All higher order mammals have a need to master their environment. In humans it has been argued that this need is manifested in the feelings of autonomous control over one’s life (White, 1959; Bandura 1994; Deci and Ryan, 1985; Erikson, 1963). From day one, the development of a human being is aimed at changing from a largely dependent individual into a relatively independent individual. This struggle from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence is most apparent during adolescence.

The Latin word ‘adolescere’ itself refers to growing into maturity. During adolescence internal (intrapsychic, cognitive and biological) and external (societal expectations, interpersonal relationships, role responsibilities, family composition) changes dictate the developmental tasks of this period. These issues involve developing self-understanding (identity), establishing a healthy sense of independence (autonomy), forming close and caring relationship with others (intimacy), expressing sexuality and enjoying physical contacts with others (sexuality) and being successful competent members of the society (achievement).

Adolescents must master these developmental tasks before they can achieve healthy psychosocial functioning as an adult but the development of autonomy is regarded as the prerequisite for reaching adulthood. Ability to function autonomously promotes a healthy sense of self and thus become important for successful development in other areas of adolescent’s life. The word autonomy is derived from autos (self) and nomos (rule), signifying self-regulation, i.e. giving direction to one’s own life. Autonomy is a psychosocial issue which shows its presence during the entire life cycle, though considered to be significant in adolescence due to biological changes of puberty, the emergence of more advanced thinking abilities and the transition of individual into new roles in society.

Erikson (1963) believed that this psychosocial process is a central issue of the play age. Children establish an initial sense of autonomy when they begin to explore their surroundings on their own. In their exploratory process they demonstrate a growing sense of independence and autonomy, and as they step into adolescence it becomes indispensable to change from a dependent individual into an independent individual.
One of the earliest observations on autonomy is made by Pfander (1908/1967) who distinguished between self-determined and other-determined behavior. Self-determined behavior is seen as a reflection of one’s own will. Inspite of external pressures, these individuals make their own choices. Several other psychologists have also attempted to define emotional autonomy.

Murray (1938) has defined need for autonomy as “to resist influence or coercion, to defy an authority or to seek freedom in a new place, to strive for independence.”

Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) have defined autonomy as an ability to regulate ones’ own behavior and to select and guide ones’ own decisions and actions without undue control or dependence on parents.

Hill and Holmbeck (1986) have suggested that autonomy does not refer to freedom from parents but to adolescents’ freedom to carry out actions while maintaining appropriate connections to significant others.

Crittenden (1990) has defined autonomy as “capacities for taking responsibility for one’s own behavior, making decisions regarding one’s own life and maintaining supportive relationships.”

Douvan and Gold (1966) describe the process of achieving autonomy as a gradual process in which youngsters make demands on autonomy while parents respond appropriately to this need with gradual increase of granting autonomy.

In simple words, Karpel (1976) refers to this process as an increasing definition of an “I” within a “we”.

Maccoby (1984) observed that autonomy appears to follow a three-phase developmental sequence, beginning with parental regulation of children, to gradually increasing co-regulation between adolescents and parents to eventual self-regulation.

Overall, autonomy refers to the ability of the individual to meet his/her own basic needs, which had been previously met by parents or other adults.
1.1 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Autonomy is often conceptualized as detachment, self-regulation, separation-individuation, psychosocial maturity, self-control, self-efficacy, self-determination, decision making and independence. A lack of consensus about definitions and dimensions of autonomy may be attributable to different theoretical underpinnings. Many conceptualizations of autonomy may reflect its multidimensionality with each operationalization representing a different facet of autonomy (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986). With several years of research, different perspectives emerge on autonomy which can be categorized as-

Psychodynamic Perspective

A general characteristic of psychodynamic theories is the focus on the developmental changes in the parent-child relationship. Moreover, autonomy is a central concept in classic psychodynamic theories. Early writings on emotional autonomy were influenced by psychoanalytic thinkers who argued that physical changes of puberty cause conflict inside the family system. Freud A. (1958) believed that intrapsychic conflicts that have been repressed since early childhood are reawakened at early adolescence by the resurgence of sexual impulses. These reawakened conflicts are not dealt with consciously and explicitly by the adolescents and their parents but expressed as increased tension among family members. As a consequence of this tension, early adolescents are driven to separate themselves, at least emotionally from their parents, and they turn their emotional energies to relationship with peers. This process of separation was called detachment and was considered normal healthy developmental process.

She proposed that it is detachment from the parental ties that makes possible emotional adjustment, healthy independence and later adjustment to extra familial objects. Freud saw adolescent’s upheaval, with their emotional separation from their parents as a necessary and desirable stage for growth. Thus, parent-adolescent conflict was considered necessary for successful resolution of these intrapsychic issues.

According to Mahler (1963) the origins of the struggle for psychological separation lie in infancy. She describes the process of separation-individuation as a
starting point of the development of autonomy. She refers to this process as the psychological birth of an individual. The first separation-individuation process occurs in infancy when infants develop a sense of individuality that they exist separate from their primary caregivers and have a will of their own. In this shift the children’s relationship to their parents becomes much less symbiotic and much more autonomous. Symbiosis in psychological relationship involves a sense of being merged with another person emotionally (Richman, 1986). Mahler (1963) notes that symbiotically attached infant become an individuated toddler developmentally. This individuation allows the child to explore his or her world and become more independent and capable of handling emotional experiences separate from parents. Thus, the individuated child is able to form emotional bonds independently of their parents.

Blos (1967) wrote that this process occurs again in adolescence as second separation-individuation process. According to this view autonomy development entails a double movement in which adolescents physically and emotionally distance themselves from their parents (separation) and increasingly take responsibility for themselves without relying on their parents (individuation).

Individuation, according to Blos (1967) refers to the disengagement from internalized objects (i.e. love and hate objects) which opens the way in adolescence to the finding of external and extra familial love and hate objects. Individuation is necessary in order to break away from infantile dependencies on parents and to begin forming more adult love and hate relationships. That is, there is a decrease in symbiosis in the relationship with parents and an emergence of emotional autonomy. The role of parents in this process is to help foster the adolescent’s sense of independence, ability to handle emotional experience and ultimately to develop senses of his or her own self. The adolescent’s ideas, interests, feelings and thoughts are more explicitly their own, and do not necessarily have to match those of their parents.

This perspective is elaborated by Douvan and Gold (1966). According to them adolescence is a time when the child must disentangle himself from the family network and become his own man—emotionally, behaviorally, and in his values. Behavioral autonomy is defined as the extent to which person is allowed to decide about daily
activities. Emotional autonomy is described as abandoning of emotional ties to the parents. Moral autonomy refers to the personal point of view on correct and incorrect behavior.

Erikson (1968) added the psychosocial outlook to the psychoanalytic view of adolescence. Erikson proposed that conflict is present during each stage of life and is not unique to adolescence. During childhood it is expressed in terms of autonomy versus shame, when children actively make a shift from external control to self-control. As adolescents become more self-aware, they strive for more autonomy from their parents. Parents who deny these beginning attempts for self-control may lead adolescents to feel shame and doubt about the self that may have long term consequences (Erikson, 1980; 1982).

Based on separation-individuation phase of infancy, Hoffman (1984) introduced the concept of psychological separation with its four aspects: 1) Functional independence is described as the ability to regulate ones’ personal matters without the help of ones’ parents. 2) Attitudinal independence is conceptualized as the differentiation of attitudes, values and beliefs between adolescents and their parents. 3) Emotional independence refers to the independence from an extreme need for support from one’s parents. 4) Conflictual independence is defined as freedom from excessive feelings of anger and guilt towards one’s parents.

Freud (1958), Erikson (1959) and Blos (1962) all share the basic assumption that only through conflict maturity can be attained and thus, confirm to G. Stanley Hall’s (1904) notion of adolescence as a time of “storm and stress”. Although the analytic foundation of this perspective (Freud, 1958/1969) maintains that a turbulent period of storm and stress is a normative condition for the development of adolescent’s emotional autonomy, contemporary researchers have attempted to carry out a separate line of scientific inquiry to assess adolescents emotional autonomy following more closely the “calm and joy” transition described by Margaret Mead (1950).

