CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Change is the immutable law of nature. Though changes, of varied types, are experienced all through human life, they are more pronounced during adolescence. These changes can, and many a time do, make adolescence a scary time, full of angst and new emotions. For, this transitory phase involves biological, social, and psychological changes. This stage of life is a period when the cognitive development is rapid. The thoughts, ideas and concepts developed during this period of life greatly influence the individual's adulthood and play a major role in character and personality formation.

It is also the stage of life, during which the individual is involved in a search for a unique social identity for himself/herself. It is the time when he/she is developing a new sense of self. It is indeed a period of 'storm and stress'. Many a time this causes adolescents to be frequently found confused between the 'right' and the 'wrong'.

Adolescents, even in the face of contradictory evidence, have been labeled as radical, rebellious, deviant, aimless and unstable by society and the media. Many adults view them as being different, *inter alia*, in how they look, how they behave, the kind of music they enjoy, their hairstyles, the kind of clothing they love to wear and the company of friends they choose.
Although they are portrayed rather negatively, most adolescents successfully navigate the journey to mature adult development (Santrock, 1998). In fact today's adolescents have positive self conceptions and positive relationships with others and a large number of them enroll and successfully complete college studies in the United States (Snyder & Hoffman, 2002) and in virtually every country worldwide (Goedegebuure et al. 1994).

For most young people in late adolescence, college occupies the central and most important milestone of their lives: a time for evaluation, decision-making and commitment and of carving out a niche in the world. “Despite the general competitive job market of college graduates, a college degree is still needed for most high-paying and high-status jobs” (US Bureau of Labour standards, 2000–01). Therefore, students consider college to be the training ground for specialized career skills and a hub for physical, personal, social and intellectual maturity (Goodman & Feldman, 1975), which is required to assume vocational and civic responsibilities (Hurlock, 1992).

The skills students are expected to master, the kinds of adjustments they are to make, the social situations and the settings they are to negotiate, the goals they are to set and achieve, and the self concept they are to build are shaped by many factors in the contexts (settings) of occurrence: Family/home, peers, social and institutional, with cultural dimensions such as gender, socio-economic status (SES/Social Class), locale, ethnicity, age, and lifestyle. However, the most important of them is the family/home namely parental and non-parental care giving (Rueter & Conger, 1995) with socio-cultural dimensions that entails gender (Unger &
Crawford, 1996), socio economic status, locale/area of domicile, streams of study course (Arts, Science and Commerce), the year of study and age that constitutes the main thrust of this present study.

**Parenting**

Family/home, and particularly parents, exerts the first and the greatest influence on the individual’s development i.e. on self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation, etc. The present study is undertaken to evaluate and compare this influence upon college students living with parents and under non-parental care with regards to their self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation.

Despite the collegians’ emotional distancing from parents and their focusing upon peers during their late adolescent stage, they typically remain very closely attached to parents (Hill, 1987). According to Grotevant (1994), this attachment serves as a buffer that protects them from some of the stresses and anxieties of adjusting to a complex world. In addition, it leads to the positive development of their self-esteem (O’Koon, 1997). According to Brown and colleagues (1993) not only are the parents instrumental in shaping their children’s social skills and values but they also significantly influence their choice of peers. Lewis (1949) found that a favourable parent-child relationship results in healthy emotional and social adjustment. Steinberg et al. (1992) found that Asian-American students, who tend to have the highest school grades among minorities in the United States, had parents who set high goals and helped in achieving them.
Parenting adolescents includes providing them with basic resources and care, protecting them from their immaturity, guiding and supporting their development (by providing opportunities for intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual growth, and fostering self-esteem) and advocacy (supporting and helping adolescents in relation to institutions or groups like college...) (Lefrançois, 2001).

