CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEMS AND ITS BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Adolescence is an important phase in our life; or phase of life when our sense of ‘self’ changes profoundly; a stage marked by various major cognitive, transitions from childhood with both biological and psychosocial demarcations. During this period, child become more ‘self-conscious’, more aware and concerned about other people’s opinion about one’s self. Adolescence is characterized by numerous unique transformations and problems such as puberty, emotional instability, ego-centricity etc. Physical changes are intervened with psychological and emotional transition and the effect of anything on behaviour and attitude becomes more important, as adolescent moods tend to fluctuate more frequently over the day as compared to adults. This is the time when adolescents are neither at childhood stage nor reached adulthood. When they act like children, they are told to ‘act their age’ and when they try to act like adults, they are often charged of being ‘too big for their britches’. In adolescence, children often compare themselves with other people and their perceptions about adolescent to locate and their own identity, as independent individuals. They face a lot of confusion about the roles they are supposed to play. In this period of rapid changes that make an individual take up new social roles, new found rights, privileges and responsibilities, new initiatives in different walks of life. Their social positioning also changes as they begin learning for adult roles in work, family and community, which probably transform their ‘self-concept’.
Erickson emphasized that the construction of a healthy identity is the major task for an adolescent. ‘Identity formation’ is considered as a principal concern for the adolescent. It is the ‘individuality’ of a person, which is made up of quite static traits of personality that are particularly prevalent in certain unusual situations. The process of the formation of identity although continues throughout in life but it becomes more important during adolescence. This ‘search for formation of identity’ sometimes leads to ‘identity confusion or identity crisis’. This crisis can only be overcome by ‘knowing the self’ or by the development of ‘positive self-concept’. Sigmund Freud also talked about self concept in terms of an internal mental process, later caught the attention of his daughter to give due importance in terms of ego development and self-interpretation. Jean Piaget termed it as a ‘formal operational stage’. The adolescents’ at this stage of cognitive development start to be involve themselves in abstract self-descriptions that are influenced by the various psycho-social factors like familial context specially parents, peers and teachers in school etc. If the psycho-social environment is favourable, it enhances social and emotional well-being of the adolescents’.

Abraham Maslow, focussed on the development of a healthy personality and formation of self-perceptions, believing that a person’s competence is directly influenced by one’s own view about one’s self and this formation of identity is based on the need of a hierarchy.

Development of self-concept in a positive way in brief, is essential for the all-round development of an individual’s personality, especially for the adolescents undergoing a period of great risk in matter like facing academic failure, violence or building healthy compromising behaviours, to develop a healthy self-concept that can ensure their success
and achievement in life. For that, they also require healthy environment and support from their parents, peers and teachers. As a result, their self-concept becomes more differentiated and organized.

When children grow; they try to understand others view regarding their skills and starts comparing and differentiating their between their efforts and abilities as a result their perception about themselves become more precise and much accurate than earlier (Harter 1999), in terms of personal beliefs and standards than social comparisons (Harter 1997). They start evaluating themselves on various different dimensions such as social relations, academics, moral conduct, etc. They become highly self-conscious, at this stage, and, generally, try to study the reaction of others towards their personality. Some psychological factors like intelligence, individual abilities to remember, discriminate, understand etc, have an effect on adolescent concept formation and its development. Considerably, self concept depends upon the child’s interactions with his/ her own environment. The child identifies themselves with the people around him and it is this process which serves as a tool for the construction and shaping of his/ her self-concept.

**Self-concept**

“Why is it that some children try new things with enthusiasm and approach peers and adults with confidence, whereas other children seem to believe that they are incapable of succeeding in many situations? . . . What can we learn from research that will allow us to help children approach new situations and other people with confidence?” - **HH.Marshall**
The concept of self is always a topic of attention in psychology and its importance in educational scenario has been discussed from a long time by several scholars. James (1890) and Cooley (1902) were among the first psychologists to theorize about the self. Sigmund Freud (1923/1961), Erikson (1950), Carl Roger (1959) wrote extensively about the self and its development.

There is a lot of confusion about the term self-concept, There being no clear, concise and universally acknowledged definition of the construct ‘self concept’. To understand the content and structure of ‘self’ i.e., one’s self-concept many researches and studies were done by the social scientist or sociologist; who spend a long time and with their extensive work they came to a initial conclusion that self-concept was associated only with the aspect of self-evaluation; which means it is merely a self-esteem, i.e., one’s evaluation of oneself in affective (negative or positive) terms (Rosenberg, (1979). However, later on he suggested that self-concept is more than self-esteem, and defined it as the sum total of our thoughts, feelings and imaginations, as to who we are? Still with the conceptions further elaborated and refined, self-concept was perceived to be made up of cognitive as well as affective components or self-feeling including self esteem (Franks and Marolla, 1976; Stryker, 1980). Self-esteem and self-concept are also closely associated with each other. If a person is happy with his/her self-concept, he/she will have high self-esteem. Mostly children achieve a firm sense about their self-esteem by early adolescence. Self-esteem seems to be associated with the social behaviour, as children with high self-esteem are more active and enthusiastic. They normally take part in debates, discussions and other activities or functions organised in their school (Coopersmith, 1967). The high self-esteem based on positive self-concept helps individuals to express their opinions freely,
participate in activities, take up new challenges with confidence, resist peer pressure and make friends more easily than others.