Psychoanalytic theorists now have modified their approach to parent-child relationship, suggesting that deidealization rather than complete rejection to the parents is
necessary step towards adolescent autonomy. The transition to adolescence is better described as a period of realignment of family relationships during which there are temporary perturbations in the parent-adolescent relationship (Collins, 1990; Steinberg, 1986). Offer (1969) and Douvan and Adelson (1966) have suggested that psychic and interpersonal tension may modify the relationship between adolescents and their parents but it may in no case severe their emotional bond. There is a transformation but not a breaking off of family relationship.

Several researches share the general hypothesis that parent-adolescent interaction that encourage differentiation and an autonomous sense of self, but that also send a message of acceptance and connection should facilitate a variety of positive outcomes in the adolescents, including healthy identity formation, perspective taking skills, ego development and self-esteem. (Hauser et al., 1991; Powers et al., 1983)

Further evidence for a shift in conceptualization of autonomy is notable in Greenberger’s model of psychosocial maturity. It is assumed that psychosocial maturity is reflected in two general dimensions: 1) Social responsibility- the capacity to function competently as a member of society; and 2) Autonomy- the capacity to function competently as an individual. She argues that self-reliance is perhaps the most basic disposition that underlies the capacity for autonomy. Self-reliance entails the absence of excessive dependence on others’, a sense of control over one’s life and a sense of initiative. Thus Greenberger’s model places an equal importance on autonomy and sense of responsibility.

In addition, Grotevant and Cooper (1985, 1986) point at the importance of relational view in the concept of individuation. According to their model, an individuated relationship is one that displays a balance between individuality and connectedness. Individuality is reflected in expression of separateness (expression of differentness of self from others) and self-assertion (expression of one’s own point of view), where as connectedness is reflected in mutuality (being sensitive to and respectful to other’s ideas) and permeability (expressing openness and responsiveness to others view). Grotevant and Cooper (1985) hold that an effective combination of cohesion and separation in family
relationship is associated with adolescent identity exploration and perspective taking skills.

Frank, Avery and Laman (1988) have specified three dimensions of autonomy and relatedness with their ten aspects. The first dimension was connectedness versus separateness, consisting of following aspects:- Self-other responsibility, the ability to separate oneself from parents and distinguish between one’s own need and the parents need; closeness, the extent to which adolescent’s have strong emotional ties with parents; communication, being able to talk about personal matters and express difference in opinion; concern, showing interest in parent’s well-being; and empathy, the ability to perceive the parent as a complex person. The second dimension was labeled competence and include following aspects: decision making, the ability to decide about important issues in accordance with personal wishes without excessive influence from parents; and independence, feeling capable to cope with challenges. The third dimension was described as emotional autonomy and consisted of following aspects: personal control, being in control of one’s own feelings toward one’s parents; self-assertion, expressing thoughts and feelings, without worrying how one’s parents may react; and respect, being proud of one’s parents and regarding them as an appropriate role model.

Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) have described autonomy encompassing: 1) the relationship with parents, or emotional autonomy, 2) resistance to peer pressure, and 3) a subjective sense of self-reliance. Steinberg tried to emphasize on the contemporary perspective of emotional autonomy during adolescence, a perspective that de-emphasize the storm and stress of adolescent rebellion and conflict and focuses instead on the more pacific process of individuation. They described deidealization, an aspect of emotional autonomy as adolescents’ relinquishing of childish perception of parental omnipotence rather than the adoption of exceedingly oppositional, critical or negativistic attitude towards parents. Similarly, non dependency was described as an absence of childish dependency from parents rather than absolute freedom from parents. They hold that an adolescent comes to de-idealize his or her parents, and begins to perceive them as people with needs, personal characteristics and repertoires of behavior not always visible in the confines of the parent-child relationship. Also, the adolescent begins to sever childish
dependencies on parents while taking responsibility for his or her own behavior, and forms an individuated sense of self- a sense of oneself as a self-governing, separate individual.

Ryan (1993) has described autonomy as self-governance or agency. Adherents of this view (Kagiticibasi, 1996; Ryan and Deci, 2000) use notions like nonconformity, external locus of control, resistance to persuasion by parents or peers, self-determination and competence. This view of adolescent autonomy is usually supported because it emphasizes what is striven for rather than what is abandoned. Moreover, it tends to be more in line with observation that the development of autonomy for most adolescents does not include a breaking away from their families (Hill and Holmbeck, 1986).

Other researchers have also stated that autonomy must be viewed in a social context as a combination of autonomy and relatedness (Allen et al., 1994a; Mc Elhaney and Allen, 2001; Beyers et al., 2003; Kuppermin et al., 1996).

Cognitive perspective

Cognitive perspective highlights the role of perceptual processes in the development of adolescent autonomy. In cognitive perspective on autonomy the process of defining goals, desires and values is described. Bandura’s (1977) theory on self-efficacy states that individual beliefs of efficacy influence the way people think, feel and act.

In summary, beliefs about one’s efficacy influence the ideas about what to do, the effort to achieve that, the positive or negative feeling associated with that and the choice of how to do it. Among the mechanism of agency, people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives is the defining feature.

Skinner, Chapman and Baltes, (1988) and Skinner (1990) have described the theory of perceived control as critical for understanding how individuals initiate and regulate actions. This involves these sets of control related beliefs: 1) control beliefs, expectation about the extent to which one can produce desired or prevalent undesired outcomes; 2) means-ends beliefs, expectation about the extent to which one has access to
potential means. On the basis of this people can be perceived as agents, attempting to reach desired ends, with the help of particular means.

Markus and Wurf (1987) present a model of self-regulation based on the conception of self-representation i.e. what individual think, feel or believe about themselves are the most powerful regulators of many important behaviors. The model incorporates: 1) Goal setting, which is determined by one’s expectations, needs, motives, values and self-conceptions. 2) Cognitive preparation for action, consists of choosing a strategy to achieve a goal and planning how to follow this strategy. 3) The cyclic process, includes observing one’s own behavior, making a judgment about how well the behavior is being executed, and evaluating or reinforcing the self. The control idea is that actual and ideal self-representations serve as a motivational factor for people to guide their behavior (Carver and Scheier, 1991).

Dworkin (1988) conceptualized autonomy as the combination of two capacities. First, the capacity to reflect upon one’s preferences, wishes and desires. Second, the capacity to accept these or attempt to change these to achieve a more general goal. By exercising these capacities, people define their nature, give meaning and coherence to their lives, and take responsibility for the kind of person they are.

In summary, cognitive domain is characterized by a sense of self-reliance, a belief that one has control over his own life and subjective feelings of being able to make decisions without excessive social validation.

**Eclectic Perspective**

In eclectic perspective, the cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements are combined to describe adolescent autonomy. Self-determination theory (Deci, 1980; Deci and Ryan, 1987) hold that there are three psychological needs guiding development in adolescents- need for competence (to achieve certain goals), need for autonomy (to perceive sense of agency in making choices and understanding actions), need for relatedness (need to feel connected to other people).
Bekker (1991) suggests that there should be a sense of awareness of one’s own desires and opinion, sensitivity to the opinion of others and a capacity to manage new situations. Still further, Flammer (1991) proposed that self-regulation is a defining characteristic of all living systems. Self-regulation is broadly applicable to five domains in adolescent development: 1) Social independence refers to reorganization of social relation with parents and peers. 2) Social regulation refers to the integration of social motives in the individual’s behavior. 3) Internalization of actions is manifested through reflection of the reasons for one’s own behavior. 4) A sense of personal control develops through an increase in cognitive process of action panning. 5) Regulation of development is conceptualized as the attempts adolescents make to direct their maturation by setting developmental goals.

Koestner and Losier (1996) distinguish two conceptions of adolescent autonomy: 1) the intrapersonal conception of reflective autonomy refers to people’s desire to perceive themselves as the origins of their actions and to have control over their own behavior. 2) The interpersonal conception of reactive autonomy refers to people’s desire to act independently of others.

Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) have defined autonomy as an ability to give direction to one’s own life, by defining goal, feeling competent and being able to regulate one’s actions. They have given 3 dimensions of autonomy- 1) Attitudinal autonomy refers to the cognitive process of defining goal by evaluating opportunities and desires. 2) Emotional autonomy refers to the affective process of feeling confident to define these goals independent of the wishes of the parents and peers. 3) Functional autonomy refers to the regulatory process of developing a strategy to achieve these goals.

