CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Young people who are in the second decade of human life search meaning, purpose and goal of their existence than any other age group (Richard M. Lerner, 2005). As they search, they move from idealism to pragmatism. Any abhorrent event and experience of this process or stage make inerasable astonishment and damages in their life. Thus it is inferred that the young people are the soft wet clay in the hands of a potter (Swami Atmashraddhananda, 2013). The potter is considered to be the social support systems classified as services, opportunities and supports. The services and opportunities are the structural supports that come from the government and other social agents. The supports that are extended by the parents, family members, friends, peers, neighbourhood and educators are called as functional supports. As the potters skilfully mould the pots the agents of support systems moulds the young people and make them unique (Sribas Goswami, 2014).

Some of the functional supports are the confidence, coping, acceptance, recognition, motivation and academic success. They are interconnected, interdependent and one influences the other. They become an instrument to young people to make use of the services and opportunities to the maximum. As an example the parental and family members support nurtures, (Charles Desforges & Alberto Abouchaar, 2003) the friend and peer members support confronts, the neighbourhood adults support encourages and educational institutions support impart knowledge and wisdom (Virginia Schmied & Lucy Tully, 2009).

The functional support stimulates and empowers the young people. They are the sparks, and forces of young people’s empowerment and development. It is visible and invisible, formal and non formal and imbibed in every service, opportunities and supports offered to young people. The overall providers of these supports are the living and non living beings of all kind. However it begins in the womb of a mother to the foetus, to the child and continues in the maternal breast, extended through the father (A father’s guide to child support, 2006) and other family members, (Natalie Scerra, 2010) peers,
(Gillian Turner, 1999) neighbourhood, educational institutions and every social structure in society (Virginia Schmied & Lucy Tully, 2009). The fortuned young people benefit and attain all success and the unfortunate regret and battle against the past (Sidney Cobb, 1976; International youth foundation, 2012).

Further these functional supports are imbibed and built on the theories of learning, comparison, competence and coping. These theories are the spectacles through which the supports are perceived, obtained and utilized. Learning through observation and model is the theory of learning (Albert Bandua, 1963). Comparing one’s SELF with the SELF of others is the theory of comparison or adapting (Festinger, 1954), progressing and making choices of life through capability is the theory of competence (Semrud-Clikeman, M. 2007). The behavioural efforts to master whereby prepared to handle the external and internal demands and conflict is the theory of coping (Shelley E. Tayler & L. Annette, 2007).

Among all these theories; the most suitable theory is the theory of coping. This theory strengthens and enables the young people to handle all issues, problems and uncertainties of life in the most amicable way (Brain Lakey & Sheldon Cohen, 2000). Coping differs from person to person and emerges as preventive, resilience and positive development models or strategy (Stephen Small & Marina Memmo, 2004). This strategy prevents a person from something worse to happen; protects and resilience a person amidst dangers and positively develops a person’s potentialities and capabilities (Damodar Suar, 2011).

This new approach is called as the contemporary models of youth development and it is against the traditional approach that the young people grow by themselves and capable of solving their own problems. It is the community based approach to youth development that involves every one especially the parents, family members, neighbourhood adults, educationists and the students themselves. The success of these models depends on the stakeholders’ commitment and supports given to their children (Walker, J. S & L. K. Gowen, 2011). The present study observes and analyses the supports given to young people by the selected agents.
**Significance of Youth Empowerment**

Youth empowerment is the need of the day since half of global population is less than 25 years of age. Among the total youth population 80 percent are in poor and developing countries and account for 1.2 billion. The emerging future generation below the age of 15 years account for 1.8 billion (World Youth Report 2005). More than half of Indian population is young and India is the youngest nation in the world (Census India 2011). Therefore it is necessary that the developmental programs and activities are focused on youth and promote their empowerment (Census India 2011, World Development Report 2007). The same was emphasized in the summits on sustainable development that every government recognises and allows the young people to participate in governance and decision making (Rio+20, 2012).

Empowerment is defined as the power given or authority to do something. It is meant to have control over one’s own life or the situation faced with the given power or the supports. Similar youth empowerment is distinct as an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement those decisions in their lives and in the lives of others (Theresa Nkiru Uzor, 2010). Thus youth empowerment is a gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement and democracy building. Such empowerment makes the young people to feel safe and provide an opportunity to genuinely serve others. This empowerment is facilitated, processed and nurtured by the social support supports (Reddeppa Reddy, M.C. 2012).