1.1 Definitions of Self-concept

“Self-concept is our perception or image of our abilities and our uniqueness. At first one’s self-concept is very general and changeable... As we grow older, these self-perceptions become much more organized, detailed, and specific.” (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2013). Baumeister (1999) defined self-concept thus: “the individual’s belief about himself or herself, including the person’s attributes and who and what the self is”. Baron and Byrne (2000) put it this way: “self concept is an organized collection of beliefs and self perception about oneself”. The components that make up the self-concept of an individual are physical, social and psychological characteristics and these get influenced by an individual’s own attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas.

Allport (1961) described self-concept the best as: “the self of something, of which we are immediately aware. We think of it as the warm, central, private reign of our life; as such it plays a crucial role in our consciousness, in our personality and in our organism. Thus, it is some kind of a core in our being”.

Self-concept is a “global description of one’s personal essence” (Mavra Kear,2000), in that, “a general conception (or image), consisting of a body of attitudes and values that one comes to develop one’s ‘being’, as a result of social transactions.”

The notion of self-concept is central point of Rogers’ personality theory. He viewed self as the “organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the ‘I’ or the ‘Me’ together with the values attached to this concept.”
He emphasized on the importance of meeting adolescents’ conscious and unconscious needs towards healthy self-conceptions to confront new experiences without feeling threatened.

These above definitions show that the self concept is something about the concept of our ‘self’. How an individual looks at himself; what qualities he/she identifies with himself/herself; and what is that which she desired to acquire. It is a collection of our self-perceptions such as about our beliefs, qualities, behaviour, etc. It is a term which refers, “to the ordered set of attitudes and perceptions that an individual holds about him/herself.” It is a set of self perceptions, e.g., a self-concept might include such beliefs as ‘I am lazy’ or ‘I am beautiful’ or ‘I am strong and hard working’. Self-concept of an individual develops through one’s interaction with the environment. Mwamwenda (1995) added more to this by saying that, “self-concept is a person’s way of perceiving himself/herself, which may be either positive or negative as a result of self-evaluation.”

A children’s self-concept is influenced when he/she develops a sense of self, interacts with and gains experience from the surroundings. We develop perception about ourselves by understanding the views and judgements of others’ people make about us; and observing their responses and the way of their communication with us. For example, parents’ opinions have significant effect on the self-concept of a young child. The influence of others continues as we mature but is not as strong as when we are adolescents. Our self-concept is influenced by our sense of identity.

Charles Cooley (1902) described the relationship between the self and society in his idea ‘Looking glass self’, saying that the content of self-perception is derived through the mirror of interaction with other people as mirror gives us a reflection of our image in the
same way through this interaction, we learn: who we are? Thus, is a result of social interactions; self-concept is a broad construct that includes cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects.

1.2 Components of Self-Concept

Self-concept basically has three components:

a) Self-worth or Self-Esteem

Self-worth or self-esteem deals with what we think about ourselves. According to Rogers, the feelings of self-worth, developed in early childhood, were initially formed by parent-child interaction. Self-esteem or self-worth is the evaluative aspect of the self-concept, concerned with internalized judgments made by others’ and ideas about how valuable our personality traits are? When children become older, their interaction with significant others starts affecting their self-worth.

b) Self-image

The self-image deals with who we actually are? It is the mental picture that we have about ourselves. It includes how we think, feel, look, and act? The real self can be seen by others, but because we have no way of truly knowing how others view us, the real self is our self-image. Self-image includes the influence of our body image on our inner personality. Self-image has an effect on how a person thinks, feels and behaves in the world. In a simple manner, we might perceive ourselves as a good or bad person, beautiful or ugly.
c) Ideal self

The ideal-self deals with how we want to be? It is an idealized image that we have developed about ourselves over time, on the basis of our learning and experiences. It is dynamic in nature, based on our goals and ambitions in life. The ideal-self in childhood is different from the ideal self in our teens or adulthood, as the ideal-self could include components of what our parents have taught us? what we admire in others? what our society promotes? and what we think is in our best interest?

Incongruent

Here self-actualization will be difficult

Congruent

Here a person can self-actualize

Figure: 1.1 Self-Actualization

These three components of self-concept help a person to self-actualize. Self-actualization can be achieved only when a person’s ideal self and actual experiences are consistent or very similar. Carl Roger says, “as much as closer our self-image and ideal-self are to each other, the more consistent or congruent we are and the higher our sense of self-worth and a strong self-concept”.
1.3 Theories of Self-concept

Various theorists have emphasized different aspects of the structure, function and determinants of self concept. Among others, three prominent theories of self-concept are:

1. ‘Looking glass self’ theory (Cooley)
2. ‘Functional theory’ of self-concept (Epstein); and
3. ‘Phenomenological theory’ of self-concept which focused on personality (Rogers)

1. Charles Cooley, in his famous theory of ‘Looking glass self’, propounded the idea that an individual’s self concept is in large part formed as a result of his interaction with the significant others, that is, self-concept, like a looking glass reflects our image about us in the way we believe, what other people think of us. This self-concept involves both evaluative and illustrative dimensions that include the judgements made by other people about us and what they believe when they look at us. Summing it up in his statements like: “I am not what I think and I am not what you think I am; I am what I think that you think I am.” He supports this theory emphasizing on social interaction that helps an individual to build up one’s own self-concept, through interpersonal interactions with society and the significant others’ perception.

2. ‘Functional theory of self-concept’, given by Epstein suggested that the self-concept can best be viewed as a theory that a person holds about himself as an experiencing, functioning being in interaction with the world. According to this theory, we create our self-image through three sub-concepts, we imagine how others see us; we imagine the judgments others make about us; and we create our self-image according to the comments of others. Examining the impact of cognitive processes on behaviours,
attitudes and thoughts, he revealed that these shape individuals’ self concepts. Cognitive processes, including capacity to critically analyze and interpret situations and events, organize information, solve problems are and use reasoning skills to make decisions and choices according to how-well individuals acquire and use these skills during their social experiences and functions, determine the self-concepts formed.

