Rationale, Aims and Objectives of the Study

Adolescence is generally considered a time of heightened sensitivity, a time when goals are reformed and ideas regarding the pursuit of goals are re-evaluated, a time when there is increased likelihood of transition-linked turning points in the life course, a time when more cognitively complex judgments are being made regarding one’s current status and one’s newly emerging desires and goals (Eccles and Gootman, 2001).

Adolescence marks the transition from childhood into adulthood and is a period of significant biological, psychological, and cognitive development. It has been described as a period of both opportunity and risk (Leffert and Petersen, 1995). Adolescents face important transitions, such as moving from school to higher education or work, that may be accompanied by changes in peer groups and in relationships with friends and family. These transitions involve not only the academic pressures of school-leaving but also myriad decisions and choices about life after the end of formal schooling. The strong focus on pathology evident in much of the scientific inquiry into adolescent wellbeing reflects a concern about young people’s abilities to deal with this period of vulnerability and uncertainty (Owens, 1994). It is an important developmental phase, marked by a multitude of significant physical, psychological and social change. It is described as a period of “storm and stress” and characterized by extreme mood-changes and difficult behaviour. However they reported that the biological shifts may be, challenging developmental tasks and cognitive maturation can affect adolescent’s emotional well-being and may cause a considerable amount of stress.

Psychology has focused primarily on the identification and treatment of psychopathological symptoms. A recent emphasis on “positive psychology” has emerged within the field, which advocates for the identification of personal strengths and environmental resources that foster optimal development (Seligman and Czikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although a variety of constructs have been proposed as indicators of Subjective well being, its cognitive component, Life Satisfaction, plays an important role in the positive
development of adolescents and provides a buffer against the negative effects of stressful life events (Gilman and Huebner, 2003).

**Life Satisfaction is integral to the science of positive psychology which focuses on identifying strengths and the building them as buffers against the development of psychopathological problems (Veenhoven 1988).**

Life satisfaction has been studied from the perspective of its effects in other domains of life (Diener et al., 1999). Considerable research has been devoted to attempting to understand the determinants of a person’s perceptions of the good life. However, studies have also suggested that life satisfaction judgments operate not just as a byproduct of particular life experiences and personal characteristics, but that life satisfaction judgments also in turn influence crucial processes and behaviors. For example, the importance of Life Satisfaction has been articulated by Frederickson (1998). She provides evidence that positive subjective experiences serve to broaden and build resources, regulate negative affective experiences, and protect health. Studies of correlates of life satisfaction in adults suggest that positive life satisfaction is linked with positive social interactions, broadened perception and creativity, active involvement in community and political organizations, fewer physical complaints, and longer lives (Veenhoven, 1988). On the other side of the coin, low levels of life satisfaction have been linked with negative adaptive outcomes, such as depression, interpersonal rejection, aggressive behavior and alcohol and chemical abuse (Zullig et al., 2001; Suldo and Huebner, 2003).

The importance of studying adolescent Life Satisfaction thus cannot be underscored. Not only is Life Satisfaction important in itself, individual differences in adolescents’ Life Satisfaction may predict important life outcomes, such as the development of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Suldo and Huebner, 2004). Furthermore, it is important to focus on the period of adolescence because this period has been characterized as unique, being fraught with upheavals of emotion and battles with those in authority. G. Stanley Hall famously described adolescence as a time of “storm and stress” in which rapid changes in physical and emotional development inevitably lead to conflicts between adolescents and authority figures.
The present study focussed on life satisfaction and factors related to it among adolescents. Earlier only a global measure of life satisfaction has been used. The present study has taken a multidimensional perspective of life satisfaction. It measured life satisfaction among adolescents in different domains viz family, friends, school, self, living environment along with a global index of life satisfaction. This may help in planning intervention strategies to enhance life satisfaction in different areas. It is essential to investigate variables related to individual differences in life satisfaction as it has been reported that subjects low on life satisfaction show more psychological distress, anxiety and poor interpersonal relations.

The present study has included a wide range of correlates viz interpersonal (parental bonding, reflecting relations with parents and perception of family conflict), intrapersonal (Stress and coping styles) and school related (academic achievement and academic stress). In addition Life Satisfaction was related to happiness and health status. All these were assumed to be related to life satisfaction. The results of the study are likely to yield a very comprehensive picture of life satisfaction and its correlates among adolescents. In addition gender differences in the correlates of Adolescent Life Satisfaction have also been investigated.

Therefore, the present study aimed to identify correlates of Life Satisfaction in relation to Parental Bonding, Family Conflict, Perceived happiness, Perceived health status, Stress, Coping and Academic Achievement in both the genders.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study were:

1. To study the prevalence of life satisfaction among adolescent in multiple domains.
2. To study the relationship of Adolescent life satisfaction with health, happiness, parental bonding, family conflict stress, coping styles and academic achievement.
3. To study the gender differences in adolescent life satisfaction and its correlates.
HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses were proposed:-

1. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be positively related with Perceived Happiness and Perceived Health Status.

2. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be positively related with Caring dimension of Parental Bonding.

3. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be negatively related with Overprotection dimension of Parental Bonding.

4. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be negatively related with Stress measures viz Life Event Stress, Stress Symptoms.

5. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be negatively related with Academic Stress and its dimensions viz Personal Inadequacy, Fear of failure, Interpersonal Difficulties and Inadequate Study Facilities.

6. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be positively related with Task Focused Coping.

7. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be negatively related with Avoidance and Emotion Focused Coping.

8. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be negatively related with Family Conflict and its dimensions.

9. Total Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its dimensions were expected to be positively related with Academic Achievement.

10. Gender Differences in Multidimensional Life Satisfaction and its correlates were also explored.