The goal of youth empowerment in India is to make ‘demographic dividend into development dividend. In this context a call has been made to all the stakeholders of youth development in India to enable youth and make them empowered. Such mission is carried out by the central and state governments of India through its own departments, organizations and various sectors of society; families, educators, leaders, voluntary agencies and youth organizations (National Youth policy, 1998). Everyone is expected to spark and stimulate the aspirations of young people and empower. The empowered young people could participate and contribute in all the levels of governance beginning
from Gram Panchayat at grass level to parliament in national level (National youth policy Draft, 2012).

**Theoretical Frame Work**

**Social Support Systems**

The concept support is defined as to aid, to encourage a person, to cause and to bear the weight of someone. It also means to strengthen the targeted groups through appropriate policies and interests. These supports lead the young people towards to achievement and high perception of competence, confidence, connection, recognition, acceptance, self esteem and achievement. The ultimate aims of these supports are to empower and to bring comprehensive development in young people. The components of these systems are services, opportunities and supports. They enhance the young people directly and indirectly, formally and non-formally (Mentoring fact sheet 2007; Sidney Cobb, 1976).

**Chart-1.1**

**Components of Social Support Systems**

The above component comprises the supports, schemes and facilities of young people for their development. Hence the services are defined as the basic amenities necessary to fulfil the fundamentals of young people. They are food, shelter, educational institutions and entertainments. Opportunities are the heart of youth development that it builds the skills and capabilities of young people. They are the number of courses and programs organized to develop the skills of young people. The supports are referred as young people perceived positive relationship with in and with out of family circles. In overall the components bring material development as well as nurture and become
everything for the young people. Among the components it is the support that allows the young people to take advantage of services and opportunities (U.S Department of education, 2007).

**Social Supports**

Social supports are the net work that supplies emotional and timely supports such as love, care and concern to young people. They are focused on the individuals as well as on a group that are connected with the net work or the support systems. The support systems or the support providers are many; parents, family members, neighbourhood, peers, associations, clubs, social media, everyone and every structure (Neil Humphrey & Afroditi Kalambouka 2008). These supporters and their support systems remain as the vital force to fulfil the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of young people. Due to the youngsters’ positive, negative and stagnant growth is conditioned by these support systems and the providers (Letvak Susan, 2002).

Social supports are the human builder or building blocks of human ethics, values, and cultures. It begins to be effective in childhood and in the process forms the characters of a young people. The gained energy in early age either creates a person or makes the person to battle against his past as an adult (Swami Atmashraddhananda, 2013). Supports are the master key to open, sparks and stimulate all domains of human life. It functions effectively during the period of adolescents and rescues them from emotional, social, psychological and all types of collapses. The adolescents are encouraged to utilize all that is available, visible and non-visible services, opportunities and supports for their empowerment and development. These supports, holds, saves and pushes the adolescents forward with compassion like a mother when they are tripped (Craig, R & Scott, 2002).
Classification of Support Systems

The support systems are classified as primary and secondary, distinguished as formal and informal and their impact are direct and indirect.

Chart-1.2
Supports Classification

The primary support providers directly involve in the affairs of young people in informal way. They are family members, peer members, people of neighbourhood (Michela Lenzi & Alessio Vieno, 2011) and educational institutions. Whereas the secondary support providers indirectly involve in the affairs of young people in formal way. They are government, social institutions, religion, health care, youth care, youth professional care, youth counselling and life skill training centres, books, newspapers, movies, and social network media (U.S Department of education, 2007).

The timely supports build the spirit of young people and make them to smooth sail into adulthood. However an unaccompanied adolescent’s period results in risk behaviours such as academic failure, substance abuse and juvenile delinquencies. Hence the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004) proposed an approach and it
demands that the young people shall be connected with individuals and institutions. It means that the young people are connected with various support systems. Such kind of connectivity facilitates the young people to utilize the services and opportunities to the maximum and bring positive changes while erasing the risk behaviours (Gray Barker, 2007).

**SOCIAL SUPPORT THEORIES**

The important theories related to young people are social learning, comparison, competence and coping.

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![Chart-1.3: Social Support Theories](image)

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The social supports are viewed, interlocked and interconnected with the support theories. These theories guide and strengthen the social support systems (family, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and educators) and the perceiver (young people). The functioning of these theories depends on the availability of supports and the discretion of the perceiver. The absolute success depends on the usage of right theory, right time, right support and right audience (Susan Letvek, 2002).

1). **Social Learning Theory**

Learning through observation and modelling is called the theory of social learning (Albert Bandura, 1977). This is the most suitable theory of young people since all types of learning takes place in this way. As per this theory the young people are given the
opportunities to see, to imitate and to learn from the various support systems or the support providers like parents, family members, friend and peer members etc. The support systems itself is the model to young people and the right learners who perform better are accepted, encouraged and rewarded. The worst performers are punished by the support systems for their wrong presentation (Grusec, Joan, 1992).