3. Rogers’ Phenomenological theory of self-concept says that adolescents’ personality is directed by the self which interprets the experiences on the basis of its own self-image. Self-concept is formed through the interaction of an individual with his/her environment, and mainly as a result of evaluation of interaction with others, the structure of the self is formed. He viewed ‘conditional and unconditional positive regard’ as an important factor that plays a significant role in the development of the self-concept. Studies on personality and behaviour show that the concept of our self becomes more abstract and more idea-oriented in the process.

1.4 Nature of Self-concept
Research existence, in the last two decades or so held a stand that self-concept is something that is “dynamic - as active, forceful, and capable of change” (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p 299); Self-concept is closely connected with moral practices involving agency and responsibility (Harre, 1987, p 41); and self-concept possesses “cognitive, perceptual, affective and evaluative facets” (Hoge and Renzulli, 1993, p 449). Self-concept is learnt, organized, dynamic, multifaceted as well as hierarchical (Shevalson et.al.1976) in nature.
(a) Self-concept is Learned

Environment behaviourists believe that no person is born with a self-concept. It is learnt and developed over the years as a result of the socialization process. May be a person has a perception about himself, different from what other people think of him. An individual may thinks one’s self to caring and kind while others see that individual as a careless and selfish person.

(b) Self-Concept is Organized

A person may have several perceptions about himself. He may think, he is caring, kind, patient, loving and calm; or cruel, selfish, rude and stubborn. It doesn’t matter how many different perceptions a person holds about himself, still are there is one perception that takes precedence over others, that leads to develop an organized self-concept. A person more likely to resist changing one’s views or more congruent to his self-concept takes a long time to change. Change is always taking place and can’t be avoided.

(c) Self-concept is Dynamic

Every individual encounters different situations and challenges in one’s life, their insight depending on the way one responds to such life changes. We perceive things according to our self-concept and behave in a situation according to our perceptions. Therefore, self-concept is a continuous process of development wherein we have a tendency to let go of the things and ideas that are not congruent to our self-concept, and retain those things that we think are helpful in building a more favourable perception of our self. According to Andrew (1993), self concept has dynamic qualities in its influence on a person’s
behaviour. In other words, although experiences form and shape our self-concept, self-concept too, plays an active and dynamic role in shaping experiences. Plenty of research evidence which suggests that it is possible to bring change in one’s self-concept. “Self-concept is not something that people can desire of but rather it depends on the process of self-reflection. Through this, people often come to view themselves in a new and powerful way and it is through this new more powerful way of viewing the self that people can develop possible self.” (Franken 1994).

(d) Self-concept is Multifaceted and Hierarchical

Shavelson et al. (1976), in their theory of a hierarchical structure of self-concept, (SC) suggest that self-concept is an organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, and differential network. This system of hierarchy entails one single highest order, i.e. general self-concept (GSC) and several lower-order field-specific self-concepts (FSCs) that make a person’s complete self-concept. For example, academic, social, emotional, and physical self-concepts (SCs) are higher-order (GSC). A lower-order FSC, such as academic SC, can be further divided into much lower-order FSCs, for example, verbal, mathematics, and science SCs. The contemporary theorists focus on adolescent self-concept which is more dynamic and multi-dimensional rather than earlier uni-dimensional construct of self. Harter (1990) suggests that the adolescent’s self-concept varies on different multiple domains and the multiple self descriptions of adolescence vary across context (e.g. parents, peers etc.). Bracken (1992) also suggests that a multi-dimensional and learned behaviour that comes out with reflective appraisals of their past behaviour and experiences, affects an individual’s present behaviours and
also predicts an individual future behaviour that depends upon the context in which learning takes place.

Summing up way back to the tag end of the 19th century, William James (1890) was the first person who suggested that an individual has many selves, that is, the real self; the ideal self and the social self. Coopersmith (1967) had also said that self concept is multidimensional, suggesting that the self is the multi-faceted personality as it combines what would one like to be, what one currently is, what others like him/her to be. In short, Self-concept being an important component of human personality and its development has its own nature and peculiarity. In fine, self-concept involves a combination of a few silent characteristics or fundamental aspects; as listed below.

i. Self-concept is made up of psycho-social factors;

ii. It is multidimensional in nature and has a hierarchical system;

iii. It is stable, but as we go lower on its hierarchical organisation it becomes more specific and more vulnerable to change;

iv. The growing age and experiences makes self-concept more differentiated among themselves on its different facets;

v. Self-concept is descriptive as well as evaluative in nature;

vi. It plays an important role in determining human behaviour and personality.

Eccles (2005) also highlighted seven major characteristics of self-concept that is, “organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative and differentiable.”
### 1.5 Development of Self-concept

Self-concept gradually emerges in the early months of infancy and is altered and shaped through perceived experiences, previous knowledge and understanding, which we mainly get from our significant others; it is both constant over a long period of time and variable according to situations. It is a continuous process and takes precedence over the physical body. Self-concept develops with growing age and is refined with increasing experiences. Development of self-concept and its developmental process is very important for the growth of a person’s personality. It influences people’s behaviours and cognitive and emotional outcomes including academic performance, their happiness, anxiety, social adjustment self-esteem, and satisfaction in life.

