1998) and have a difficult time accepting failure (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). Thus, emotion-focused coping strategies might serve as a tactic of active coping with a stressor when a person perceives the stressor as uncontrollable as well as unavoidable.

However arts and professional students (not science) high self-oriented negative perfectionism are also reporting high use of avoidance coping, along with emotion-focused coping. The effectiveness of one's coping will influence whether an event/stressor is appraised as stressful, benign or challenging (Cohen & Lazarus, 1979). The adaptive value of a coping technique depends on the exact nature of the situation (Weiten & Lloyd, 2007). The effect of avoidance coping strategies (e.g., self-blame, substance-use, behaviour disengagement, and denial; Carver, 1997) might be expected to differ as a function of the characteristics of the situation or of the individual. In extremely high-stress situations, in uncontrollable stressful situations, or in acute stressful situations, in uncontrollable stressful situations, or in
acute stressful situations, avoidance may be adaptive in lowering the level of negative arousal, perhaps allowing the person time to mobilize for more active problem-solving or positive cognitive reappraisal (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Suls & Fletcher, 1985 as cited by Wolchik & Sandler, 1997). Dunkley and Blankstein (2000) found that avoidance behaviours (like blaming oneself) mediated the relationship between self-critical perfectionism and levels of higher distress. In the present study, perhaps high fear of failure, of not being perfect and of not being able to live up to their own standards, might cause overwhelming feelings in students (arts as well as professional) that might lead them to the use of more to avoidance coping, allowing them to avoid a less than perfect performance (Frost & Marten, 1990; Frost et al., 1990; Peters, 2005).

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented negative perfectionism and problem-focused coping along with self oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism, socially prescribed negative perfectionism, achievement orientation, and moral-religious emphasis in factor II for only professional students (table 5.12) and not for either arts (table 5.8) or science (table 5.10) students. Thus, pointing towards a positive relationship between self-oriented negative perfectionism and problem-focused coping.

(iv) SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Socially prescribed negative perfectionism is related positively to emotion-focused coping for arts and science students. Coping resources represent attempts made by the individual to restore the equilibrium or remove the turbulence for the individual either by solving the problem or by accommodating to the concerned without bringing about a solution (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a as cited by Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). When people feel that the stressor is something that must be endured, emotion-focused coping is used (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Socially prescribed perfectionism is associated with an external locus of control and is reactive rather than proactive. Excessive levels of socially prescribed perfectionism may result in a sense of learned helplessness due to the perceived incontingency between one's own behaviour and unrealistic standards prescribed by others (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Socially prescribed perfectionists tend to blame factors such as luck and situational context and also a perceived lack of personal
control and a tendency to attribute both positive and negative outcomes to external factors (Flett & Hewitt, 1998). Often, because of the assumptions about the expectations that others hold, the individual strives for standards that are unattainable. They are motivated by a fear of failure, fear of disapproval, rejection, and often social criticism (Blackburn, 2003 in Ram, 2005). Such cognitions and behaviour in arts and science students of the present sample may lead them to use more emotion-focused coping strategies (like self-destruction, venting etc.) to manage emotional distress.

Further, the professional students high on socially prescribed negative perfectionism are reporting high use of avoidance coping (substance-use, denial, self-blame etc.). No such relationship has been observed for arts as well as science students. Baumeister (1990) observed that excessive socially prescribed perfectionism combined with such factors as hopelessness and maladaptive coping to create suicidal tendencies. Socially prescribed perfectionism has been found to be highly dependent on avoidant behaviour, which is the source of many negative behaviours. Negative perfectionists tend to avoid their problems rather actively engaging in them (Burns & Fedewa, 2005). In the present study, the professional students have excessively high fear of disapproval by others and belief that if they let others see their flaws, they will not be accepted (Frost & Marten, 1990; Hall, 2005). In fact it may be said that perhaps, the desire in them to avoid disapproval of others, fear of failure (Slade & Owens, 1998) as well as fear to live up to the expectations of others, might lead them to indulge in avoidance coping tactics.

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed negative perfectionism and problem-focused coping along with self oriented and socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented negative perfectionism, achievement orientation, and moral-religious emphasis in factor II for only professional students (table 5.12). It implies a positive relationship between socially prescribes negative perfectionism and problem-focused coping. However no such relationship is evident for arts (table 5.8) and science (table 5.10) students. However, lack of supportive evidences requires a need for much more future research.
Hence, from the super findings based on correlational and factor analysis it may be deduced that the hypothesis IV (d) is partially confirmed for different streams.

6.5 PERFECTIONISM AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

It is natural that individuals at different stages of their lives are preoccupied with career choices (Campbell & Cellini, 1981; Gati et al., 2001 as cited by Gati & Tal, 2008; Super, 1980). Career development is a process that spans an individual's life (Super et al., 1996, Vandracek et al., 1986). Career decision making is the process of making career choices based on one's personal experiences. A significant factor in career decision making is dysfunctional career thoughts (Sampson et al., 1996). It is important for individuals to have healthy and functional career thoughts to minimize the amount of dysfunctional career thoughts (Young & Chen, 1999).

Individuals with perfectionism attempt to be perfect or perform perfectly and any given time, but the magnitude of this perfectionism—positive or negative—is moderated by the goals (i.e., approach or avoidant goals) (in Kobori, 2005). According to Slade and Owens (1998), positive and negative perfectionists may exhibit the same or similar behaviour prima facie, but their latent motivations and corresponding affective states and cognitive processes are different.