**Models of Social Learning**

There are three models of social learning; live model, verbal model and symbolic model.

**Chart-1.4**

**Models and Steps in Learning Theory**

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  Models of Learning
      `--- Live Model --- Attention
          `--- Verbal Model --- Retention
               `--- Symbolic Model --- Reproduction

               "Motivation"
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Learning through the supports that are in the form of demonstrated behaviours are called live model, learning through the supports that are in the form of instructions by others are called verbal model and learning through the supports which are symbolic and demonstrated in the form of movie, TV, Internet, literatures and radio are called symbolic model of learning. Through this way that the support systems influence the young people and in return the young people influence the support systems and the environments (Albert Bandua, 1963).

**Steps in Social Learning**

The steps in social learning are attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. Attention is the *first step* in social learning in which the young people are made to pay
attention to what has been displayed. The second step in social learning is retention; that is retaining the behaviours and remembering. In this process the young people are enabled to learn by replaying, reproducing and adopting. The third step in social learning is reproduction where by the receiver remembers and reproduces the same observed behaviours. It helps to master the behaviours displayed in course of time. The fourth step in social learning theory is motivation. It is the motivation that urges the young people to learn the right behaviours (Chomsky Noam, 1959).

**Merits and Demerits**

Social learning theory has got several merits and demerits. The merit of this theory is that the young people are able to learn their behaviours simply by observing the others. In this process the learning becomes easier and faster to the young people since their expected behaviours are modelled, replayed and re-enforced by the social supporters. However when demerits are concerned it is harder for the supporters to make sure or to insist upon the steps in social learning (attention, retention, motor reproduction, motivation) and any excessive insistence curtails the freedom and free will of young people. Further the lack of supporters being the real role models before the young people and too much insistence of this theory leads to duplicity (Gregory Clinton, S. 2008).

**II). Social Comparison Theory**

Social comparison theory is one among the theories of social support. It is defined as judging, comparing one’s SELF with the SELF of others. An account to the person is able to process the achievement and success of others by which he/she is able to learn, correct and change him/her self. This theory is the most influential and preferred theory of parents and others to educate the children. Based on this theory they alter and adopt their supports or support systems in order to influence the conscious and subconscious of young people. Due to the young people are able to learn while comparing themselves with the others. Thus the food habits, dress choices, selection of subjects and careers etc are learnt by the young people in comparison (Katja Corcoran & John Crnsius et al. 2011).
There are two types of comparison namely downward comparison and upward comparison. When the comparer or a group is lower and many aspects are similar to the compared subjects then it is called downward comparison. The comparer is happy since his/her neighbours and the compared group is behind or equal to him. On the contrary when the compared individual and the group are above or superior to the comparer then it is called upward social comparison. Here the comparer is unhappy because his neighbours and the group are above him. Comparison maintains homogeneity and determines the physical, mental health, intellect and all domains of young people’s life (Festinger, L. 1954).

**Merits and Demerits**

Social comparison is the most suitable theory in modern world of science and technology. The learning becomes faster and most appropriate in this theory. This theory makes tremendous impact on the lives of children, adolescents and every one in society. By this model a person is enabled to compare his or her owns SELF with the SELF of others and progress in life. Ultimately comparison brings uniformity of thoughts and opinion among individuals and in groups. An account this theory sparks the youngsters, motivates, and moves them towards to empowerment and development. This theory is very much promoted by the primary support systems like parents and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood and educationist (Katja Corcoran & Jan Crusius et al. 2011).

However the demerits of this theory are also in abundance. Hence the social comparison put pressure on the young people towards to achievement and perfection; due to a poor academic performer too much compare him/her with the rich and remain in stress. This type of upward and downward comparison creates either superiority or inferiority complex in young people. Further the young people undergo lot of anxieties to arrive at high standard of living set by the social organization in a community. Such phenomenon takes away the joyful periods of adolescents and youth hood. An account symptom such as depression, complexes and mania are found among young people (Shelley E. Taylor & Marci Lobel, 1989).
III). Social Competence Theory

Social competence theory is a powerful social support theory used in today’s world of industrialization. Competence becomes inevitable in the world of globalization and it is found to be most successful in every field. It enables the young people to learn, to adapt, to progress and to make choices of life in and through competence. This theory is meant for all age groups starting from babies to elders. The choice of this theory is multiple; in order to improve upon one’s social adjustment, to learn further and to condition the individuals and groups, to educate and to skill the young people and to promote their physical and mental health (Mellard D.H & Hazel, J.S. 1992).