Rogers’ suggests that in the early childhood, feeling of self-worth develops and is formed from the interaction of the child with their parents. As a child grows older, this feeling starts affecting an interactions with the significant others. In the middle adolescence stage, the adolescent recognizes self related discrepancies and in late adolescence settles with it and its description. Adolescent starts thinking even about conceptual and unifying features, engaging in the new ways of behaving and thinking that involve the greater self-sufficiency, self determination and words of familiarity with others, and became more organized and easily differentiated. Adolescents also learn to evaluate themselves both overall and along with many different aspects of ‘self’ like social, academic, moral, intellectual, emotional etc. At this stage the individual is very conscious about the reactions towards his/her personality. His/her self-concept develops through learning, attitude and social factors and overall, the development is related to the totality of
experiences that an individual gets during this stage. In the beginning, it is just a simplistic awareness but as the self-concept develops, it becomes more and more complex. According to Harter (1990), “compared with children, who tend to describe themselves in relatively simple, concrete terms; adolescents are more likely to employ complex, abstract and psychological characterizations.”

1.6 Types of Self-concept Development

According to Lewis (1990), there are two kinds or aspects of self-concept development, namely:

I. The Existential-Self

It is the initial and fundamental part of the self-concept that helps a child to realize how unique and different he/she is from others. It is basically the realization of a child about its existence in the world. It helps a child to realize how he/she is a separate entity from others and it continues to exist. A child gain awareness of the existential-self when he/she is just two to three months old; it is due to his/her relation with the world and it is a gradual process that comes into parts. For example, the child smiles and someone smiles back.

II. The Categorical-Self

When a child realizes that he or she exists as a separate entity, the child now starts understanding that he or she is also an object in the world. Just as objects have some properties and features, in the same way people have some attributes that can be experienced, such as (Tall, short, thin, white, smooth and so on). Thus, the child
understands that as an object he/she is also an object which has attributes that can be experienced. In the same way self, too, can be put into categories such as age, gender, size or skill. However, initially in early childhood the categories in to which children placed themselves are very concrete in nature (e.g. hair colour, height and favourite things), but with the time at adolescence stage they begin to include self-description about themselves related to their internal psychological traits, comparative evaluations and to how others see them.

1.6.1 Cyclic Process of Self-Development

Skidmore (2003) says, “As I see myself is formed by our perception of what other think of us, our actions are highly influenced by this and these actions are in return determined by how others see and have influence of their reaction on us. These reactions modify our concept of looking at ourselves.” So, we can understand the formation of the self is a cyclic process which continues throughout our lives.

![Figure: 1.2 Cyclic process of Self-concept](https://example.com/image.png)
1.6.2 Some other Determinants of Self-concept Development

According to Wattenberg (1962) self-concept develops by:

Learning- Self-concept is learned with the experiences which an individual gained in his/her physical and social environment. It is not inherited as it develops with learning and change accordingly.

Beliefs- Our beliefs about the others and others beliefs about us contribute in shaping the self-concept of an individual. Our beliefs make us confident and if these beliefs are negative then it makes us opposite of that i.e. dull, unsure, unconfident.

Personality- Our personality that portrays our external self is an important aspect of self-concept. The personality traits help an individual to describe himself/herself.

Actions- When our actions and emotions are matched with our dominant beliefs it develops and shape our self-concept.

Past experiences- An individual past experiences helps them in forming their perceptions about their self.

According to Hamachek (1971), self concept develops through:

Success- When a person experience success on every aspect of life his/her self-concept would be more strong and positive.

Failure – When a person experience failure on every stage of life his/her self-concept would be weak and negative.
Insulting remarks or actions- When a person received negative or insulting remarks from others’ it may be shattered their process of making self-concept and resulted in negative personality development.

Feeling of pride and pleasure- A person received reward for their work or praised by others’, makes that person to be proud and gives him pleasure and this feeling of pride and pleasure makes their self-concept strong.

Friends’ assessment- Friends are important in the life of an adolescent. Friends’ positive remark makes a person happy and positive in life.

Friends’ reaction- When friends give positive reaction to a person it can make a person to think more positively about him/her. In the same way negative reactions makes a person unhappy and also compel him/her to think negatively towards their self.

1.6.3 Formation of Positive and Negative Self-concept: Classification of its major factors

A. Michael Argyle (2008) identified four factors that influence the development of self-concept:

(i) The ways in which others (particularly significant others) react to us - It means the reaction of others matters a lot. If a person gets positive comments or views towards himself, he will more likely to develop positive self-image but if a person experience neglection or avoidance or criticized by others, then he/she may develop negative self-concept.

(ii) How we think we compare to others- If a person finds that he/she is better than the person whom with he/she compared, leads to positive self-concept development.
(iii) Our social roles- The role which gives a person prestige and respect in the society makes his/her self-concept positive and strong.

(iv) The extent to which we identify with other people- Identification is very important for self-concept development. We identify us with our position, our roles, with groups that make our personality.

B. Broadly speaking factors affecting Self-concept may be classified into three categories-

i. Internal factors;

ii. External factors; and

iii. Chronological factors

(i) **Internal factors**- Fear, doubts and anxiety are some internal factors that affect the development of self-concept of an individual, leading mainly to low self-esteem that hinders positive self-concept development. If a child experiences incessant failure in his life, it may build up the feeling that he/she is worthless. Gradually, this feeling may lead to development of negative self-concept. On the other hand, if a child has a positive self-development then, failure becomes an opportunity for him to improve his performance, learn new things, and take concrete decisions etc. People who suffer from anxiety be likely to think, respond, even evaluate themselves negatively, feel hopeless and starts believing that they are good for nothing. They are wondering for their survival and struggling
throughout in life. They develop a tendency to be sensitive towards what other people say about them or act.