Conclusively, it can be suggested that these different perspectives do not conflict, but rather emphasize on the different aspects of autonomy development. All theoretical perspectives, definitions and autonomy domains share commonalities and variance in the relationship between autonomy, family relationships and diverse outcomes. The diversity in conception indicate that achieving a sense of autonomy from parents should be explained as a multidimensional task that is accomplished gradually as one moves from adolescence to adulthood.
Achieving a sense of autonomy from parents is a complex task which occurs at cognitive, emotional and behavioral level of an individual and are considered as three dimensions of autonomy (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986; Sessa and Steinberg, 1991; Steinberg; 1990). Cognitive autonomy is defined as the capacity for independent reasoning and decision making without excessive social validation. It gives the adolescents, the subjective sense of self-reliance, and believes that one has choices. Emotional autonomy is defined in terms of relationships with others and includes relinquishing dependencies and individuation from parents. It gives the adolescents, the ability to take the responsibility for one’s thoughts, feelings and actions. Behavioral autonomy refers to the capacity for competent self-governance in absence of external guidance or monitoring. It gives the adolescent, the capacity to function on his own in a new or challenging situation or behave ethically when outside the purview of adult supervision. However, all the three dimensions are interrelated and influence one another. (Collins and Repinski, 1994; Youniss and Smollar, 1985; Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986).

Autonomy is a core psychosocial developmental issue during adolescence. Literally, autonomy means self-regulation. The need of self-regulation emerges during adolescence because before this period an individual is regulated by his/her parents. Due to increasingly adult-like appearance, cognitive advances, emotional maturity and expanding social relationships, as well as granting of more rights and responsibilities by others, the adolescents want greater control over their lives. Thus, autonomy involves a process of moving from parental regulation to self-regulation. During this process, adolescents psychologically separate themselves from their parents and increasingly take responsibility for their decisions and actions. Before this stage, adolescents feel the urge to validate their thoughts, feelings and actions from their parents. Adolescents develop the capacity for independent thinking and functioning only when they relinquish their childish dependencies and conceptualization of their parents. Due to relational changes, adolescent’s thoughts and actions are also modified.

During this whole process, relationship aspect remains the predominant. Transformation in relationship acts as a triggers for cognitive, emotional and behavioral
autonomy. The relationship domain manifests itself in the emotional facet of autonomy. Hence, emotional autonomy serves as a base and connects the cognitive and behavioral autonomy and makes them fall in the same phenomenon i.e. ‘autonomy’. Moreover, in our culture relational ties are highly valued. Connection with parents in the form of dependency continues for a longer duration in comparison to individualistic cultures, which emphasizes “I” consciousness, autonomy, emotional independence, self-interest and right to privacy. Indian culture has traditionally been collectivistic, which emphasizes “We” consciousness, group harmony, collective identity, emotional dependence and sharing duties and obligations. However, owing to westernization, increasing number of nuclear families, two-career households, exposure to media and awareness, adolescent’s demand for autonomy from their parents is now on increase due to which their relationships are also undergoing through a dramatic change. Therefore, it is more important to study the concept of autonomy from a relational perspective i.e. emotional autonomy.

Studying autonomy from an emotional perspective involves an introspective quality that seems necessary for true autonomy. Emotional autonomy is an important contributor for the overall achievement of adolescent autonomy from the family (Taradesh et al. 2001; Pinquart and Silbereisen, 2002). Emotional autonomy refers to adolescent’s relinquishing of childish dependencies and conceptualization of their parents and replacing them with more mature perceptions about them (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986). Emotional autonomy leads to the development of mature, realistic and balanced perception of parents that accompanies the acceptance of primary responsibility for personal decision making, values and emotional stability (Lamborn and Steinberg, 1993). Individuals who achieve emotional autonomy come to rely on their own internal resources, take responsibility for their own actions and gradually result in mature and competent young adults.

According to Lambom and Steinberg (1993), the development of emotional autonomy during adolescence is an important stepping stone in the process toward true self-reliance and responsible decision making. The success of adulthood stage depends a lot on how well the adolescent has been able to resolve the conflict between dependence
and newer demands of independence. Moreover, the development of emotional autonomy is central to any discussion of the tasks of adolescence because of its intimate relationship with the accomplishment of other tasks. Without achievement of a reasonable degree of emotional autonomy, the adolescent can hardly be expected to achieve mature heterosexual or peer relationship (Fuligni and Eccles, 1993), confident pursuit of a vocation (Guay et al. 2003; Guay, 2005) or a sense of identity (Grotevant and Cooper, 1986), which requires a positive image of self as separate, unified and consistent over time.

Emotional autonomy is not the same as rejection, alienation or physical separation from parents. It is an independent psychological status in which parents and adolescents accept each other’s individuality. Adolescents who achieve emotional autonomy can recognize and accept both the similarities and differences between themselves and their parents without feeling totally absorbed in their parents’ identity or totally alienated from their parents’ love.

Emotionally autonomous individuals can feel affection for their parents, cherish worthy ideals they have taught and heed the commandment “Honor thy father and thy mother”. The essential elements in emotional autonomy are the freedom, desire and ability to take responsibility for one’s thoughts, feelings, moral judgments and practical decisions. Individuals who are emotionally autonomous may seek advice from their parents, but they will not allow their parents to dictate their decisions. They respect their parents’ moral values, but they measure what is wrong and right by their own conviction and not simply in terms of what they think their parents will approve or disapprove. The individuals who achieve emotional autonomy handle criticism, hurdles and setbacks constructively by developing their own inner strengths and self-esteem.

1.2 CONTEXTS OF EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY

Adolescents emotional autonomy is best understood if studied in context (Fuligni, 1998; Lamborn and Steinberg, 1993). The process of emotional autonomy is embedded in the interpersonal contexts of parents and peer relationships. Parents serve as an important institution that provides necessary input for the development of emotional autonomy in adolescence. Whereas, peers serve as a ground where adolescents can experiment and
function autonomously. Still further, family structure, number of siblings, birth order, socioeconomic status, and culture constitutes other significant contexts which play their role in the development of emotional autonomy.

1.2.1 EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIP

A central aspect of autonomy is a commitment to self-in-relation rather than self that stands alone. In this perspective parent-adolescent relationship in terms of attachment and styles of parenting, serve as a defining feature for the development of emotional autonomy in adolescence.

Evolutionary theorists (Darwin, 1959; Huxley, 1942) point out that humans spend a much longer period of time in biological and psychological dependence on their parents than do members of other species. While some animals become independent within a few days or hours after birth, the human remains dependent upon their caregivers for many years. At the same time, from day one parents try to prepare their children step by step to develop into self-supporting adults: adults who make their own choices, who feel confident about following their own desires and who can reach their own goals. Though children start manifesting those needs and demands for autonomy at a very early age but it becomes a core psychosocial developmental issue during adolescence because of adolescent’s advanced cognitive, emotional and behavioral capacities.

Adolescence is a peak period of transition in the biosocial status of an individual. In this transitional period of development, adolescent is confronted with a new set of social demands and expectations. It is a period during which marked changes occurs in duties, responsibilities, privileges, social and economic roles and relationship with others. Under such conditions changed attitude towards self, parents, peers and elders become inevitable. In indicates that adolescents are learning the skills that will help them in managing their thoughts, emotions and ultimately their lives.

The ease, with which the young persons adjust to changed roles and new demands of adolescence, depends largely on their relationship with their parents. Noller (1995) described the three ways that the parents may promote the confidence and competence with which young people can give direction to their lives. First, parents may enhance adolescent autonomy by stimulating adolescents to participate in making important
decisions. Parents can motivate their sons and daughters to think about their own ideas and contemplate possible solutions by asking questions and making suggestions. Second, parents can provide a model for adolescents to learn appropriate patterns of communication. Parents who clearly articulate their opinions may stimulate adolescents to think about their own ideas. Finally, parents can reassure the adolescents by creating a supportive environment. A warm and affectionate parent-adolescent relationship provides an opportunity for adolescents to explore and express their ideas freely and to test them in a family context without fear of criticism and rejection.

Affectionate and supportive parents tend to show respect for the view of their children and are open and responsive to those views. This helps adolescents to achieve a sense of emotional independence, feel free to adopt their own opinions and attitudes, make their plans and formulate their goals. On the other hand, when family interactions are characterized by a great amount of hostility and criticism, adolescents are less likely to be self-confident and more likely to use external standards, rather than their own judgment as a guide of their behavior. Adolescent growing up in such families tend to be more susceptible to both parental and peer pressures and less likely to function autonomously.