Approaches

The social competence theory follows the top-down to bottom-up approach. In this approach the standard commonalities in upper level are encouraged and promoted in bottom level. The young people’s transition into adulthood depends on this upper level motivate force. If the upper level is negative their transition also is going to be negative in society (Kathryn N. Stump & Jacklyn M et al. 2009). How well the youngsters transition; are they able to organize their thoughts, questions, sense of humour, handling money, friendship, work culture, standard and quality of living are determined by the social theory of competence. Competence generates appropriate skills that are necessary in every aspects of young people’s life (Mellard, D. F. & J. S. Hazel, 1992).

The social competence transforms the provided supports and perceived supports of young people as success in individuals and in groups. These supports are in the form of instructions, modelling, behaviour rehearsal, feed backs and reinforcement. Competence plays a very significant role in the development and maintenance of many emotions and behavioural disorders. Defective support systems produce spiritless competence and arrive at negative out come. It is the competence with supports brings success in early adolescents and in youth. Competence boasts the ego of a perceiver and remains as the source of energy, force and makes them to obtain high level of self confidence (Susan H Spence, 2003).
Merits and Demerits

There are several merits in applying social competence theory. This theory helps to know one’s own self and develop self confidence. It is to understand what others think, feel, appreciate and interact with others in positive. Self management and handling one’s own emotions are possible in this theory. The relationship skills grow an account healthy and rewarding relationship based on communication, cooperation, understanding and high professionalism is obtained. The youngsters become responsible decision makers and make their own choices looking ahead the consequences (Huitt W & Dawson, 2011).

The demerits of competence theory are also many; setting up the high standard of expectations and looking at the possibilities of achieving them brings stress and discomfort in young people. As consequence the young people with low competence spirit are rejected by the parents, peers and educational institutions. It results in increase of school dropout rates, academic failures, loneliness and social dissatisfaction of young people and others (Koscelnikova & Katerina et al. 2009).

IV). Social Coping Theory

The word ‘coping’ is defined as to manage, to handle, to deal with, to survive and to hack it. Coping develops the young people’s cognitions and emotions by which strengthens their behaviours. This theory is the most relevant social theory suiting every one and especially the children, adolescents and youth in today’s world. Coping is also called coping skills or coping strategies. The coping skills smoothen the adolescents’ transition into adulthood hood and make them happy liver. These skills are defined as the expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems and seeking to master, minimize or to tolerate stress and conflicts in life. Coping strategies are unconscious or non conscious and used by the parents, educationist, counsellors, spiritual leaders and many other in every settings (Shelley E. Tayler & L. Annette, 2007).

The coping skills handle the dramatic experience of life as well as everyday hassles. Every day hassles are the most stress giver and handling them are the bigger challenge of children and adolescents. The hassles come from families, peers, educational institutions and social net work media (Lazarus R.S & S. Folkman, 1984). Thus coping
strategy is defined as the behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate or to reduce external and internal demands and conflicts. Coping strategies are a style or type of inherent trait that are not induced or affected by the external factors. These strategies are meant for the well being of physical, mental and psychological aspects of young people. The quality of social support systems and its relationships with young people are associated with these coping strategies (Junghyun Kim & Y. H. Jeong et al. 2008).

There are active and passive or avoidant coping; to face the problems directly and reduce the effect of a stressor is called active coping. To escape or avoid the behaviours that seek to escape from the source of distress without confronting is called passive coping. Active coping enhance, give less pain, more out come and better quality of life. Whereas passive or avoidant coping increase depression, anxiety and towards to the end yield to self blame (Junghyun Kim & Y. H. Jeong Y. H et al. 2008).

The goal of social coping theory is to protect a young person from stressful factors and to promote in them the self esteem and self regulative behaviours amidst stress. It is to connect the young people as individuals with rest of the world by which to reduce the social conflicts of modern times. This theory is the most relevant theory in contemporary times to cater the needs and well being of youth (Brian Lakey & Sheldon Cohen, 2000).

**Merits and Demerits**

There are only merits in this theory since social coping is directly associated with emotions, stress and physical well being of young people. As per this theory the high level of physical and mental health is achieved when high level of coping is generated by the supports. When there is coping there is less pain and coping doesn’t segregate any one. It accepts the best students as well as the worst students and encourages every one indiscriminately. There are no human conflicts and every young person becomes socially responsible in coping. Coping makes the goal of youth empowerment to become real that develop the young people and young people develop the nation (Shelley E & L. Annette, 2007).
Social coping Vs Other Theories

There are number of differences found between social coping and others theories. On the contrary number of similarities and uniformities are also found among the other theories. Therefore the differences are listed in the table.