The perfectionist's tendency to engage in setting unrealistic standards and striving to attain these standards, selective attention to and overgeneralization of failure, stringent self-evaluations, and a tendency to engage in all-or-none thinking (Burns, 1980; Hamachek, 1978; Pacht, 1984 in Hewitt & Flett, 1991a) lead to adjustment difficulties.

Perfectionism has both personal (self-oriented) and social (socially-prescribed) components (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991b). Self-oriented perfectionists sets high personal standards for themselves and evaluate their own performance against these standards, and socially prescribed perfectionist perceive that significant others in their lives hold excessively high standards for them (Neumeister, 2004, p.260). Increasing evidence of support a multi dimensional view of perfectionism that both positive (adaptive) and negative (maladaptive) aspects of incorporated (Flett & Hewitt, 2002).
6.5.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND CAREER DECISION MAKING THOUGHTS OF MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis V (a) states that “self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and negatively related while, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for male and female university students.”

Based on the correlational results and factor analysis with regard to male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students, following discussion has been put forth.

(i) SELF-ORIENTED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented positive perfectionism is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for both male and female students. It appears that both the genders with a high tendency to have high standards for oneself including the intrinsic need to be perfect and a compulsive striving for perfectionism and self-improvement (Hewitt & Flett, 1991a) to obtain positive consequences, are reporting less dysfunctional career thoughts as well as decision making confusion. Silverman (2005) believes the root of excellence is perfectionism and this is what urges an individual towards achieving high goals (in Peters, 2005). The positive perfectionists retain the ability to be satisfied with one’s performance (Accordino et al., 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Davis, 1997; Hamachek, 1978; Rheaume et al., 2000). Leong and Chervinko (1996) reported that self-oriented perfectionism was a significant and negative predictor of career decision. Neumeister (2004) found that self-oriented perfectionists had an underlying motive to achieve, rather than to avoid failure, which influenced them to set mastery goals, and adopt healthy achievement motivation strategies such as seeking out challenges, time management and asking for help. Hewitt and Flett (1991a) pointed out that self-oriented perfectionism is under individual’s control and involve standards that may be changed in a proactive manner and to sustain the decision making process and perhaps, less likely to be in a state of indecision about their choice. Thus, it is not unusual for them to experience less dysfunctional career thoughts. Personality traits such as
perfectionism, self-consciousness, fear of commitment (Leong & Chervinko, 1996), and anxiety (Fuqua et al., 1998) were all positively associated with career in decision (in Guay et al., 2003). Dysfunctional career thoughts have been found to be positively correlated with perfectionism and career indecision (Osborn, 1998). Irrational beliefs and expectations about career decisions may impede the career decision making process (Gati et al., 1996). Betz and Luzzo (1996) found that existence of homogeneity in men and women's experiences regarding to decision making process.

However, only females (not males) high on self-oriented positive perfectionism are also reporting less commitment anxiety. Commitment anxiety reflects the inability to make a commitment to a specific career choice which is accompanied by generalized anxiety about the outcome of the decision making process. This anxiety perpetuates indecision (Sampson et al., 1996, p.28). Perhaps, the positive perfectionistic behaviour of females being adaptive and reinforcing is directed at one's self, is also leading them to commit to a “best” choice without much anxiety after a potentially appropriate set of alternatives have been identified and thus, let go of the state of indecision. Research suggested that women may report higher levels of dysfunctional career thoughts due to higher reported levels of anxiety (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Güçray, 2001; Herr & Cramer, 1996). However, the result of the present finding is not supportive of this finding as females of this study are high on self-oriented positive perfectionism. Hence, much future research is recommended for from conclusions.

(ii)  **SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM**

Socially prescribed positive perfectionism is related negatively to decision making confusion for both the genders. However for only males, it is also related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts. Flett and Hewitt (2002) assumed that adaptive perfectionists pursue extreme standards in circumscribed domains of life. Socially prescribed positive perfectionism being an adaptive aspect, characterizes those individuals who believe that others who excessively high standards and expectations for them (Hewitt & Flett, 1991a) but, did not report body and stress over meeting those expectations (Rice & Ashby, 2007; Rice & Dellwo, 2002; Rice & Slaney, 2002). They report high self-esteem, satisfaction (Rice & Dellwo, 2002), pleasure and euphoria when they succeed (Slade & Owens, 1998). Decision making
confusion is that in inability to initiate or sustain the decision making process as a result of disabling emotions and/or lack of understanding about the decision making process itself (Sampson et al., 1996). In the view of the above it may be deduced that for both male and female students reporting high perceived need to attain standards and expectations imposed by significant others may not be exerting much pressure on them to be perfect. Thus, are not so overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem, hence experienced less decision making confusion and dysfunctional career thoughts. Bergman et al. (2007) found that negative perfectionism correlated with cognitive dysfunctions, maximizations, depressions, and regret. On the other hand, positive perfectionism was found to correlate with life satisfaction and maximization, but not with cognitive dysfunctions, depression and regret, among other maladaptive characteristics.

Male students reporting high socially prescribed positive perfectionism are not only experiencing less decision making confusion, but also less dysfunctional career thoughts. Dysfunctional career thoughts have been conceptualized as dysfunctional career beliefs (Krumboltz, 1990), dysfunctional cognitions (Corblishley & Yost, 1989), self-defeating assumptions (Dryden, 1999), faulty self efficacy (Brown & Lent, 1996), and irrational expectations (Nevo, 1987). The greater is the level of dysfunctional thinking, the greater is the difficulty in career problem solving and decision making. Thus, dysfunctional career thoughts may cause individuals to avoid or inappropriately and engage in career decision making process (Sampson et al., 1996). As such, socially prescribed perfectionism is associated with and external locus of control and is reactive rather than proactive (Hewitt & Flett, 1991a). Perhaps, male students with high socially prescribed positive perfectionism do not feel pressurized to live up to the unrealistic standards and expectations prescribed by significant others, which might be the reason for lower levels of dysfunctional career thoughts in them.