(ii) External factors- It include family, school, work, peer relationships, social activities etc. Family provides the basic needs of survival, safety and security. If a child gets love, care and affection in the family, the development of his/her self-concept is possible to be positive. School is the place where a child spends most of time, develops relationship with peers and receive affection and guidance from teachers that help him/her shape perceptions regarding different concepts, feelings etc.

(iii) Chronological- It means the development of self-concept taking place into three stages of life- childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The development of self-concept starts in childhood and is formed through our past experiences clearly when we reach adulthood. During adolescence, self-concept is in the stage of formation whether negative or positive, depending on the experience and feedback that an individual gets from the surroundings and situations.
1.7 Self-concept Development Variables:

Psycho-social Variables

The term psycho-social variables mean the development of individual through a close interplay of the psychological and social aspects of cognitive and emotional growth, as a result of interaction with parents, teachers and peers.
1.7.1 Parenting Styles

Parenting style is a psychological construct that represents the standard ways that parents use in the rearing of their children. It can be referred as an attitude of parents that expressed through their behaviour and communication towards the child, in an emotional climate.

“Parenting styles are basically the constellation of parental attitudes, practices and non-verbal expressions that characterize the nature of parent-child interaction across diverse situations (Darling and Steinberg, 1993).” There are various views on the parenting styles. Baumrind’s configurational approach (1961) identifies three different styles of parenting while Maccoby and Martin (1983) identified two styles of parenting on the basis of two dimensional framework and contextual model by Darling and Steinberg.

Over the past fifty years or so, research evidence has shown that parenting styles may have a strong impact upon children and adolescent development (Collins & Auczaj, 1991). Baumrind (1971-72) used long term repeated observations of parent’s interaction with their children and adolescents to maintain that parental warmth along with firm and moderate discipline is required to build up high self-concept in children and adolescents. Parents are primary teachers in instilling motivational thinking and roots to goals (Snyder 2000). Examining a positive significant correlation between self-concept and parental verbal interaction, Enger (1994) found that Parental protective behaviour is positively contributes to self-concept while parental rejecting behaviour contributes negatively to self-concept (Ojdar & Paramanick 1995). Thus, both the dimensions of parenting styles positive as well as negative seem to be nurturing and hindering the self-concept among adolescents, particularly girls. Robert and Bengtson (1993) documented
that parental contribution during late adolescence predicted greater satisfaction with the self. Research in effective parenting style has also focused on two worldwide constructs that is responsiveness and demandingness:

(i) Responsiveness refers, “to the degree to which parents are accepting and responsive to their children’s behaviour as opposed to being unresponsiveness and rejecting.” Responsive parents value reciprocity between them, think about the child’s wishes or desires, needs and requirements etc.

(ii) Demandingness refers, “to the degree to which parents manage their children’s behaviour and also describe how parents monitor and discipline their child.” In the absence of demandingness, rules may not be set and implement properly. Children’s whose parents ask minimal of them might demonstrate low self-control, even when parents are extremely demanding; the outcome might lead to the same. Parents need to be rational in deciding rules and demands for their children.

Analysing the stance of perfect parenting style, psychologists have come to believe that poor parenting is an absence of or an overabundance of responsiveness or demandingness. Baumrind utilized this thinking and made three classifications to explain parenting styles. She thought that each distinctive style of parenting might be associated with unique patterns of parent-child interaction; and that parenting styles could be made use of to predict outcome for children.

(a) Authoritarian Parenting Style- According to Baumrind, these parents “is obedience and Status-oriented, and expects their orders to be obeyed without explanation.” They have a tendency to be high on their demands and very less in response towards their
children. Authoritarian parents show little warmth, but high control over their adolescents as they are strict disciplinarian and restrictive, which, in turn, may lead the adolescents’ to be rebellious in certain situations and be dependent on others. Those who become rebellious might exhibit violent behaviour and those who are obedient tend to be reliant on their parents. Authoritarian parents do not interact with their adolescents and demand that they should accept the rules and practices without asking questions. Authoritarian parents are mainly concerned about their authority, respect, conformity, and traditions. They punished their children for not obeying the rules or standards set by them. They can be divided into two sorts that are non-authoritarian directive and authoritarian directive. Non-Authoritarian directive parents are non-interfering and very directive with their children while authoritarian directive parents are very interfering and autocratic with their children and use their power and authority strictly. (Gould & Martin Dale 2007)

(b) Authoritative Parenting Style- Baumrind (1990) suggested that these parents, “monitor and impart clear standards for their children’s conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self-regulated as well as cooperative.” These parents are highly responsive and demanding. It means Authoritative parents are warm, but determined. They encourage their adolescents to be independent but put some limits and control on their actions. They often, interact, discuss and debate with their adolescents and recognize their opinions as well. This style of parenting gives warmth, love, support and acceptance to the children and educates them to become progressive and independent. Steinberg et al. (1989) also supported the
fact that authoritative parenting enhances adolescents’ psychological well-being which, ultimately, helps them to achieve academically success in school. It also contributes to the benefit of a parent-child relationship, markeded by the amalgamation of psychological autonomy and firm behavioural control. Another important characteristic of this parenting is reciprocity, free communication, verbal interaction, mutual understanding in relationship. Authoritative parenting applies firm control and requires their children obey with the reasonable set of rules and guidelines. They make use of reason and control in taking disciplinary decisions but strict punishment is avoided (Bonstein & Zalotnik 2008). Pratt et al., (2003), analyzing the inputs of parenting styles to adolescents’ pro-social development, they suggested that the children find their parents more authoritative, being more valued by them. This style of parenting is associated with many positive outcomes in the development of adolescents, even during and after adolescence also. This style of parenting makes adolescents more skilful and conform. (Baumrind,1987; Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Gecas,1971; Ginsburg & Branstein,1993, Steinberg; 2001). Thus, this parenting style is commended to be more suitable and positive for adolescents’ development. This style of parenting is also connected with greater psychological well-being.