**Table-1.1**

**Comparison of Social Coping with other theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Coping Theory</th>
<th>Theories of Learning, Comparison and Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social coping theory is a style or a type of inherent trait that are not induced or affected by the external factors.</td>
<td>They are not a style or a type of an inherent trait and induced and affected by the external factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no self blame; the more usage of coping brings less self blame.</td>
<td>Self blame occurs during and after the implementation if there is mismatch support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch between supports and coping don’t bring stress to the supporters and the client.</td>
<td>It brings stress to the supports and the client. Finally the supporters withdraw the supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is the theory of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual growth approach.</td>
<td>Theories of partial approach and focused on mainly academics, sports or management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failures, loneliness and social dissatisfactions are never and ever felt in this theory.</td>
<td>These theories are prone for loneliness, failures and disappointment etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The systematic analysis and evaluation on social support theories of learning, comparison, competence and coping pave way to choose coping as the suitable theory. Henceforth this theory becomes the base to study and evaluate the support systems of parents and family members, friend and peer members, neighbourhood, educational institutions and their association with the young people.

**Present Study**

The present study is based on the belief that the social support systems empower young people. It analyses the various support systems of young people and their association with each other. It expects that the supports equally and positively influence
the other. Thus the increase of supports amplifies the societal and economic status and strengthens the thriving indicators. Simultaneously the risk behaviours such as low self esteem, substance abuse and criminal activities decreases and even disappears.

In order to analyse this phenomenon an explorative research design is selected as suitable design in quantitative data. These data are collected through prepared questioner, edited for its accuracy and entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The selected research area for this study is the Dindigul district in Tamil Nadu since more than 75 percent of its territory is considered as rural.

**Analytical Frame Work**

The present study has adopted an analytical framework based on the social support theories and especially the theory of coping. An account the primary support systems generate the coping by which it connects properly the emotive behaviours and cognitive brain of young people. The young people are able to reason out and perceive better care and progress in life (Wayne Froggatt, 2005).

The social supports systems are indispensable for any age group from babies to elderly people. It is an important determinant of one’s physical and mental health in life. The generated cope enhance the person in all circumstances. Lack of social supports leads the adolescents into anxiety and depression and the middle age people to cardiovascular diseases. It weakens the overall physical and mental health of elderly people (Corey M. Clark, 2005).

The parental and family members’ supports are one among the most important and primary supports of social support systems. It reinforces and fulfils all the needs of young people positively. The young people are able socialize with cope and perceive that they are recognised and accepted (Corey M. Clark, 2005).
Friend and peer members support is one among the primary social support systems which is based on the principles of companionship, confidence, consolation, belonging, security and sharing responsibilities. It plays the most significant role in the life of young people so much so; its absence and the unhealthy friendship even destroy a person (Sunderland & Kim et al. 2013).
Supports from neighbourhood are one among the primary support system that motivates, guides and intervenes the young people when need arises. Due to the young people are able to utilize the services and opportunities of the community to their best. The community too shares its responsibilities with the young people and make them as partners of development. In return the risk behaviours of young people disappear and they become socially responsible with social consciousness (Gavin Bailey, 2006).

Schools are one among the primary support systems of young people that provide intensive and individualised supports. They care the mental health and well being of young people by which promote good citizenship, positive attitudes, coping strategies and help seeking behaviours. The good schools observe the surroundings and issues of young people and accordingly present their inputs and the supports. They always poster sense of community and belonging in most integrated way among the young people (Margaret Grogan & Susan Kenny et al. 2013).

The above analysis, social support systems imbibed with the social coping theory expected to results that the young people feel secured and mutually have grown. Their personalities and leadership qualities have developed positively. The risk behaviours; poor academic performance, fight, substance abuse have disappeared.

**Chapter Scheme**

The research report is comprised of five chapters arranged in order. The first chapter gives a brief account of social support systems; explains its primary concepts with suitable review and theoretical framework. The second chapter gives the comprehensive view of social support systems and its impact on the young people. The methodology adopted to conduct the present study, which includes objectives, operational definition of concepts, sampling procedure and sample size, tools for data collection and method of analysis is presented in the third chapter. The fourth chapter is devoted for primary data analysis that consists of several parts with sub title. Summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations are dealt under the fifth chapter.
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World Development Report 2007