Hence, it can be concluded from the above findings that the hypothesis V (a) with regard to male and female university students is partially confirmed. However, lack of supportive evidences requires a need for much future research.
(iii) SELF-ORIENTED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM and SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism are related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for both male and female students. It implies that both the genders high on negative perfectionism—intrapersonal as well as interpersonal—are reporting high degree of indecision regarding career decision making process. People with perfectionism strain compulsively and unremittingly towards impossibly goals and rigidly adhere to them (Burns, 1980). Maladaptive perfectionists pursue extreme standards across a variety of life domains (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). They seem to be more self-critical and less satisfied with their accomplishments (Grzegorek et al., 2004). Generally, the maladaptiveness of perfectionism is determined by its association with negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem (Hewitt, Caelian, Flett, Sherry, Collins, & Flynn, 2002; McCreary, Joiner, Schmidt, & Ialonga, 2004), hopelessness, external locus of control, and lower a perception of social skills (Shafran & Mansell, 2001). Negative (maladaptive) perfectionism refers to the cognitions and behaviours to avoid negative reinforces, such as imperfection, disapproval by others, mediocrity, and failure. Moreover, perfectionists feel that even others demand perfectionism from them (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Slade & Owens, 1998). Negative perfectionism has been linked to various negative outcomes including feelings of failure, guilt, indecisiveness, shame, and low self-esteem (Hamachek, 1978; Pacht, 1984; Sorotzkin, 1985 in Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

Woloshyn (2005) indicated that perfectionists temporality is characterized by inadequacy, limits, speed, delays, and loss; relationality is characterized by the engagement in self-comparison, -evaluation, and -management, and other-comparison and -judgment; and spatiality by high expectations and ordering; and corporality by feelings of anxiety, panic, and fear, self-critical and dichotomous thinking, and psychological discomfort. Hewitt and Flett (2002) also suggest that perfectionist have a difficult time accepting failure and have strong negative reaction to the actual or perceived experience of stressful events. Many researchers have highlighted the role of cognitions and cognitive process in perfectionism, such as selective attention (Hollander, 1978)), dichotomous thinking, overgeneralization,
“should” statements (Burns, 1980), overvaluing performance and undervaluing the self (Hamachek, 1978) (as cited by Kearns, Forbes, & Gardiner, 2007).

Burns and Fedewa (2005) found that negative perfectionists are poor constructive thinkers and do not react well to stress. Pessimism and cognitive inflexibility appear to limit them by feeling distressed about things that may be out of their control. This interferes with their judgement and their ability to focus on the problem at hand. The tendency to engage in failure preservation and self-blame would contribute to both causing and maintaining the experience of stress. Some perfectionist’s have a cognitive style that involves the frequent experience of automatic, perfectionistic thoughts. The frequent experience of these thoughts is associated with psychological distress, such as anxiety. Perfectionists also often engage in rumination—when a failure or stressful event occurs they will continually focus on the discrepancy between their real and ideal selves. Rather than engaging in task focused attempts to alleviate distress of distract themselves, those with the ruminative orientation tend to focus cognitively on their experience of distress and ruminate about the nature and causes of that distress (Hewitt & Flett, 2002).

Self-oriented perfectionists are more sensitive in the domains in which they require perfection and may select tasks that are easily achieved. Socially prescribed perfectionists, in contrast, may feel like they have little choice in the tasks in which perfection is required as standards are imposed by others (Tangney, 2002). All these contribute to maladaptive outcomes. Perfectionism and the thoughts that perfectionists experience have consistently been linked with a number of negative outcomes (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, & Gray, 1998). In the present study, both male and female students high on negative perfectionism—self-oriented as well as socially prescribed—are also experiencing greater dysfunctional career thoughts (e.g., irrational cognitions, self-defeating beliefs), lack clarity in understanding how to go about the process of career decision making, have a greater inability to make a commitment to a specific career choice, and also have the inability to differentiate the perceptions of others from self-perceptions (i.e., weak identity) resulting in a reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making. Socially prescribed perfectionism was found to be correlated significantly with variety of irrational beliefs including high self-expectations, demand for socially approval, dependency,
blame proneness, and anxious over concern (Flett et al., 1991). Leong and Chervinko (1996) also observed that socially prescribed perfectionism was positively predictive of career indecision. Research does not usually report gender differences on career decision making, self-efficacy and career indecision (Betz & Voyten, 1997; Guay et al., 2003; Sweeney & Schill, 1998).

Further, the results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative, commitment anxiety, and external conflict in factor I for only female students (table 5.6) and not for male students (table 5.4). Thus, a positive relationship between self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism and all the aspects of career decision making for females is seen. However, much future research is recommended for from conclusions.

Hence, based on the correlational as well as factor analysis it may be deduced from the above findings that the hypothesis V (a) is partially accepted for male students but, is fully accepted for female students.

6.5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND CAREER DECISION MAKING FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ART, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis V (b) states that “self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism will be significantly and negatively related while, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism will be significantly and positively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for arts, science, and professional stream university students.”

The correlational and factor analysis results obtained with regard to arts (table 5.7 & 5.8), science (table 5.9 & 5.10), and professional (table 5.11 & 5.12) university students have been discussed as follows.