Empirical studies on the relationship between parenting and adolescent development have also confirmed the importance of support and stimulation for facilitating the achievement of independence and becoming emotionally autonomous individual during adolescence (e.g., Fletcher et al., 1995; Fuhrman and Holmbeck, 1995; Gecas and Seff, 1990; Steinberg, 1990, Steinberg et al., 1989). However, the balance between adolescent individuality and parent-adolescent connectedness varies with the transitions in parent-adolescent relationship throughout adolescence (Allison and Sabatelli, 1988; Collins, 1992).

The parent-adolescent relationship gradually transforms from unilateral authority to mutuality which leads to an initial disequilibrium in their relationship. As children mature and begin to act more autonomously, conflicts between parents and children about self-governance issues become much more frequent, at least temporarily, as children reach puberty (Steinberg, 1996; Yau and Smetana, 1996). Disagreements over autonomy related concerns are at the top of the list of things that provoke quarrels between
adolescents and parents (Holmbeck and O’Donnell 1991; Montemayor, 1986; Steinberg, 2001).

Psychologists have discovered that tension arises from most often two specific sources: First, when adolescents want and fear independence, second when parents waver between treating them as adults and children. Much of the friction stems from the different perspectives that parents and adolescents adopt (Steinberg, 1990). Parents view conflict through a moral or social conventional lens feeling that they have a responsibility to monitor and regulate their child’s conduct. Whereas, adolescents often view their nagging parents as infringing on personal rights and choices (Yau and Smetana, 1996).

As adolescents continue to assert themselves and parents slowly loosen their reins the parent-child relationship gradually evolves from an enterprise in which parents are dominant to a situation, in which parents and adolescents are on a more equal footing (Feldman and Gehring, 1988; Furman and Buhrmester, 1992). During adolescence, thus parent-adolescent relationship transforms from a hierarchical to a more equivalent relationship which leads to a valuable change in their relationship and act as a source of development of emotional autonomy in adolescents.

As adolescents develop and begin to search for autonomy, there must be a response to this change on the family as a whole (Caffery and Erdman, 2000; Hill et al., 2003, Kreppner, 2002; Segrin and Flora, 2005). The mildly upsetting interchanges over mundane matters are not relationship breakers. But their repetitive nature takes a toll on parental mental health (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1994). Placing the parents under a pedestal is especially difficult for many parents to cope with. Moreover, the clash between psychological issues of adolescence and that of midlife, further aggravates the problem for parents.

Thus, adolescence is an incredibly important period for the renegotiation of relationships both by parents and adolescents. Parents have to understand that adolescents are more in need of support than nurturance, guidance more than protection and direction more than socialization. On other hand, adolescents have to set a harmony with mutuality, guidance, freedom and limit setting.

If adults are flexible, adolescents will be more likely to turn to them for advice and guidance. As children grow up and are faced with new opportunities and
responsibilities, open discussion about rules will enable the adolescents to adjust to the changing needs. At the time when youth want and need to learn to manage their own lives, they need guidance and support from an open and supportive family and community. They also need to feel that they themselves are a guiding force in their own lives. The degree to which adolescents and parents are able to negotiate the delicate balance between attachment and emotional autonomy, significantly influence their future relationship.

By the end of adolescence, individuals are far less emotionally dependent on their parents then they were as children. Emotionally autonomous individuals do not rush to their parents when they are upset, worried or in need of assistance. They do not see their parents as all-knowing or all-powerful. Also, they are able to see and interact with their parents-as-people and not just as their parents. Moreover, adolescents often have a great deal of emotional energy wrapped up in relationships outside the family. On the other hand, parents report that they confide in their adolescent children, something that was not possible when their adolescents were younger. Moreover, adolescents can easily sympathize with their parents when they have any problem. These sorts of changes in the parent-adolescent relationship reflect the development of emotional autonomy (Steinberg, 1990). It does not represent a complete separation from parents but a movement towards mutuality and reciprocity in relationship with parents.

Although parents and adolescents may bicker more often then they did during earlier period of development, there is no evidence that this bickering significantly diminishes closeness between parents and adolescents (Grotevant, 1997; Hill and Holmbeck, 1986). The psychic and interpersonal tension believed to arise at puberty does not show up in marked strained family relationships. Although adolescents and their parents undoubtedly modify their relationship during adolescence, their emotional bonds by no means are severed. This is an important distinction, for it means that emotional autonomy during adolescence involves a transformation, and not a breaking off of family relationships (Guisinger and Blatt, 1994). In other words, adolescents can become emotionally autonomous from their parents without becoming detached from them (Collin, 1990; Gortevant, 1997; Steinberg, 1990).
Therefore, the process of achieving autonomy while maintaining a positive relationship with parents is recognized as a critical task of adolescence (Collins, 1990; Steinberg, 1990; Grotevant and Cooper, 1985; Moore, 1987). Although achieving autonomy while maintaining positive relatedness with parents have sometimes been placed at the opposite ends of a continuum and is referred to as a “double edged sword” (Frank et al., 1990), there is a growing evidence that a state of “autonomous-relatedness” is an optimum outcome for the adolescent’s relationship with their parents (Bowlby, 1980; Allen et al., 1994a). Bowlby (1980) asserts that the ability to separate paradoxically is dependent on having a secure attachment. Therefore, after being dissatisfied with the traditional models emphasizing on conflict and detachment, it is optimal to study the development of adolescent’s emotional autonomy in terms of attachment with parents.

1.2.1 (a) Emotional autonomy and Attachment with Parents

Attachment is an instinct that human beings possess throughout the life span, while its expression may differ depending on the maturity of the individual. Attachment is generally described as a quality of relationship with significant others and emotional autonomy is conceptualized as relinquishing of childish dependencies on parents. Although it may appear that emotional autonomy is the opposite of attachment, most reviews go on to state that attachment and autonomy should not be considered as two opposite poles of one dimension but as two different dimensions.

In fact, a number of researchers have found a positive relationship between perceptions of autonomy and the perceived quality of relatedness (Ryan, 1995; Armsden and Greenberg, 1987; Allen et al., 1994a). Moreover, autonomy tends to facilitate relatedness: the more fully volitionally and intrinsically motivated a relationship is the more likely it is to be characterized by satisfaction and trust. Furthermore, Ryan and Lynch (1989) argued that autonomy and dependence are not opposites. Parents can support autonomy while caring for their child or an adolescent can develop a secure relationship with his parents without feeling controlled in one’s actions.

According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980), a primary role of attachment figure is to provide a secure base of support by encouraging the development of self-reliance yet remaining available as a source of help when needed. Thus, attachment with
parents provides a source of comfort and safety during the multiple life changes of adolescence by supporting independent strivings and offering guidance when needed.

However, several researchers propose that detachment and withdrawing from the family enable the adolescents to move towards new attachment and social bonds in the wider community that facilitate autonomy and adolescents then no longer require reliance on parental support (Freud, 1958; Petersen and Taylor, 1980). They argue that adolescents are to abandon infantile urges and desires directed at primary love objects i.e. parents. This involves emotional and physical detachment from parents as a vehicle for the development of emotional autonomy.

Contrary to traditional beliefs, growing evidence indicates that this process is most easily navigated in the context of a close relationship with parents rather than at the expense of this relationship (Allen et al., 1994a; Best et al., 1997; Connell et al., 1995). They hold that emotional autonomy is facilitated by the adolescent’s emotional connectedness with parents. As parents serve as a secure base from which adolescent’s can independently explore and master new environment and heavens of safety to which they can return during the times of stress or real threat.

The adolescent’s task of establishing autonomy, while maintaining a positive parental relationship is functionally similar to the infant task of exploring the environment from the secure base of infant-parent relationship. In the same way the adolescents seek to explore living without being emotionally dependent on their parents. A critical distinction here is that this change appears to reflect the adolescents becoming less dependent on parents in a number of ways, rather than the relationship becoming unimportant as a whole (Buhrmester, 1992, Buhrmester and Furman, 1987; Larson et al., 1996; Wilks, 1986). Fuligni and Eccles (1993) believe that adolescents do not wish to withdraw completely from their relationship with their parents, instead they just want greater control over their lives.