(c) Permissive Parenting Style- According to Baumrind, permissive parents “are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, do not require mature behaviour, allow considerable self regulation, and avoid confrontation”. Permissive parents are very warm and non-demanding. They are lenient and become inactive in their parenting, believing that the best way to express their affection is to fulfil
their adolescents’ wishes; to help them take good decisions; and also but they also choose to support that they seek parents advice as and when needed. The adolescents can make decisions even without parental help under this parenting style. Permissive parents are different from authoritative parents as they believe in exercising less control and less demand; practice high level of nurturance and clear communication (Bornstein & Zlotnik 2008). Permissive parents give freedom in decision-making to their offsprings. They are mostly very supportive and acceptable towards impulses, requirements and behaviours of their offsprings. They are against punishment and avoid confrontation (Dwairy & Menshar 2005). Divided further into permissive indulgent and permissive neglectful, later on, say that permissive indulgent parents are cool, open, and cuddly, practice less control on their offsprings such as give only some directions, suggestions or instruction, even when they required or ask it while, on the other side, permissive neglectful parents are not much loving, unsupportive, less directive and exercise very less control over their offsprings; hence, their children take undue advantage and experience unnecessary freedom and autonomy.

1.7.2 Peer Relationship
The concept of peer denotes two senses: first, it is a term used for small group of friends who have and share common values, interest and activities; and second, it is a term used for all who are in the same age group. During adolescence, a healthy peer group is supposed to play an important part in shaping identity, and providing social support, preventing adolescents from anti-social behaviour and delinquency.
In the present study the term peer relationship signifies the connection or association among the classmates that they make inside or outside the classroom environment. Peers have a central place in the life of an adolescent because the role they play during adolescence is very crucial for their psychological and social development. Erikson’s stages of psycho-social development had emphasized the idea that not only family but society also affects the development process of one’s ego and identity. Erikson described how peer pressure is a key event during the adolescent stage of psychosocial development, especially during latency stage, when the adolescents begin to develop relationships among their peers. The interaction of adolescents with their parents at this stage is generally minimal. The adolescents tend to gain more independence during this stage as they are confused regarding their own self and their role in social environment.

When children shift from childhood to adolescence, they start spending most of the time along with their peers in comparison of their parents or other adults (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984). For this reason it became more important to study the peer relationship in the context of self concept as self is constructed majorly through the interaction with social environment. Hunt (1997), found that Adolescents’ satisfaction with their peers’ leads to the construction of a healthy social-self concept and academic achievement than others. On the other hand, dissatisfaction leads to social and academic problems. It is an important factor at the adolescent stage to conform to the peer rules. Several longitudinal studies have supported the inference that peer groups significantly influence academic achievement, but comparatively a few studies have examined the influence of peer relationship on the self-concept of adolescents. However, some evidence tends to testify that peers influence cognitive ability of the adolescents. For instance, some studies do
show that students who join the school and become friends with many other students at that time evinced favourable perception about the school compared to those students who had fewer friends. Peer relationship has two themes: one’s children’s peer relationships changes systematically as they grow in form and function; and second, peer relationship are believed to be powerful in shaping the development of children from middle childhood through adolescence.

Peer relationships are categorized into two major types-Dyads and Groups. Dyads include best friends, enemies and romantic relationships while Groups include (i) smaller peer group of friends who hang out together and (ii) larger group such as classroom peers. Harris (1998), maintaining the group socialization theory, believes that the peer group is the most crucial environmental factor that influences the personality of adolescents. The peers have a stronger influence than parents, siblings, teachers or any other adult on the development of the adolescents’ personality. Garfield Bester (2007), too in his study on, “Personality Development of the adolescents peer group versus parents” indicated: when compared with the parents’ the peer group had a stronger relation with the personality development of the adolescents, more prominently in boys than in girls; thereby indicating that gender does play a role. Relationship with friends is correlated more strongly than parents for adolescents’ self-concept development as well.

Budhall (1998), acknowledged a positive correlation between social isolation among peers and low self esteem in adolescents. Brendgen Warner, Morren and Vitaro (2005) found that there was an increase in depressive mood when rejected by the same sex peers especially in case of girls. According to Hopes, Davis, Allport and Longoria (1997), it is
widely accepted that peer group acceptance or become a part of peer group is a powerful force at adolescent stage as these groups give a base and become a remarkable point of reference through which adolescents gain an insight towards the world outside of their families. Failure to build up such relationship with their peer group often results in a variety of problems for adolescents such as stress, anxiety, feeling of loneliness, delinquency, substance abuse, psychological disorder, victimization etc, related to lower social self concept in adolescents.

1.7.3 Teacher Influence

“The task of an excellent teacher is to stimulate “apparently ordinary” people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners: it is in making winners out of ordinary people.” – Kathryn Patricia Cross

Adolescents have many inhibitions and confusions in their about their strengths, weaknesses and their own identity which make them unaware of their self; not internally free to interact with others; or participate in activities; be socially active and confident in most situations. It is the teacher who shapes the personality of children and is capable of making them shine in their lives. A teacher is an ideal figure who is ever inspiring and encouraging, shouldering the responsibility of developing the overall personality of every child under his charge with unique characteristics and abilities. Teachers, next to parents, are the most significant persons in children’s lives, and in their classroom to play an
important role in the formation of children’s attitudes and predispositions (Banks & Grambs 1972). Teachers have many different multifaceted roles to encourage and develop the abilities of students and this role is not restricted within the four walls of classroom only as they do different activities through which they identify and inculcate more abilities and strengths. A successful teacher will always try to make positive changes in the self of a child. Teachers can promote self-concept by cheering supportive relationship among students. Students’ perception of their classroom as an early community is positively related to their academic, social and global self-concepts. (Battistich,V., Solomon,D., Kim,D., Watson,M. & Schaps, E.1995).