(i) SELF-ORIENTED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented positive perfectionism is related negatively to decision making confusion for all three streams. It appears that students of all the three streams high on self-oriented positive perfectionism (i.e., towards oneself) are experiencing lesser
career decision making confusion. Rodell (1984) pointed that in a positive form, perfectionism can provide the driving energy which leads to great achievement. Positive perfectionism refers to the perfectionist behaviour in which the individual has a willingness to approach stimuli, and strives to achieve high standards leading to rewarding outcomes (Accordino et al., 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Davis, 1997; Rheaume et al., 2000). Self-oriented positive perfectionism generates high self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-actualization, resourcefulness, positive affect, perceived control, positive appraisals of personal projects etc. (Blankstein & Dunkley, 2002; Burns & Fedewa, 2005). Self-oriented perfectionism is associated with a more intrinsic form of motivation because it is characterized by an inherent and personal need to be perfect and a striving for perfection and self-improvement (Flett et al., 1994; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Miquelon et al., 2005). It can be interpreted that students who got to university either because they enjoy it or because they think that university education will help them better prepare for career (Blais, Sabourin, Boucher, & Vallerand, 1990; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992; Miquelon et al., 2005; Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997) have comparatively less career decision making confusion enabling to initiate/sustain decision making process, while retaining the ability to be satisfied with one's performance (Accordino et al., 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Rheaume et al., 2000).

However, only arts students with high self-oriented positive perfectionism not only reporting less decision making confusion, but also less dysfunctional career thoughts as well as commitment anxiety. In self-oriented perfectionism and objects to the perfectionist behaviour is directed is the individual himself or herself (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Self-oriented perfectionists have perceived control over their perfectionistic behaviours which are self-directed (also Miquelon et al., 2005). Their perfectionistic behaviours are rooted in a need for achievement motives and mastery of goals, rather than to avoid failure stimulating further motivation to achieve such as seeking out challenges, commitment, time management etc. (Neumeister, 2004). Thus, it may be pointed out those arts students high on these motives, set high goals and personal standards and strive for the rewards associated with achievement, while retaining the ability to be satisfied with their performance (Accordino et al., 2000; Blackburn, 2003; Davis, 1997; Rheaume et al., 2000). Perhaps, this perfectionist behaviour of arts students might be helping them to be comfortable with their
progress in career decision making without dysfunctional career thoughts as well as commitment anxiety to a specific career choice.

Further, the results of factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on self-oriented positive perfectionism, socially prescribed positive perfectionism, cohesion, organisation and problem-focused coping along with negative loadings on decision making confusion and avoidance coping in factor II for only arts students (table 5.8) and not for either science (table 5.10) or professional (table 5.12). It implies that a negative relationship is evident between self-oriented negative perfectionism and decision making confusion for only arts students.

(ii) SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED POSITIVE PERFECTIONISM

Socially prescribed positive perfectionism is related negatively to decision making confusion for all the three streams students. Socially prescribed perfectionism is derived from the perception of other people’s imposed expectations. It may be stated that perhaps high expectations and standards from significant others did not exert much pressure on students (arts, science, professional) to be perfect, which might encourage positive and active striving toward goals by even asking for help. Thus, the decision making confusion is not experienced by them. Page et al. (2002) found that positive aspects of perfectionism play an important role in career choice and adjustment.

However, only arts students high on socially prescribed positive perfectionism are also experiencing less dysfunctional career thoughts. Sampson et al. (1996) observed that cognitive processes have an impact on the quality of career decisions made by individuals. Individuals who express and verbalize positive cognitions regarding the career decision making process tend to make effective decisions.

Bergman et al. (2007) observed that positive perfectionism was found to correlate with life-satisfaction and maximization but, not with cognitive dysfunctions, depressions, and regret among other maladaptive characteristics. In the present study, since arts students are not experiencing decision making confusion, this might be further responsible for less dysfunctional career thoughts. However, no such relationship appeared for science or professional students.
The results of factor analysis have shown significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, self-oriented positive perfectionism cohesion, organization, and problem-focused coping along with negative loadings on decision making confusion and avoidance coping in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). On the other hand for science students (table 5.10), factor analysis results have indicated significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed positive perfectionism, achievement orientation, problem-focused coping, moral-religious emphasis, cohesion, organization, and social coping along with negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict in factor II. However, no relationship was seen for professional students (table 5.12). Therefore, it appears that for both, arts as well as science students (not professionals) a negative relationship is evident between socially prescribed positive perfectionism and decision making confusion.

In nutshell, from the supra two findings based on correlational and factor analysis it is evident that the hypothesis V (b) is partially accepted with regard to arts, science, and professional stream students. Moreover due to lack of supportive evidences, much future research is required for firm conclusions.

(iii) SELF-ORIENTED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Self-oriented negative perfectionism is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety for all the three streams students. Maladaptive (negative) perfectionism is characterized by the setting of inflexible and/or unattainably high standards, the inability to take pleasure in one's performance and uncertainty or anxiety about one's capabilities (Enns et al., 2002, p. 922). Perhaps, they are more prone to irrational ideas concerning career choice, more apprehensive, fearful, and prone to worry and in a state of indecision about career choice (Blackburn, 2003; Frost et al., 1990). Thus, it is not unusual for male and female students to have high levels of dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety.