In addition, Weiss (1982) and Bretherton (1985) have argued that attachment beyond childhood is reflected in continuity in the organization of the individual’s “internal working model”, children construe models of relationship out of interactions with attachment figures (Bowlby, 1980, 1982). These models include expectations about the attachment figures responsiveness and accessibility, as well as the self deservingness
of such care (Ainsworth, 1989, Bowlby, 1980). Although internal working models are open to reformation across development, they tend to persist across time and significantly influence the manner in which child construes the self and others within the context of interpersonal relationships. Thus, attachment theory hold that attachment to parents and the internal working models of these relationships continue to be influential into adolescence and adulthood, even if a new attachment figure replaces the parent (Ainsworth, 1989).

Armsden and Greenberg (1987) have suggested three underlying constructs of attachment: trust, communication and alienation. Trust is the product of strong relationships, specifically in which relationship partners feel that they are available to each other. Noller (1994) states that trustworthiness is an extremely important quality of relationships. In infancy, children seek proximity and comfort when they sense danger. On the other hand, adolescents seek proximity and comfort in the form of advice when they feel it is needed (Hazan and Shaver, 1994; Schneider and Younger, 1996). Open communication allows for understanding during the time of developmental transition and changes, specifically in terms of acceptance of new needs and desires that adolescents face (Sillars et al., 2005). Whereas, alienation is associated with avoidance and rejection. When one senses that the attachment figure is not available, attachment becomes less secure.

Studies have shown that secure attachment with parents in adolescence facilitates autonomy development, greater life satisfaction, better college adjustment, and higher self-esteem (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987; Blain et al., 1993; Bradford and Lyddon, 1993; Lapsley et al., 1990). Furthermore, the securely attached adolescent and family present a stronger balance of autonomy and attachment (Allen and Land, 1999). It is likely that securely attached adolescents have more confidence that their relationship will remain intact and functional inspite of disagreements. Moreover, the problem solving discussions tend to balance the adolescent’s striving toward autonomy with continuing efforts to keep strong the current parent relationship (Allen and Hauser, 1996; Becker-Stoll et al., 1997; Kobak et al., 1993).
On the other hand, families with an insecurely attached adolescent are more likely to avoid problem solving, have lower levels of confidence in interaction and higher levels of disagreement, dysfunctional anger and use of pressuring tactics that tend to undermine autonomy. Disagreement in families with insecure parent-child attachment may lead to withdrawal, pressuring and hostility. These are understandable reactions if the adolescents’ efforts to establish autonomy in disagreement are interpreted as a real threat to the parent-child relationship.

Therefore, adolescents’ subjective sense of independence especially in the context of the parent-adolescent relationship inevitably is influenced by the extent to which their parents encourage, accept or hamper emotional autonomy. Some parents become distressed by their teenager’s striving for emotional autonomy, whereas other relishes this same development (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986).

In sum, during adolescence, adolescents begin to move away from their parents, take on new responsibilities and develop their own individuality. Parents, on the other hand need to adapt to adolescents desire for autonomy by creating an opportunity for them to experiment with their new role and by encouraging them to do so. As adolescent attachment behavior departs from pattern of attachment behavior seen in earlier ages, adolescents often appear to be actively and purposefully moving away from their parents. In this view attachment is not a regressive bond form which adolescents must free themselves but rather a dynamic relationship that change in according with the developmental tasks at hand.

1.2.1 (b) Emotional autonomy and Parenting Styles

In order to obtain a more accurate reading of the emotional climate of the parent adolescent relationship, it is important to consider the multiple parenting dimensions. Baumrind (1967) identified a typology that separate parenting style into three distinct categories: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive.

In authoritative families, guidelines are established for the adolescents’ behavior and standards are upheld but they are flexible and open to discussion. These standards and guidelines are implemented in an atmosphere of closeness, concern and fairness. Moreover, adolescents have a right to give suggestions. The final decision comes after
consultation and discussion between parents and adolescents. This sort of verbal give and take is well suited to the development of emotional autonomy in adolescents. Because standards and guidelines are flexible and adequately explained, it is not hard for the family to adjust and modify them as the child matures emotionally and intellectually (Smetana and Asquith, 1994). Gradual changes in family relations that permit the younger person more independence and encourage more responsibility but that do not threaten the emotional bond between parents and child is optimal for the growth of emotional autonomy in adolescents (Baumrind, 1978; Vuchinich et al., 1996).

Authoritative parenting has been associated with higher self-esteem (Litovsky and Dusek, 1985), more advanced identity development (Adams and Jones, 1983; Litovsky and Dusek, 1988), greater school success (Dornbusch et al., 1987) and better school adjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991). Baumrind (1991) and Steinberg (1989) attributed these effects to the healthy sense of autonomy.

On the other hand, in authoritarian households where rules are rigidly enforced and seldom explained to the child, adjustment to adolescence is more difficult for the family. Authoritarian parents may see the child’s increasing emotional autonomy as rebellious or disrespectful and they may resist their adolescents growing need for independence, rather then reacting to it openly. Instead of encouraging autonomy, authoritarian parents may inadvertently maintain the dependence of childhood by failing to give their child sufficient practice in making decisions and being responsible for his or her actions. Kandel and Lesser (1969) reports that authoritarian style leads to dependence and antisocial activities and thus, stifling autonomy among adolescents.

The problems are compounded when closeness is absent as well. In families in which excessive parental control is accompanied by extreme coldness and punitiveness, the adolescents may rebel against the parents’ standards explicitly, in an attempt to assert their independence in a visible and demonstrable fashion (Hill and Holmbeck 1986). Such rebellion is not indicative of genuine emotional autonomy but adolescents’ frustration with their parents’ rigidity and lack of understanding. And, when adolescents attempt to establish emotional autonomy within the context of a cold or hostile family, the effects on adolescents’ mental health are likely to be negative (Lamborn and Steinberg, 1993). Indeed adolescents from hostile or stressful family environment may do
best when they actively detach themselves from their parents (Fuhrman and Holmbeck, 1995).

In both indulgent and indifferent families different sort of problem arises. These kinds of parents do not provide sufficient guidance for their children; as a result, youngsters do not acquire adequate standards for behaviors. In the absence of parent’s guidance and rules, permissively reared teenagers often turn to their peers for advice and emotional support and become psychologically dependent on their friends; emotionally detached from their parents perhaps but not genuinely autonomous (Devereux, 1970). The problems of permissiveness are exaggerated by a lack of closeness in case of indifferent families.

Still further, mothers and fathers may differ in their styles of parenting. The stereotypic view on the differentiation of parental roles is manifested in the popular saying “Strict father and kind mother” (HO, 1987). But Baumrind (1991b) reported that parenting characteristics of fathers and mothers were similar. They were similar on the grounds of control and support (Stice and Barrera, 1995), rejection (Dubois et al., 1994) and responsiveness and demandingness (Paulson, 1994). However, other research results show that paternal and maternal parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991a) and socialization practices (Lamb, 1987; Martin, 1985) differ significantly. Studies have suggested that mothers tend to spend more time with their adolescents, are more likely to be involved in care giving activities and more likely to be involved in offering support and advice than fathers (Collins and Russell, 1991; Greene and Grimsley, 1990; Starrel, 1994). Whereas, fathers more than mothers are standard bearers of reality principle and represent the demands and challenges, and rewards of participation in the extra familial and non relational world. Fathers play a particularly important role in shaping their children’s relationship outside the home (e.g. Crockenberg et al., 1996; Youngblade and Belsky, 1995).

In sum, the context of parent-adolescent relationship suggests that the quality of relationship between parents and adolescents remain vital component for the development of emotional autonomy in adolescence. In adolescence, parent-child relationship is subtly transformed as adolescents develop ‘responsible autonomy’ from
their parents (Steinberg, 1990). Adolescence begins with the adolescents “attainment of separation and independence from the parents” and ends with a “return to the parents in a new relationship based upon equality”. As this negotiation takes place, the adolescent’s childish images of parents are replaced by a more mature, complicated and realistic conceptions.

1.2.2 EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PEER RELATIONSHIP

Another contributing factor for the development of emotional autonomy is adolescent’s relationship with their peers. Peer relationship plays a unique role in adolescents’ emotional autonomy development because they are likely to serve as important sources of intimacy, feeding back about social behavior, social influence and information and ultimately attachment relationship and lifelong partnerships (Ainsworth, 1989; Fuligni and Eccles, 1993; Hartup, 1992). In addition, Brown (1990) states that peers make up the largest single category of significant other for adolescents and will eventually replace a parent at the top of emotional support hierarchy.