Self-concept development is a lifelong process, and affected by our surroundings and environment. In school, teachers are the major stakeholders of the students’ learning and training. If students get due guidance of teachers they will be able not only to develop their self, but also meet many challenges, that adolescents face at this stage, more positively and confidently, with positive strengths, abilities and aptitudes and also create opportunities where they can encourage themselves to realize their strengths and improve on their weaknesses.

Developing self does not mean that an individual should focus on one’s ‘ego’. It is the duty of the teacher to make a smooth transition from ‘me’ of an individual to ‘us’ of an individual, to discharge one’s social responsibility also, an adolescent’s strong self will always be socially active and develop the feeling of ‘us’ rather than ‘me’.
Moreover, to communicate effectively about his/her need, feelings and emotions, a teacher has the responsibility to develop his/her self positively and strongly so that he/she is able to communicate clearly and effectively. There are many situations where in children get confused about right or wrong happening to them or to others. It is the responsibility of a teacher to let students know and understand what is right and what is wrong so that they become confident about not doing any wrong to themselves nor to others. If their self is developed and strong they will always try to understand others’ situations and readily help them, as needed.

Physical, social and psychological characteristics of an individual are the major components that make up the self-concept. These components often get influenced by an individual’s own attitude and belief patterns. It is the duty of a teacher to shape and transform the negative attitude and vision of an individual to a more positive self. Moreover there are many instances wherein peers in the school bully or put negative remarks on the student, thereby killing his/her own self. It is also the role of teacher to always pay attention to such instances as peer bullying, victimization etc., and to strengthen the self of the adolescents to be shaken their belief and conviction.

Several studies have found significant impact that teachers can have on the self-concept of their students. Rogers found: “When students’ feelings are responded to when they are regarded as worthwhile human beings capable of self direction, and when their teacher relates to them in a person-to-person manner, good things happen.” That is when we respect our students as people; they will rise to the occasion.
In a classroom environment there are many instances wherein teachers should give opportunities to answer questions, participate in discussions and these should always be appreciated by the teachers. It should always be noted or kept in mind that teachers should leave on positive reinforcement and remarks so that it helps in building self-confidence of the students. Furthermore, teachers should devise such activities that enhance the self of the child positively and the child is able to gain positively and strength.

In short, the support of teachers is of crucial importance to students, especially at adolescents’ stage, when their self is confused; when there is identity crisis; when their unresolved emotions bind them. Teacher support appears to play a significant role in building the adolescent self-concept with their positive social behaviour (such as the extent to which they follow classroom rules), and their well-being (Reddy, R., Rhodes, Jean E., & Mulhall, P. (2003). A teacher’s role is of paramount importance to them so as to develop in them positive self-concept and a sense of togetherness and individual identity as well. A teacher is like a lighthouse who shows light of correct direction to adolescents grasping in darkness about their self and their situations.

“A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” Henry Adams.

1.8 Research Gap
There is no dearth of literature available on Self-concept, Peer relationship, parenting style and role of a teacher in student’s achievement but very few studies were done which measures the influence of all these variables on the development of self-concept. A
review of prior researches conducted on self-concept indicates that very little attempt is made to study the influence of psycho-social variables (such as parents, peers and teachers) all together on the development of self-concept. Presently, though we believe that the self-concept of adolescent students is influenced by varying degree of parenting style, peer relationships but hardly we find any empirical study, that related to what extent the parenting style and peer relationship influences the self concept of adolescent students. As far as teacher role is concerned many studies were available that indicated the importance of teachers’ in the achievement of students and their learning but not a single study the researcher, have found that can clearly indicate the teachers’ influence in the overall development of self-concept among adolescent students, researcher is trying to fill this gap. That’s why present study is an effort to throw some light on the development of self-concept among adolescents with respect to their psycho-social variables. I hope this study will prove to be helpful in realizing the need and importance of self-concept among adolescents and the influence of parenting style, peer relationship and teachers on its development.

1.9 Rationale of the Study

Research evidence already revealed indicates that self-concept of an individual mainly develops or is influenced by one’s interaction with their environment and with their significant others comprising for example parent, peers, teachers etc particularly when an adolescent starts developing one’s unique identity through interaction and experience with these significant others by evaluating or comparing one’s self with others’ feedback. Receiving a positive feedback is most likely to develop a better and positive self-image
whereas, in the same way, negative feedback may result in the development of negative and weak self-image. The development of a passable personality has been found to be very much linked with the development of passable self-concept. An adolescent failing in developing an adequate and positive self-concept may have to face lot of problems such as stress, aggression, anxiety, depression, poor self-esteem, mental health problems and other failures in life. In contrast, having a passable self-concept is linked with many positive social and emotional developments. A probe into this major question poses a big problem to meet the demands of the rational raised above. Hence, the need of the study along principal parameters of parenting style, peer group relationships and teachers’ influence through their role and responsibility in building self-concept of adolescents.