However, only arts and professional students who are high on self-oriented negative perfectionism are not only experiencing high dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety, but also high levels of external conflict. According to Sampson et al. (1996), external conflict reflects the inability to balance the importance of one's own perceptions with the importance of input from
significant others, resulting in a reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making. Taylor and Popma (1990) have shown that decisions that are internally valued facilitate rather than impede the career decision making process. However, Bergman et al. (2007) observed a positive correlation between negative perfectionism and cognitive dysfunctions. According to the manual (Sampson et al., 1996), the scores of dysfunctional career thoughts include the aspects of decision making confusion, commitment anxiety as well as external conflict. Thus, those high in dysfunctional career thoughts are bound to be high on decision making confusion and commitment anxiety.

The results of analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, external conflict and self-oriented negative perfectionism along with socially prescribed negative perfectionism and avoidance coping in factor I for only professional students (table 5.12) and not for either arts (table 5.8) or science (table 5.10) students. Thus, pointing towards a positive relationship between self-oriented negative perfectionism dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety and external conflict for only professional students.

(iv) SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED NEGATIVE PERFECTIONISM

Socially prescribed negative perfectionism is positively related to all four aspects of career decision making process i.e., dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for all the students in the three streams. Socially prescribed negative perfectionism is an individual’s interpretation that perfection is demanded by others who are significant in one’s life and there is a perceived need to attain those standards (Frost et al., 1990) by either avoiding or escaping negative consequences (Slade & Owens, 1998). Hewitt and Flett (1991) proposed that socially prescribed perfectionism is associated with a more extrinsic form of motivation because it is characterized by a sense of helplessness about the inability to establish personal control over evaluative standards and by a great desire to please others and avoid punishment (see Flett et al., 1994). Flett and Hewitt (2002) argued that socially prescribed perfectionists (maladaptive aspect) maintain a compulsive preoccupations and a high need for external validation. Further, Frost et al. (1990) pointed that these perfectionists
perceive unusually high parental expectations for flawless behaviour/performance, have consistently doubts about their own actions and about criticism from others. Guay et al. (2003) stated that career indecision has been related positively to personality traits such as perfectionism, fear of commitment (Leong & Chervinko, 1996), and anxiety (Fuqua et al., 1998). Career indecision has also demonstrated a significant relationship to self-defeating beliefs (Sweeney & Shill, 1998), lower career decision-making self-efficacy beliefs (Taylor & Betz, 1983), irrational thinking (Enright, 1996; Skorupa & Agresti, 1998; Steed et al., 1993), poor career beliefs (Enright, 1996); and negative career thoughts (Saunders et al., 2000) (cited by Dahl et al., 2008).

Miquelon et al. (2005) observed that students who go to university because they want to please their parents or because they experience an internal pressure to do so (see also, Blais et al., 1990; Vallerand et al., 1997; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992) are high on socially prescribed negative perfectionism. Often because of the assumptions about the expectations that others hold, the individuals strive for standards that are unattainable. They are motivated by a fear of failure and often social criticism (Blackburn, 2003). This form of perfectionism is self-defeating as a fear of failure and worry still occurs even when standards are met (Blackburn, 2003). This disposition generates from negative affect, a “dimension of subjective distress...that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states including anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear, and nervousness” (Watson et al., 1988). Negative affect is a mixture of anxiety and depression symptoms (Frost & Di Bartolo, 2002) and is related to self-reported stress (Watson et al., 1988). Thus in the view of above, high levels of dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict experienced by all the students of three streams who are also experiencing high socially prescribed negative perfectionism is in the predictive direction.

The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on socially prescribed negative perfectionism, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict alongwith avoidance coping and self-oriented negative perfectionism in factor I for professional students (table 5.12) and not for arts (table 5.8) or science (table 5.10) students. Hence,
depicting a positive relationship between socially prescribed negative perfectionism and dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, as well as external conflict.

Thus, based on the correlational as well as factor analysis it may be deduced from the above two negative aspects of perfectionism that the hypothesis \( V (b) \) is partially confirmed in relation to self oriented negative perfectionism but stands fully confirmed in relation to socially prescribed negative perfectionism with regard to arts, science, and professional streams. However for from conclusions, much future research is recommended.

6.6 COPING BEHAVIOUR AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

Individuals who are confident of their ability to cope effectively with decision-making tasks and who see such activity as leading to be desirable outcomes are likely to engage in the behaviours (like planning, gather information) necessary for making and adjusting to career choices (Bandura, 1986). Hann (1977, 1982) pointed that coping typically has referred to the most matured ego process, involving realistic and flexible thoughts and acts that contribute to more adaptive functioning. Skinner and Wellborn (1994) conceptualized that the immediate outcome of coping is to manage the individual’s engagement with (i.e., re-engagement) versus disaffection from the stressful situation, and the longer-term outcome is to impact social, cognitive, and personality development. Coping strategies vary depending upon the type of situation and the individual’s personal habits and resources (Mishara, 2008).

A career decision making process is a demanding, responsible, and stressful task for a student. Students who are more emotionally stable are more efficient in coping with dilemmas related to the further education as well as in making better decisions related to career (Pečjak & Košir, 2007). The complexity of the decision making of further education/study requires adolescents to use various skills in the process of selection (Gati et al., 1996 in Pečjak & Košir, 2007).

However, studies on children have shown that the use of problem-focused coping remains relatively stable with age whereas, use of emotion-focused coping increases during childhood and adolescence (Compas et al., 1992, Compas,
It has been argued that a single approach to supporting career decision making in young people is not feasible given the varying levels and types of support young people need at various stages in their school careers (Blenkinsop et al., 2006). Janis and Mann (1977) argue that people have different coping strategies in different tension situations which also sometimes characterise decision making situations. Individual factors such as poor problem-solving skills (Peterson et al., 1991), lack of self-knowledge related to career interest, abilities and values (Holland & Holland, 1977), maladaptive career beliefs and assumptions (Krumboltz, 1983; Nevo, 1987), have also been implicated in the development of dysfunctional career thoughts.