Parenting has not been an easy role to play with the ever-changing structure of the family and with the traditional models of parenting turning obsolete and ineffective. The long search for parental ingredients, by psychologists, in order to promote healthy competent adolescents has resulted in new models. These models view healthy competent adolescents as being the result of having a close and warm relationship with their parents while at the same time becoming independent.

One important model of adolescent–parent relationship is Interdependence Theory (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985) wherein the parents give adolescents more freedom and let them have a greater say in decision-making.

The other model gaining increasing attention is Attachment Theory (Ainsworth & Others, 1978). This popular theory asserts that a trusting relationship with the parents or caregivers gives the child feelings of security and self-confidence. Children develop secure attachments when parents are sensitive, warm and responsive towards their children. Such children become socially competent, high goal setters and achievers and have a self-concept and adjustment that is much superior to their non-attached peers. Research indicates that adolescents with secure parental attachments have higher self-esteem and are socially more
competent than those with insecure attachments. Secure parental attachments may contribute to positive views of self and lower levels of depressive symptoms among adolescent boys and girls, while adolescents who feel detached from parents feel rejected and lack in self-confidence (Ryan & Lynch, 1989).

In another model, many a social scientist and family therapist looks at the family as a system. According to this System Theory, the family is viewed as a whole and not just as a group of individuals. Therefore, when something happens to one member of the family, the entire family is affected.

In this constantly evolving society, changes that take place within and among adolescents, parents, family system and society pose great challenges and sometimes lead to frustration in parents whilst raising their adolescent children. To help remedy this situation, psychologists have been working on types of parenting styles that would be best suited for adolescents.

**Parenting Styles**

Baumrind’s (1971, 1989 & 1991) research has identified three distinctly different styles in parenting. Some parents adopt an Authoritarian Style wherein they respond to their adolescents’ challenges by becoming stricter, with the feeling that clamping them down right away will compel adolescents to return home on schedule, keep their room tidy/clean and dress neatly. Other parents employ a Permissive Style, giving their adolescent children lots of freedom, hoping they will do what is best. The third style of parenting called the Authoritative Style –
the most common and successful style wherein parents hold high expectations, set rules and provide explanation while, at the same time, creating a warm and caring environment.

Baumrind (1971, 1989 and 1991) has studied children from early childhood through adolescence to determine the impact of these parenting styles. She found that they differ along two dimensions – responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness refers to the warm encouragement of independence by parents while demandingness involves parents’ supervision of their adolescents’ activities and the setting of high expectations and standards.

According to the research of Baumrind (1971, 1989 & 1991), authoritative parenting is most likely to develop healthy children and adolescents. Parental responsiveness seems to develop social skills and a strong self-concept. In contrast, demandingness seems to foster self-control and make adolescents more co-operative with others (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Baumrind (1991) also found that the adolescent children of parents who were demanding had few behaviour problems and were not likely to use drugs. Adolescents, whose parents used reasons to influence their behavior and who took interest in their activities, were found to be more competent and to possess higher self-esteem than those adolescents whose parents were strict and controlling in their parenting. Adolescents who were brought up by authoritative parents were, socially, more competent and better adjusted than others (Lamborn & associates, 1991). Adolescent children of authoritarian parents were found to obey rules and keep out of trouble but have less self-confidence as compared to other adolescents. While
adolescent children of indulgent parents were found to have positive self-concept; though they may not do well academically or may get involved in misbehaviour etc. Adolescent children of neglectful parents scored lowest on the measures of self-esteem, social competence and problem behavior.

The recent decades have witnessed great changes in family life: the father no longer holds the sole title of breadwinner of the family, so also the mother is not merely a housewife and a caretaker of children, but a partner in sharing financial burdens with her husband. The changes in the family structure also affects adolescents’ development.

Also, not all students are fortunate enough to live with their parents. Due to better prospects and job opportunities, a large number of parent/s have migrated to urban or metropolitan cities and even abroad, leaving their children behind, to be cared for by grandparents or other guardians. Also, a surge of rural students has migrated to cities, other states and abroad in search of quality education. Circumstances, therefore, compel them to either live in hostels or with guardians (Sherrod, 1996). So what happens to these students and the development of their personality under non-parental caring? How do guardians influence the self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation of the student-wards (who are under their care) at this crucial juncture of their life?