Early adolescents gradually move towards peer while distancing themselves from their parents because their peer relationship fit some of their developmental needs better than their relationship with the parents. Increasingly able to think abstractly and to use complex reasoning, early adolescents are likely to seek opportunities and settings in which they can participate these new skills, establish forms of independent thinking, feeling and behavior and develop their own identity (Baumrind, 1991; Youniss, 1980).

Parent-adolescent and peer relationship differ in the provision of these opportunities because they differ in the power balance between the members. Parent-child relationship are inherently asymmetrical, usually dominated by the parents; peer relationship, in contrast, can be symmetrical and egalitarian (Buhrmester and Furman, 1986; Youniss, 1980). During adolescence, adolescents become sensitive to this difference (Eccles, et al., 1991; Higgins and Eccles-Parsons, 1983; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). Due to the unequal power balance of parent-child relationship, early adolescents may feel that opportunities for independent thinking and activity are limited in these
settings. Meanwhile, the relative lack of unilateral control over one another within peer relationship may lead early adolescents to invest increased amount of time and attention in their friendship. Some scholars (e.g. Piaget, 1965; Youniss, 1980) have argued for the uniqueness of peer relationships, suggesting that peer friendship are marked by mutual reciprocity and cooperation, unlike parent-child relationship, which are based on unilateral power and are more likely to involve obedience and conformity.

As adolescents seek autonomy and independence from their parents, they turn to peers more often than before (Nickerson and Nagle, 2005). As peers provide a safe base at which the adolescents can experiment with their newly gained skills and potentials and can try out variety of roles autonomously with minimal risk to self-concept. Kerns (1994) argued that forming of closer peer bonds allow adolescents to explore independence from parents. Gould and Mazzeo (1982) reported that adolescents become more concerned about peer acceptance and popularity and begin to turn to their friends more often as a source of advice and comfort because adolescents feel that peers tend to provide guidance and support according to the novel trends of the society.

It appears that adolescents increased orientation towards peers during early adolescence is at the expense of their closeness to their parents. However, the waxing of peer orientation and the waning of closeness with parents does not appear to be permanent. The heightened susceptibility to peer influence during early adolescence decreases through mid-and-late adolescence (Berndt, 1979; Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986).

Peer relationship exists in different settings outside the family and thus acts as a first base for extra familial attachments. In particular, the growing push for autonomy from parents may create healthy pressures to begin to use peers as attachment figures, so that attachment needs can be met while establishing autonomy in the relationship with parents (Steinberg, 1990). From this perspective, adolescence is not a period in which attachment needs and behaviors are relinquished, rather it is one in which they are gradually transferred to peers. Adolescents’ inappropriate dependence on peers may be viewed as the first step toward learning to use peers as attachment figures.
In this respect, a phenomenon such as heightened susceptibility to peer pressure is quite inevitable: To the extent that peers begin to replace multiple parental functions, adolescents may reflexively tend to obey peer directives just as they have previously done with parental directives and may experience an almost reflexive desire to please peers just as they have previously done with parents. It suggests that when adolescents gain emotional autonomy in the context of parents, they do not simultaneously become emotionally autonomous in the context of peers as well. Thus, emotional autonomy is defined as abandoning of childish dependencies on parents as well as peers (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) redefined this task as “moving through autonomy to interdependence” thus emphasizing healthy interpersonal relationships as an outcome of gaining self-mastery. They suggested that adolescents gain emotional autonomy by the process that “begins with disengagement from parents, proceeds through reliance on peers and role models and move toward a balance of comfort with one’s own company and openness to others, without need to cling.”

Furthermore, Ryan and Lynch (1989) report that susceptibility to peer pressure is related to the security of attachment to parents. Adolescents who do not receive support and acceptance from their parents may seek such acceptance from their peers, making them more likely to conform. Teenagers without supportive family relationships are less likely to learn to act independently and are therefore more likely to conform both to their parents and to their peers. On the other hand, adolescents with more secure attachments to their parents are also more emotionally secure with their friends and have a higher tendency to be emotionally autonomous in the context of peers as well. In this perspective, susceptibility to peer pressure is related to low levels of emotional autonomy in adolescence and a close supportive relationship with parents can lead to lower susceptibility to peer pressure.

A number of studies propose that peer pressure can be linked with both negative sequel ranging from depression to deviance and the positive outcomes including prosocial behavior and academic achievement (Dishion and Owen, 2002; Granic and Dishion, 2003; Laird et al., 2001; Mounts and Steinberg, 1995; Prinstein et al., 2002,
Healthy relationship with peers has been linked with perceived self-worth (Robinson, 1995), high levels of perspective taking and prosocial behavior (Azmitia and Perlmutter, 1989, Eisenberg and Fabes, 1997), greater exploratory behavior (Fuligni and Eccles, 1993) and decrease risk of emotional and behavioral problems (Cauce et al., 1994 Garneski and Diekstra, 1996; Coie and Dodge, 1997).

In sum, psychoanalytic thinkers view dependence on peers as an inevitable ‘flip side’ of autonomy from parents. As adolescents search for identities separate from those of their parents, they experiment with new identities by participating in the different behaviors of their peers (Allen et al., 1995). With friends, adolescents get the opportunity to learn the reality outside the family circle and experience a life that is uniquely their own.

The above discussion suggests that adolescents attain emotional autonomy while maintaining a sense of relatedness with others. When adolescents are unable to manage this task efficiently, various problematic outcomes occur. Numerous studies have suggested that the way in which emotional autonomy is negotiated in the context of parents and peer relationships has a profound influence on the psychosocial adjustment of the adolescents. During adolescence, autonomy and relatedness are important predictors of academic, social and emotional adjustment (Eccles et al., 1997). The ability to act independently of others and an interest in connection with others are thought to be associated with physical and psychological well being, but a positive unusual level of independence not tempered by a positive orientation to others can be psychologically, physically and socially damaging (Helgeson, 1994). Therefore, the domain of psychosocial adjustment is important to consider as it tends to provide additional understanding about the adaptiveness of emotional autonomy during adolescence.

The process of becoming independent and changing parents and peer relationship involve both positive and negative consequences which can effect the adolescent’s psychosocial adjustment (Berndt, 1979; Brown, 1990; Eccles et al., 1993; Fasick, 1984; Fuligni and Eccles, 1993; Laible et al., 2000). On one hand, adolescence is a time for developing greater self-reliance, self-regulation and decision making skills, but on the other hand development of autonomy leads to the demolition of comfort zone constructed.
during earlier years. Furthermore, peer relationship not only facilitates autonomy, self-esteem and social competence (Paterson et al., 1995) but also is a strong predictor of problem behavior (Hawkins, Catalano, and Miller, 1992).

Blos (1969) view adolescence as a time of natural oscillation between regressive and progressive processes. The regression is towards infantile dependencies and safeties and progression is towards mature sense of individuality and identity. Adolescence is a time when individual’s ego develops towards adulthood and old ways of relating to the world are rejected. Those adolescents who experience various psychopathologies experience some difficulty in progressing from old ways of coping. These adolescents side-slip the individuation process and as a result may attain a pseudo-individuation that may result in psychosocial difficulties during adolescence as well as in later life.

During adolescence the parent-adolescent relationship must undergo a transformation to accomplish the task necessary for healthy child development: regulation of behavior, the development of autonomy and connection with significant others (Barker, 1997; Steinberg, 1990; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). However, some parents pursue a hostile, confrontation or non-supportive interactional style during this period of rapid change. When this pattern of parental behavior occurs, the early adolescent is placed at increased risk for developing adjustment problems (Rohner, 1986; Simons et al., 1988). Moreover, siblings who emulate their parents’ negative behavior may increase further the risk that the adolescents will engage in troublesome behaviors (Conger et al., 1994).

Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) suggested that negative profile of adjustment would occur for emotionally autonomous individuals who perceive their parents as unsupportive. On the other hand, emotionally autonomous adolescents who perceive parental support score more positively on adjustment. Whereas, Fuhrman and Holmbeck (1995) reported that under stressful and less supportive family environment the feelings of emotional autonomy can be adaptive and beneficial to adolescents. On the other hand, under less stressful and more supportive conditions, high emotional autonomy would be maladaptive. However, both the research teams conjointly proposed the negative
outcomes of having an unsupportive family environment combined with a sense of emotional distance from parents.