Making a career decision is a complex task and the deliberation involved often leads to discomfort, anxiety, and confusion (Osipow et al., 1980 as cited by Gati & Asher, 2001). Career-related choices are among the most important decisions people make during their lifetime (cited by Gati & Tal, 2008). Whereas, both decided and undecided individuals engage in some degree of dysfunctional thinking in career problem solving and decision making, indecisive individuals engage in dysfunctional thinking to the point of debilitation. Dysfunctional thinking limits an individual’s capacity to learn effective career problem solving and decision making skills. The greater the level of dysfunctional thinking, the greater is the difficulty in career problem solving and decision making (Sampson et al., 1996). The individual’s cognitions mediate and change individual’s career behaviour (Keller et al., 1982; Lent et al., 2000; Peterson et al., 1991; Sampson et al., 1996).

It is important to point that a given strategy may not be intrinsically maladaptive, but may become dysfunctional if it is relied on for long periods when other strategies are more useful (Carver et al., 1989) leading to poor coping outcomes.

6.6.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COPING BEHAVIOUR AND CAREER DECISION MAKING FOR MALE AND FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The hypothesis VI (a) states that “problem-focused coping will be significantly and negatively related while, emotion-focused coping, social coping, and avoidance coping will be significantly and positively related to dysfunctional
career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for male and female university students”.

Interpretation of correlational and factor analysis results with regard to male (table 5.3 & 5.4) and female (table 5.5 & 5.6) university students has been presented below.

(i) PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

Problem-focused coping is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for male and female students. It implies that both male and female students who are high on the use of problem-focused coping, experience less dysfunctional career thoughts and confusion in decision making process. Problem-focused strategies (such as active coping, positively reframing, planning, and acceptance; Carver, 1997) are aimed at problem-solving or doing something to alter the source of stress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Carver et al., 1989; Stanton et al., 1994). Researchers have reported that problem-focused coping significantly related to several positive developmental outcomes such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and perceived competence in multiple domains (Brodzinsky et al., 1992; Causey & Dubow, 1992; Wills, 1985, 1988). The positive relations between problem-focused and positive thinking strategies may be due to their improving the stressful situation or leading to more benign interpretation of the stressor (Wolchik & Sandler, 1997). Hence, the presence of dysfunctional career thoughts which may cause individuals to avoid or inappropriately engage in career problem solving and decision making behaviours will be less present in individuals who are high on the use of problem-focused coping. Also, high use of problem-focused coping includes initiating direct action, construing a stressful transaction in positive terms, and accepting the reality of stressful situation. Thus, the possibility of decision making confusion is also less. However, lack of supportive evidences requires a need for much future research to confirm conclusions.

Hence, in view of the above finding, it may be concluded that the hypothesis VI (a) is partially accepted with regard to genders.

(ii) EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

Emotion-focused coping is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety for both, male and
female students. It means that both the genders who are reporting greater levels of dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety are also using greater levels of emotion-focused coping strategies (such as self-distraction, venting of emotions, turning towards religion, and even humour). Emotion-focused coping is both, constructive emotional expression and explosive emotional discharge. It tries to manage the distressed emotions rather than dealing with the stressor per se (Stanton et al., 1994). When the stressor seems unavoidable, managing the emotions that accompany the perception of stress may be best option (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety might result from the stressors that seem unavoidable and uncontrollable. Thus, they can be regarded as expressions of distressed emotions. Hence, high use of emotion-focused coping by the subjects (male and female students) is seen.

Further, females are also reporting high levels of external conflict (aspect of career decision making process) along with higher use of emotion-focused coping. Dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, as well as external conflict interfere with higher order cognitive processes necessary for effective career problem solving and decision making (Sampson et al., 1996). Researchers have found that females employ emotion-focused coping more often than males (Atkins, 1991; Bind & Harris, 1990; Carver et al., 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Ptacek et al., 1992). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have pointed that those events that constitute stress deemed by the individual to be some-what controllable generally lead the individual to employ problem-focused coping strategies. Conversely, individuals generally use more to emotion-focused coping strategies to manage uncontrollable stressors. In the present study perhaps, the high use of emotion-focused coping by these subjects can also be regarded as a substitute to problem-focused coping when they experience high dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict. However, much future research is recommended for firm conclusions.

(iii) SOCIAL COPING

Social coping is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for only male students. It implies that
those high on dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, and external conflict are using more social coping. When people experience high levels of dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety as well as external conflict then perhaps, individuals will be required to mobilize their psychological resources, share the task, and obtain information and skills. These are the aspects of social coping as identified by Caplan (1974). It has been pointed out by Carver et al. (1989) that people seek social coping for either instrumental reasons (i.e., seeking advice, assistance, or information) or for emotional reasons (i.e., to gain sympathy, moral, support, or understanding). Blenkinsop et al. (2006) noted that young people’s decisions frequently fluctuate over time, and that they would benefit from both personalised as well as individualised support. Phillips et al. (2001) suggested that the role others play in an individual’s career decision making process is significant, complex, predominantly positive, and appreciated. Thus, this finding is in a predicted direction for males. However, since no such relationship was seen for females, no firm conclusions can be drawn on this part of the research. Most of the studies on gender differences report females using more social coping mechanisms than the male counterparts (Billings & Moos, 1981; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Ptacek et al., 1992; Shulman, 1993 in Murphy, 2002). Hamdan-Mansour and Dawani (2008) found that female university students have higher perception of stress and social support than male university students. But, the present finding states just the opposite. Therefore for firm conclusions, much future research is recommended.