1.10 Need of the Study

Adolescence is a period characterized by innumerable and unique changes and problems. This is one of the most important phases of life, the only stage when an individual starts understanding one’s personality as a whole on the basis of different self perceptions, established from the psycho-social environment comprising home, school and the society. These self perceptions do help develop one’s self-concept attitude, beliefs, abilities, typical behaviour, traits, actions, characteristics, qualities etc unique in themselves and distinct from others.

Self-concept development is a primary concern for an adolescent. The major task of an adolescent is the construction of a healthy identity (Erickson). The search for identity formation sometimes leads to identity confusion or identity crisis such as: who am I (?), which may destruct the self or lead to the poor self-concept development. That is why it
is important to overcome this crisis by knowing the self and for this; there is the need for proper guidance, from parents, teachers as well as peer groups. During the acquisition of their own identity, the adolescents gain knowledge about their self and this acquisition of the identity takes place in the environment in which they live, particularly the significant others such as parents, peers, teachers etc. So their role becomes very important as adolescent evaluate themselves on the basis of feedback which they get from this environment.

Family is always considered as the first school for a child in which parents from the beginning act as important identification figures for them in the development of their self-concept. Personal experiences that come up from the parent-child relationship are the primary source that set in motion the cycle of how adolescents will evaluate themselves and interact with others. In other words, the type of relationship they experience with their parents is thought to predict their attitudes towards themselves and the worth of relationship they experience with their peers (Gecas 1971; Wilkinson, 2004). Parent’s behaviour, their interaction with their children and their feedback matters so much for the children in making their mental picture about their self. Parent-child shares a strong emotional bond and it becomes stronger when a child experiences a warm, loving and caring environment at home. Parents’ attitude, behaviour and their communication with their children gives the child a sense of security, respect and value towards themselves. If a child fails to develop this sense of security and warmth positively then it leads to development of a negative self-concept and a poor and weak personality in future. So,
parenting style is considered as an important variable of self-concept development for adolescents.

Adolescence is also a period that is characterized by the increasing importance of social context beyond the home which shifts in autonomy away from family-centred relationship towards institutional and peer group interactions. Adolescents begin to construct their own self-concept through observing and evaluating the reactions of their significant others’ towards. (Gibson and Jefferson, 2006). In an adolescent life, role of peers become very important as adolescents spend a quantum of time with them. Adolescent relationship with their peers becomes more strong and clear compared to childhood. Studies on human relations suggest that lack of harmonious relationship with the peers is related to mental health problems, psychological and educational maladjustment; delinquency, if rejected by the peer group etc leading to problems such as aggression and less attentiveness. Generally, adolescents start relying more on their peers for their decisions, seeking their opinions, recognitions and respect. This helps them minimize their confusion and make their self more clear, psychologically, intellectually and socially. If peers do not give them support or acceptance and put pressure on the individual, this leads to destruction of their self-formation or even may hurt in such a way as to result in the development of a negative self-concept.

Classroom peer group relationships and how these positive or negative relationships influence the development of their self-concept is the major question that deserves attention as most of the available studies addresses peer influence in the context of peer
victimization, peer pressure, anti-social behaviour etc and not in the context of peer relationship vis-a-vis its influence on their self concept development i.e. whether the peer who shares positive and negative relations at the adolescent stage influence their self concept development.

Teacher’s role in this context is also crucial to build positive self-concept of adolescents. A teacher, after parents is considered as a significant others in shaping the life of adolescents. Teacher personalized behaviour may affect students’ self as teachers’ play a significant role through their teaching and guidance. Teachers motivate and encourage students to express their feelings and share their problems that help them to alter their personality and make their self-concept clear and positive. Teacher helps a student to develop a sense of vision that enlighten their thought and modify their attitude and behaviour.

1.11 Statement of the problem:
“A Study of the Self-Concept among Adolescents with respect to their Psycho-Social Variables.”

1.12 Variables of the study
The purpose of the researcher is to study the influence of psycho-social variables including teachers, parenting style, peer relationship as well as gender on the development of Self-Concept among adolescents. Here, the independent variables are
parenting style, teacher influence, peer relationship and gender and the dependent variable is Self-Concept.

### 1.13 Operational definition of the key terms

1. **Self-concept** – It is the collection of our self-perceptions about our beliefs, qualities, behaviour etc. The total scores obtained by an individual on this scale indicate the self-concept of that individual.

2. **Adolescents** – Individuals in the age group ranging from 14 to 18 years.

3. **Psycho-social Variables** – Interplay of the psychological and social aspects of cognitive and emotional growth of an individual as a result of interaction with parents, peers and teachers’. i) Psychological development implying the capacity to learn, perceive, analyze and experience emotion; ii) Social development implying the ability to: form attachments towards care givers, maintain social relationship, and learn social code of behaviour of one’s own culture; and iii) Emotional development basically implying influence of the way in which we think, feel and act in different social situations.

The Psycho-social variables of this study are-

(a) **Parenting style**- A psychological construct that represents the standard ways that parents use in the rearing of their children.

(b) **Peer relationship**- Close association among the classmates that they make inside or outside the classroom environment.

(c) **Teacher influence**- Effect of the teacher’s action, behaviour, beliefs, opinion etc on development of the self-concept of adolescent students.
1.14 Objectives of the study

1. To study the Self-concept of adolescents;
2. To study the gender differences in self-concept among adolescents;
3. To study the influence of parenting styles on the development of Self-concept among adolescents;
4. To study the influence of peer relationships on the development of Self-concept among adolescents; and
5. To study the influence of teachers in the development of Self-concept among adolescents.

1.15 Delimitations

The study is confined to:

1. South Delhi District.
2. The study is limited to secondary school level, classes IX and X.
3. Only selected co-educational schools.