Furthermore, adolescents whose parents are intrusive or overprotective may have difficulty in individuating from them which may lead to depression, anxiety and diminished social competence (Allen and Mc Elhaney, 2000; Holmbeck et al., 2000). Whereas excessive behavioral control is associated primarily with rebellion and externalizing problems among adolescents; excessive psychological control is associated with both internalizing problems (Garber, Robinson, Valentines, 1997) and externalizing problems (Barber, 1996; Conger et al., 1997).

Parenting that emphasizes autonomy via encouraging children to express their own view, explaining and providing a rationale for rules and giving children some degree of choice of control is linked to positive social adjustment (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Parental attachments characterized by autonomy and relatedness are believed to be enduring bonds that not only facilitate concurrent adjustment but also contribute to future adjustment (Sroufe and Water, 1977). Parental promotion of autonomy is positively linked to healthy adolescent adjustment, including higher attachment to school, better grades, lesser depressed affect and fewer behavioral problems (Eccles et al., 1997) and decreased psychological distress and deviance (Herman et al., 1997). Whereas undermining of autonomy generally relates to maladaptive outcomes including higher levels of depression and lower self-worth (Garber et al., 1997), decreased self-confidence and increased hostile/aggressive behavior (Conger et al., 1997).

Thus, the granting of emotional autonomy appears to have vastly different effects on the adolescents, depending on the level of harmony in the parent-adolescent relationship. Adolescents, who become emotionally autonomous, but who also feel distant or detached from their parents, score poorly on measures of psychological adjustment, whereas adolescents who demonstrate same degree of emotional autonomy, but who still feel close and attached to their parents, are psychologically healthier than their peers (Allen et al. 1996; Chen and Dornbusch, 1998; Fuhrman and Holmbeck, 1995; Lamborn and Steinberg 1993; Ryan and Lynch, 1989).
Along with parents, adolescents’ adjustment is also influenced by the feelings of acceptance by peers. Buhrmester and Yin (1997) found that quality of friendship among adolescents significantly predicted psychological adjustment, self-esteem and depressive symptoms. Friendship support is positively associated with self-esteem and negatively associated with depressed feelings (Way and Chen; 2000).

In the context of supportive relationship with both parents and peers, adolescents indulge in decision making and look out for new opportunities and enjoy autonomous functioning. This brings out a positive outlook in adolescents and hence forth, they adjust better in the social environment and can achieve new competencies. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) reported that attachment to both parents and peers was positively related to psychological well-being.

In sum, a balance between independent self-confident action and positive relationship with significant others appears to be optimal for psychosocial adjustment (Sessa and Steinberg, 1991). Furthermore, in a well adjusted adolescent, autonomy and relatedness balance each other (Allen et al., 1994a, 1994b; Allen and Land, 1999). A positive relationship with both parents and peer can provide a supportive base from which adolescents can develop both positive feelings about themselves and the capabilities for responsible, independent actions.

1.3 GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY

Parent-adolescent relationship can be better described as the conjunction of four relationships, sons and daughters each of them in relation to mother and father. Traditional patterns of gender socialization by mothers and fathers lay different patterns of autonomy development for girls and boys. Although the normative task in adolescents could be the same for both boys and girls: to develop a healthy balance between emotional autonomy and ties with parents but it is a more of challenge to disengage from parents for the girls than it is for the boys (Steinberg, 1987).

As several Psychologists (Chodorow, 1978, Jordan and Surrey, 1986; Miller, 1976; Surrey, 1984) have argued that because of socialization practices that encourage
relatedness, girls develop internal mental representations of the self in relation to another and they remain more preoccupied with interpersonal connection than boys. Girls find it difficult to break the interpersonal ties to parents and go through a greater emotional turmoil in order to gain emotional autonomy. On the other hand, boys are more engaged in establishing independence from parental control and are found to be less likely to accept parental regulations as appropriate. They appear to experience more intense conflict with their parents in more areas than do girls. Boys have stronger needs of autonomy and are permitted more autonomous behavior than girls (Coleman, 1961; Douvan and Adelson, 1966). Moreover, many parents encourage closer ties to the family in daughters and relatively more autonomy in sons (Ryan and Lynch, 1989). Girls are generally over socialized toward dependence on family while boys are over socialized toward independence (Steinberg, 1987). Therefore, it appears that for girls, the challenge could be disengaging from parents, while for boys, it could be maintaining relationship with them (Steinberg, 1987).

However, empirical evidence does not consistently support this point of view. Girls do not manifest lower levels of autonomy from parents than boys (Manley et al., 1993; Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986). Dhillon (2004) and Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) found that emotional autonomy is greater amongst girls than boys with girls scoring high on emotional autonomy and describing themselves as more self-reliant. Whereas, Ryan and Lynch (1989), Coleman (1961), Douvan and Adelson (1966) suggested that boys manifest higher levels of emotional autonomy than girls. Even though the individuation process is more apparent amongst adolescent males than in females, Newman (1989), Archer and Waterman (1988) stressed that both males and females are equally capable of expressing autonomy. However, Beyers and Goosens (1999) maintained that emotional autonomy is more stressful experience for adolescent females than it is for adolescent males.

Along with differences in girls and boys, it is important to consider the unique role played by fathers and mothers in fostering the potential of autonomy functioning in their sons and daughter. Mothers and fathers perform different but equally important roles in the development of emotional autonomy in adolescents. Mother may function as
important provider of certainty and safety, a secure base for adolescents exploring behavior. On the other hand, father may be one “who push the birds out of the nest.”

Within the Indian family context, marked gender differences continue to prevail, with the clear favor for males across the entire life span (ICSSR, 1974). Boys are given greater prestige and rights than girls (Bharat, 1997). Girls perceive parental control more in the area of their social household activities, whereas boys perceive it in relation to their academic work (Hegde and Gaonkar, 1991). Females are encouraged to develop an interdependent and even sacrificial self and to prepare for their roles as good wives and mothers (Saraswathi, 1999).

Gender differences continue to remain a reality within the Indian family system. However, with ongoing and rapid process of social change, girls have greater opportunity in education, vocation and careers. These changes are currently disturbing parents and adolescents because of their novelty and an accompanying awareness about egalitarian gender roles. So, it would be interesting to study, whether there is a change in the role of present day girls and are they moving towards attaining self-reliance and autonomy?

1.4 EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY AND OTHER FAMILIAL VARIABLES

The family structure also plays a significant role in the psychosocial development of the child. The variations in the composition of the family i.e. the joint or the nuclear family will influence the relationship, which parents share with their children and consequently will contribute to their personality development. Whether a child’s interaction is limited to his parents and siblings alone or it extends to his cousins and other relations will determine autonomy development. Thus, the number of adult figures in the family and the consequent psychological distance of the child from his parents are important factors including autonomy.

Some three decades ago the family structure in India was that of a joint family, now this family structure is transferring into nuclear family (Agarwala, 1962; Cohen, 1981). This change in the interaction with the family gives entirely two different kinds of environment to the child. In large families, children are severely disciplined (Whiting, 1961) and parental behavior is autocratic and authoritarian (Elder and Bowerman, 1963).
Such strict atmosphere gives less freedom to the adolescents to explore their surroundings and work in an independent manner. This fosters continued interdependence among members and inhibits autonomy development (Whiting 1961; Barry, Bacon and Child, 1957). However, in a nuclear family, the adolescents have a much smaller social universe with which they may attach themselves. The atmosphere is less disciplined and there is scope for selfhood and independence. With changing times, adolescents favor more egalitarian relationship with their parents and thus are gradually advancing towards achieving emotional autonomy while reducing dependence on family.

Furthermore, parents’ socio-economic background may moderate the ways in which transformation in the parent-adolescent relationship affect well-being (Jacob, 1974). In Asian Indian adolescents the socio-economic status is the mediating factor in fostering individualism. Reddy and Gibbons (1999) concluded that upper class families in India endorse individualism, whereas lower class families stress more collectivism and conformity in adolescent males and females. Moreover, Kohn (1977) found that working class parents values adolescents conformity and obedience. Whereas, parents of middle class families appear to place greater stress on development of autonomy and independence. Therefore, it is important to study how parents of different socio-economic level influence the development of emotional autonomy in their adolescents.