(iv) AVOIDANCE COPING

Avoidance coping is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, and external for both the genders. Avoidance coping involves cognitive or behavioural efforts to either not think about the stressor or to avoid encountering the stressful situation (Ebata & Moos, 1991). It includes behaviour disengagement, denial, substance-use, and self-blame aspects of coping mechanism (Carver, 1997). Perhaps, dysfunctional career thoughts, commitment anxiety, as well as external conflict are so high in both male and female students of our sample that they feel that stressors induced by all the above aspects of career decision making process are beyond their control, and hence, they report higher use of avoidance coping strategies to a great extent.
Similarly, males are also reporting high levels of decision making confusion and high use of avoidance coping. Perhaps, when the stress induced by decision making confusion (i.e., inability to initiate or sustain the career decision making process) becomes too high, they resort to greater use of avoidance coping. In the present study, male students are significantly higher on avoidance coping as well as decision making confusion than their female counterparts (see table 5.1). Murphy (2002) specifically reported that males more frequently employ avoidance than females. It has been proposed by Walker and Fraizer (1993) that as life becomes more complicated by several factors, many university students will experience numerous psychological, physiological, and social difficulties, develop several unhealthy lifestyle choices like, smoking, alcohol, eating too much that are often used for coping or as an avoidance to struggle with life stresses.

The result of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, external conflict, and avoidance coping in factor I for only male students (table 5.4). Thus implying a positive relationship between avoidance coping and all the aspects of career decision making. However, no such relationship appeared for female students (table 5.6). However, much future research is needed for firm conclusions.

Hence, from the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis, it may be deduced that the hypothesis VI (a) is partially confirmed with regard to male and female university students.

6.6.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COPING BEHAVIOUR AND CAREER DECISION MAKING FOR THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARTS, SCIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL STREAMS

The hypothesis VI (b) states that “problem-focused coping will be significantly and negatively related while, emotion-focused coping, social coping, and avoidance coping will be significantly and positively related to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict for arts, science, and professional streams university students”.

Based on the results of correlational and factor analysis with regard to arts (table 5.7 & 5.8), science (table 5.9 & 5.10), and professional (table 5.11 & 5.12) university students, following discussion has been put forth.

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(i) PROBLEM-FOCUSED COPING

Problem-focused coping is related negatively to dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion for arts as well as science students but, no such relationship has been seen for professional students. It means that arts and science students who exhibit greater use of problem-focused coping are reporting lesser dysfunctional career thoughts as well as lesser decision making confusion. Problem-focused coping tends to predominate when people feel that something constructive can be done (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). It involves doing something to change for better the problem causing distress either by changing one's own action or by changing the damaging or threatening environment (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Problem-focused coping responses include taking direct action, planning, positively framing, and accepting the reality of a stressful situation (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). It is utilized more when the problem is perceived as changeable (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985 in Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). In general, individuals who view themselves as masterful and in control of their lives are more likely to adapt successfully to stressful situations that are those who perceive life to be beyond their control (Bandura, 1982; Folkman, 1984). High self-esteem and high sense of mastery have shown to be related to effective personal efforts to overcome stressful situations and the tendency to use active strategies to cope with stress (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Carver et al., 1989; Compas et al., 1991). Thus, the dysfunctional career thoughts can be identified, challenged, and altered resulting in less decision making confusion as well as better career problem solving and decision making. Fewer dysfunctional career thoughts and decision making confusion may enable the person to use problem-solving coping.

However, arts students who are high in the use of problem-focused coping are also experiencing less commitment anxiety along with less career decision thoughts and decision making confusion. Perhaps, when the arts students perceive that the stressors as some-what controllable then, they might indulge in activities such as planning the action strategies, positive reframing of the stressor/problem, or in accepting the reality of a stressful situation, which might perpetuate less commitment anxiety in them. Wolchik and Sandler (1997) found positive correlation between problem-focused and positive thinking strategies.
The results of factor analysis indicate significant and positive loadings on problem-focused coping, cohesion, organization, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with significant and negative loadings on decision making confusion and avoidance coping in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). Moreover for science students (table 5.10), factor analysis reveals significant and positive loadings on problem-focused coping, cohesion, achievement orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, social coping, and socially prescribed positive perfectionism along with negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict in factor II. Thus, indicating a negative relationship between problem-focused coping and decision making confusion for both arts and science students. However, no such relationship was evident for professional students (table 5.12).

Hence, based on correlational and factor analysis it may be concluded the hypothesis VI (b) is partially confirmed for arts, science and professional university students.

(ii) EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING

Emotion-focused coping is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety for all the students in three streams. It implies that those students of all the streams (arts, science, and professional) who are high on dysfunctional career thoughts and commitment anxiety are using more emotion-focused strategies. Emotion-focused coping is aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with (or cued by) the situation (Carver et al., 1989; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). It tends to predominate when people feel that the stressor is something that must be endured (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Carver et al. (1989) suggested that emotion-focused responses involve self-distraction, humour, turning to religion, and venting of emotions. Perhaps, emotion-focused coping is used more when these students feel powerless to reduce the presence of high levels of dysfunctional career thoughts as well as the anxiety perpetuating from the inability to commit to a specific choice which might have been caused by expression of distressed emotions. This might enable them to either avoid or to inappropriately engage in career problem solving and decision making behaviours.
Further, only arts students who report higher use of emotion-focused coping are also experiencing high external conflict. Perhaps, the potential conflict with significant others, or continuous negative meta cognitions (i.e., negative self-talk), or failure to probably regulate lower order cognitive processes might lead arts students to resort to more self-distracting activities, become humorous or turn toward religion under stress as a tactic of active coping with a stressor.