Research conducted in this area is insignificant and inconclusive. Therefore, studying the influence of guardians on college students in relation to these variables and comparing them with those living with parents will lead to a greater
understanding of those who are well adjusted, highly successful, highly placed in work or social status and those who are maladjusted, depressed and underachieved.

Undoubtedly, there is an urgent need to conduct a study to investigate the effect of the type of parenting on the college students’ self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation especially at this crucial juncture of their lives. Since no study has yet investigated these phenomena, will this present study throw some light in understanding a large number of college students even from rural areas surging their way to urban or other states or even abroad leaving their parents behind? It also makes one wonder whether it is only the culture or a trend that pushes the 18-year-old U.S. and European adolescents to leave their home/parents and live their own lives? Or will the results of this study create flutter amongst parents and society, inviting overhauling of traditional parenting in this fast track of adolescents life?

**Socio-cultural Dimensions**

Besides parental and non-parental influences, there are also socio-cultural dimensions viz. ethnic, cultural, socio-economic status, gender and age/life-style differences that influence the actual life trajectory of each student.

In the present study, the researcher has selected the six important socio-demographic dimensions viz. gender, socio-economic status, locale/area of domicile (urban/rural), streams of study course (Arts, Science and commerce), year
of study and age that would exert influence on the self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation of the college students.

**Gender**

Gender specifically refers to the psychological characteristics typically associated with biological sex. Thus, there are two sexes: Male and Female, and correspondingly two genders – Masculine and Feminine (Ben, 1974). Home/family environment plays an important role in gender typing. Parents, especially, by way of action and example seem to influence their adolescents’ gender typing. For example, parents allow boys greater independence than girls, while they show greater concern about their daughters’ sexual vulnerability. And parents with adolescent daughters experience more intense conflict about sex, choice of friends/peers than do parents of adolescent sons (Papini & Sebby, 1988). Placing severe restrictions on their adolescent sons leads to disruptive behavior (Baumrind, 1991). According to Gilligan (1982), male self-esteem seemed to be linked with striving for individual achievement, whereas female self-esteem depends more on relationships with others. Similarly, it is the view of Chubb and others (1997) that adolescent girls have lower self-esteem than adolescent boys.

**Socio-economic Status (SES)**

The second socio-cultural dimension that is studied is the socio-economic status or SES. This is also termed as social class. It refers to people living in a similar
occupational, educational and economic background. SES plays an important role in
the life of an individual. For, self-concept, adjustment, social competence,
achievement motivation may be also patterned by socio-economic status. According
to research studies, socio-economic status can be a powerful factor in educational
achievement through its influence on family atmosphere, neighbourhood and on the
parents' manner of caring (National Research Council [NRS], 1993).

Due to different levels of educational attainment and the subsequent variations in
economic resources or occupations, which vary in prestige and status, social
classes are created. The most commonly recognized social classes include High-
Income Group (HIG), Middle-Income Group (MIG) and the Lower-Income Group
(LIG). Lower Income Group includes occupations like factory workers, manual
labourers, maintenance workers and welfare recipients. The Middle Income Group
is variously described as the managerial class, White collar or middle class. The
High Income Group or upper class consists of people with high incomes.