Including siblings in addition to parents, as potential sources of influence within the family environment, allows for a more complete examination of family relationship patterns. The presence of a sibling may significantly affect the course of development for the other children in the family (Brody et al., 1987). Close relationship with siblings serve as a way for adolescents to remain connected to the family, while in the process of individuating from dependence on parents. When adolescents strive for autonomy they usually try to be less dependent on parents’ traditional influences, such as being told what to do, being protected and being helped by parents (Moser et al., 1996). Thus, siblings become an important additional source other than parents for advice about plans and problems for their lives (Seginer, 1998; Tucker et al., 1997).

Siblings can serve as an important source of emotional support and meaning, and functions distinctively from those other social resources like parents, friends and
romantic partners (Buhrmester, 1992). Although siblings can be each others friends and companions, but older siblings often are assigned parental type roles that may include caregiver and rule enforcer (Bryant, 1992; Zukow, 1989). Older siblings often function as teachers, managers, helpers, source of advice, role models when they interact with their younger brothers and sisters (Brody, 1998; Tucker et al., 1997). Whereas younger siblings seems to benefit more than first born children from the guidance and support offered by older siblings and tend to maintain a higher level of intimacy with them (Buhrmester, 1992; Tucker et al., 1997).

The above discussion suggests that developmental tasks of adolescence find their resolution in the context of healthy relationship with significant others. Relationships that allow disagreement and the expression of alternative views, while not being intrusive, overinvolved or manipulative are thought to form socially adaptive emotional autonomy.

1.5 PRESENT WORK

Though attaining emotional autonomy is one of the most important developmental tasks of adolescents but its adaptiveness varies from culture to culture. As western culture stresses individualism that is self-interest, autonomy and privacy whereas collectivistic society stresses loyalty to family, emotional dependence on one another and interdependence. In our culture independence and individuality are not values that are cherished. Close ties between parents and children continue through one’s life. Neki (1976) reported that dependency is encouraged in India. Kakar (1978) observed that strong ties to the family continue into adulthood with continued emotional dependence on family particularly on mother. Indian scholars have reported that in extended family there is a hindrance of growth of such personality traits such as independence and initiative (Kakar, 1978; Krishnan, 1998).

In such conditions, perceiving parents as people with faults and deidealizing them would be threatening for Indian adolescents and it may be challenging for them to relinquish their childish dependencies and conceptualization of their parents. Therefore, the dimension of emotional autonomy needs to be explored in the culture, where parents are regarded as “second to God.”
Deci and Ryan’s (1985, 2000) self-determination theory states that people from all cultures share basic psychological need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Moreover, Kagitcibasi (2005) hold that autonomy is a basic human need. Therefore, the frequently heard generalization that autonomy is irrelevant to development in non industrialized cultures is misleading. Cultural variations thus may be a matter of when and how autonomy is evinced, rather than whether or not autonomy is relevant to human action and emotion.

In addition, some researchers argued that adolescents in collectivistic culture may in fact grow to be autonomous while maintaining a close and warm relationship with their parents (Hill and Holmbeck, 1986; Mayseless et al., 1998; Steinberg, 1990). But it is difficult to corroborate the idea owing to paucity of literature on adolescents in such societies. In another study, Bhushan and Shirali (1993) also highlighted the lack of sufficient research on family relations within the Indian context. Moreover, it’s a high time to investigate the concept of emotional autonomy in Indian culture which is undergoing a dramatic change.

Industrialization, urbanization and technological advances have been instrumental in changing family structure, values and life styles. Misra (1995) emphasized that middle-upper class families in urban area are undergoing a dramatic transformation because the younger generation is questioning power issues, traditional roles, hierarchical relationship, obligations, loyalty and deference for kinsman and elderly. Contemporary adolescents face significantly different challenges and expectations related to family, life and society than adolescent cohorts of previous generations. Today’s adolescents must be prepared to a far greater degree in terms of independent living, emotional regulation, interpersonal and decision making skills, problem solving and self-confidence and also in sidetracking the outside pressures and risks. These needs are largely linked to autonomous feelings, which provide the ability to evaluate situations and to act according to one’s own judgment.

Researchers have expressed that changes in the family may be moving the adolescents toward western like pattern in which they spend less time with their parents. Biswas (1992) suggests that nucleation has deleted the emotional surroundings of the
individual. Mother’s employment outside the home and subsequent separation provides
the children with an opportunity for independent functioning, exposure to diverse role
models and break down of traditional psychosocial barriers at a relatively earlier period.
With the modernization Indian adolescents too are demanding the same type of
developmental requirements as their western counterparts. Preserving the traditional
features of family system and trying to assimilate emerging notions of individuality can
be a tough task for adolescents. Therefore, it would be very interesting to comment upon
the individualistic part of Indian adolescents.

Till date research has suggested an inconsistent and an incoherent picture about
the development of emotional autonomy. Emotional autonomy continues to be a fuzzy
and elusive concept. Moreover, it would be erroneous to apply the conclusions of studies
conducted in western culture on the Indian adolescents due to varying cultural pattern and
socialization practices.

The present study is therefore an endeavor to explore the individualistic
orientation of adolescents with in a system which is undergoing a dynamic change.
Adolescents’ relationship with their parents is now changing but they are not loosing
their importance. They are changing to accommodate the demands of the modern day set-
up. Peers are taking up important roles that previously fall exclusively in the parental
zone. Healthy relationship with significant others support exploration and mastery of the
environment which can be related to several areas of functioning.

Therefore, it is inevitable to see whether the principle of individuation has
penetrated into the family life and to what extent and how the relationship with parents
and peers has helped the growing adolescents to tackle this developmental task. At the
same time, it is important to investigate that whether boys and girls follow a similar or
different developmental path while attaining emotional autonomy. Moreover, it would be
interesting to comment upon the adaptive value of emotional autonomy by probing into
the issue of adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment. In addition, several other familial
variables will also be studied in relation to emotional autonomy.

1.5.1 OBJECTIVES
Keeping in mind the relevant nature and the aim of present study, the following objectives were framed:

1) To study the gender differences on emotional autonomy, paternal and maternal attachment, parenting styles, peer attachment, peer pressure, and psychosocial adjustment.

2) To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and their paternal and maternal attachments.

3) To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and parenting styles of their mother and father.

4) To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and their attachment to peers.

5) To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and peer pressure.

6) To study the relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and psychosocial adjustment.

7) To find the percentage of adolescents falling in different groups (individuated, connected, detached and ambivalent) based on high and low levels of emotional autonomy and parental attachment and then further study their adjustment levels.

8) To study the role of other familial characteristics as related to the development of emotional autonomy in adolescents, such as family structure- nuclear/joint, socio-economic status, number of siblings and birth order.

1.5.2 HYPOTHESES

On the basis of previous studies and theoretical consideration, following hypotheses were framed.
1) There will be significant gender differences on emotional autonomy and adolescent’s perception of paternal and maternal attachment, parenting styles, peer attachment, peer pressure, and psychosocial adjustment.

2) There will be a significant relationship between emotional autonomy and attachment with mother and father for both boys and girls.

   2a) Emotional autonomy will be positively related to paternal and maternal trust.

   2b) Emotional autonomy will be positively related to paternal and maternal communication.

   2c) Emotional autonomy will be negatively related to paternal and maternal alienation

3) There will be a significant relationship between emotional autonomy in adolescents and parenting styles of their mother and father for both the samples.

   3a) Emotional autonomy in adolescents (boys and girls) will be positively related to authoritative parenting style of mother and father.

   3b) Emotional autonomy in adolescents (boys and girls) will be negatively related to authoritarian parenting style of mother and father.

   3c) Emotional autonomy in adolescents (boys and girls) will be negatively related to permissive parenting style of mother and father.

4) There will be a significant relationship between emotional autonomy and attachment to peers in both boys and girls.

   4a) Emotional autonomy will be positively related to trust on peers.

   4b) Emotional autonomy will be positively related to communication with peers.

   4c) Emotional autonomy will be negatively related to alienation from peers.
5) There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional autonomy and peer pressure for both boys and girls.

6) There will be a significant positive relationship between emotional autonomy and psychosocial adjustment for both boys and girls.

7) The individuated and connected adolescents will be better adjusted as compared to detached and ambivalent adolescents.

8) There will be a significant relationship of emotional autonomy with other familial characteristics such as family structure- nuclear/joint, socio-economic status, number of siblings and birth order.