On the other hand, both science and professional students are also reporting high levels of decision making confusion (also an aspect of career decision making process) along with the higher use of emotion-focused coping strategies. Sampson et al. (1996) suggested that a general predisposition towards dysfunctional thinking strongly influence subsequent specific aspects of dysfunctional career thinking, such as decision making confusion and commitment anxiety. Folkman and Lazarus (1985) pointed that emotion-focused coping is utilized more when the problem is perceived as less changeable and subsequently under less direct control of the individual (also see Frydenberg & Rowley, 1998). Since, the emotion-focused coping is generally utilized to simply avoid painful or difficult feelings, and not to change the reality of the situation (as seen in problem-focused coping). However, lack of supportive evidences requires much future research in this direction for firm conclusions.

(iii) SOCIAL COPING

Social coping is related positively to commitment anxiety for only science students whereas, to external conflict for only professional students. No such relationship has been seen for arts students. Social coping involves seeking social support for emotional reasons (i.e., getting moral support, sympathy, or understanding) and seeking social support for instrumental reasons (i.e., seeking advice, assistance, or information) from others (Carver et al., 1989). In reality, social support fluctuates over time and is evolved out of individuals’ interaction with others (also see Blenkinsop et al., 2006; Newcomb, 1990). Wills (1998) observed that social support may also help people gain confidence in their ability to handle stressful situations thus, when they experience stress, they may appraise the stressor as less threatening than people who have fewer social coping resources. Shields (2004) found that for adults who experienced little stress, social support was not very important in their feelings of distress, but for those who experienced stress, emotional support exerted a buffering effect. Thus, researchers typically view social
support as a complex, multidimensional construct including social relationships and supportive transactions (see Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Joseph, & Henderson, 1996). Blenkinsop et al. (2006) reported that young people who would benefit from personalized as well as individualized support.

In the present study, science students who are reporting greater levels of commitment anxiety (an aspect of career decision making process) are also high in using social coping. Germeijss et al. (2006) suggested that the linkage of indecisiveness, decisional status, and commitment are mediated by adolescents’ career choice anxiety. Thus, perhaps greater use of social coping mechanism can be found helpful when dealing with high degrees of commitment anxiety which might perpetuate their indecision.

Further only professional students, high on external conflict are also reporting greater use of social coping. External conflict is the inability to balance the importance of one's own self-perfections with the importance of input from significant others in decision making, resulting in reluctance to assume responsibility for decision making (Sampson et al., 1996). It may be said that greater levels of external conflict among professional students might require them to use more social coping which might help them obtain information, gain sympathy, assistance, and moral support. Thus, a person who is made insecure by a stressful transaction can be reassured by this sort of support (Carver et al., 1989).

Sampson et al. (1996) pointed out that both commitment anxiety and external conflict may be viewed as indicators of the presence of dysfunctional thinking that constrains the cognitive system undergirding career problem solving and decision making.

The results of factor analysis reveal significant and negative loadings on decision making confusion and conflict along with significant and positive loadings on social coping, problem-focused coping, achievement orientation, cohesion, moral-religious emphasis, organization and socially prescribed positive perfectionism in factor II for science students (table 5.10). This implies a negative relationship between social coping and decision making confusion for only science students. However, no such relationship appeared for either arts (table 5.8) or professional students (table 5.12). Therefore for firm conclusions, much future research is required.
Avoidance coping is related positively to dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion and commitment anxiety for all the three stream students. Endler and Parker (1990) suggested that avoidance coping involves responses having the effect of distracting or diverting individual's attention from stressful situation. It includes behaviour disengagement, denial, subsistence-use, and self-blame mechanisms (Carver et al., 1989; Carver, 1997). As cited by Roth and Cohen (1986) and Suls and Fletcher (1985), in extremely high-stress as well as uncontrollable stressful situations, avoidance (coping) may be adaptive in lowering the level of negative arousal, perhaps allowing the person time to mobilize for more active problem solving or positive cognitive reappraisal.

For the present sample, dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, and commitment anxiety might have resulted from uncontrollable stressors and thus may be regarded as expressions of distress that seems unavoidable for students of all the streams who resort to higher use of avoidance coping.

Further, science and professional students are also reporting greater levels of external conflict as well as greater use of avoidance coping. Sampson et al. (1996) suggested that dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict interfere with higher order cognitive processes necessary for effective career problem solving and decision making. It may be said that perhaps, when these subjects find them powerless to actively cope with the above mentioned stressors, they indulge in smoking, blaming themselves, denying the stressor etc.

The result of factor analysis indicate significant and negative loadings on avoidance coping and decision making confusion along with positive loadings on problem focused coping, cohesion, organization, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed positive perfectionism in factor II for arts students (table 5.8). It means that a positive relationship exists between avoidance coping and decision making confusion for arts students. On the other hand for professional students (table 5.12), factor analysis reveal significant and positive loadings on dysfunctional career thoughts, decision making confusion, commitment anxiety, and external conflict, self-oriented as well as socially prescribed negative perfectionism in factor I. Thus
implying a positive relationship between avoidance coping and all the aspects of career decision making for professional students. Furthermore, for science students (table 5.10) no such relationship appeared. However, lack of supportive evidences highlights a need for much future research.

In view of the above findings based on correlational and factor analysis it may be **concluded** that the hypothesis VI (b) is partially accepted with regard to arts, science, and professional stream university students.