Socio-economic status and social class differences, in parents, do exist and influence
the individual's self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement
motivation. Adolescents of higher SES, generally, have higher self-esteem than
those of lower SES particularly during middle and late adolescence (Savin-Williams
& Demo, 1983; Van'Tassel-Baska, Olszewski-Kubilius & Kulieke, 1994). Low
Income Group (LIG) parents hold, in high value, obedience and neatness and are
more likely to discipline their children and adolescents with corporal punishment.
Adolescents from lower income background tend to have more maladaptive and
psychological problems such as depression, low self-confidence and juvenile
delinquency than those from middle-income background. However, a sizeable number of adolescents from low-income background do considerably well in intellectual abilities and perform very well at school (Gibbs & Huang, 1989). Middle Income Group (MIG) parents often place high value on self-control and postponement of desire/need-gratification. Such parents, while disciplining, will also use reasoning, ask questions and give verbal praise (Heath, 1983).

The variation in neighbourhood settings can affect adolescents’ adjustment, self-concept, social competence etc. Adolescents, whose parents hold prestigious jobs, live in attractive houses and neighbourhoods and attend school with high class and middle class children have better self-concept, adjustment... But adolescents, whose parents hold simple occupations, live in unattractive houses and neighbourhoods and generally attend school with a mix of lower and middle class peers, have poorer adjustment, self-concept, etc. (Coulton & Korbin, 1995; Leffert & Blyth, 1966; Sampson and Earls (1995).

Locale/Area of Domicile

The third dimension under study is the location or the geographical background that the students come from; in other words, it is the learning that comes from the experience of living in a geographic background. Milgram (1970); Korte and Kerr (1975) found that city (urban) dwellers were more indifferent and apathetic than rural residents. It was observed that the general level of friendliness and socializing was much higher when a country atmosphere was introduced, even within a city. Rubenstein (1981) reported that shoppers at a city farmers’ market
are far more outgoing than those in a city supermarket. Levine et al. (1976) reported that city residents were less friendly and helpful than rural residents, so also city dwellers were less willing to help strangers as compared to rural dwellers. It would be interesting to investigate the effect of urban and rural dwelling upon the development of self-concept, social competence, adjustment and achievement motivation of college students living with parents and guardians.

Finally, the stream of study course (Arts, Science, Commerce), the year of study (First, Second and Third Year) and age of college students can also be an influencing factor in building self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation of students – not by itself but through the influence of family atmosphere, choice of neighbourhood and the parents’ manner of rearing the child.

The present study was conducted in the small picturesque State of Goa, with an area of 3702 square kilometers. The State has a total population of about 1.6 million with Hinduism, Islam and Christianity being the main religious persuasions. Goans are known for their hospitality, adaptability and ‘nomadic life’. In fact, Goans are spread all across the globe. The recent decades have witnessed en masse migration of Goans to developed countries in search of a higher standard of living. The ever-increasing sprawl of wealthy Gulf States lured many parents to surge forward to the Middle East in pursuit of high-paying jobs, a better life and glamour, leaving behind their children under the care of grandparents, uncles/aunts, hostels or as paying guests.
Also, parents who raised their family in Gulf States found it economical and convenient to send their children to Goa for their Higher Secondary and College studies. A large number of these students either live with their grandparents or relatives or under guardians in hostels.

There are also a substantial number of rural students migrating to urban areas because of the better quality of educational institutions and the availability of new career-oriented courses. These rural students live either with their relatives or in hostels or as paying guests.

So far, no research studies have been conducted on students who live with guardians with regard to their self-concept, adjustment etc. Studying such students, evaluating the strength of self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation and comparing it with students who live their parents would give great insight into the desired type of parenting required at this crucial stage of adolescence.

This study may reveal differences in these variables brought about by the type of parenting which may, in turn, help to formulate policies or draw certain guidelines to those guardians under whose care they are or it may suggest to parents that their parenting style needs to incorporate more ingredients in caring for adolescents at this crucial stage of their lives. Thus, it may end up in better understanding of college students and providing better caregivers during this period of their lives.
Since socio-cultural dimensions also affect parental and non-parental care giving, the researcher evaluates the impact of gender, socio-economic status, locale, streams of study course, the year of study and age of the college students on the self-concept, adjustment, social competence and achievement motivation of the students living with parents and guardians.