INTRODUCTION

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Introduction:

A thorough understanding of adolescent development in contemporary society depends on being familiar with numerous perspectives on adolescence. Within the biological and psycho-social perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period, whose chief purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles. Rather than viewing adolescence as having a specific beginning and a specific ending, it makes more sense to think of the period as being composed of a series of passages biological, psychological, social and economic from immaturity to maturity.

The word adolescence is Latin in origin, derived from the word adolescere, which means, to grow into adulthood. “In all societies adolescence is a time of growing up, of moving from the immaturity of childhood into the maturity of adulthood, of participation for the future.” (Larsen; 2004)

Adolescence is a period of transitions, biological, psychological, social and economic. It is an existing time of life. Adolescence is defined as the second decade of the life span although at one time adolescence may have been synonymous with the teenage years (from 13 to 19), the adolescence period has been lengthened considerably in the past century, both because young people mature earlier physically and many individuals remain economically dependent on their parents well after they turn 20. Because of these changes, it makes more sense to think of adolescence as beginning around the age 10 and ending in the early twenties.

“Development during adolescence is involving a series of transition from immaturity into maturity. Some of these passages are long and some are short; some are smooth and others are rough. And not occur at the same time. Social
scientists who study adolescence usually differentiate among early adolescence, which covers the period from about age 10 years through 13 years of age; middle adolescence, from about 14 years of age through 18 years; and late adolescence from about 19 years of age through age 22 years. These divisions correspond to the way in which many society's group young people in educational institutions.” (Hurlock; 1953)

The fundamental changes of adolescence

“There are 3 features of adolescent’s development that give the period its special flavor and significance: the onset of puberty, the emergence of more advanced thinking abilities and the transition into new roles in society. These 3 sets challenges – biological, cognitive and social – are the fundamental changes of adolescence those occur universally; virtually without exception.” (Collymore; 2001)

“The chief biological changes of adolescence which together are referred as puberty, involve changes in the young person’s physical appearance and the attainment of reproductive capability. The simultaneous release of growth hormone, thyroid hormones and androgens stimulates rapid acceleration in height and weight- adolescent growth spurt. The spurt in height during adolescence is accompanied by an increase in weight, which results from an increase in both muscle and fat. The rapid increase in body fat that occurs among females in early adolescence frequently prompts young girls to become overly concerned about their weight- even when it is in normal range. This fear may lead to develop eating disorder like Anorexia Nervosa. Young adolescents often fear to be out of proportion physically- as though their noses or legs were growing faster than the rest of them. It’s not an optical illusion.” The parts of the body do not all grow at the same rate/ at the same time during puberty. This synchronicity in growth can lead to an appearance of awkwardness in the young adolescent. Differences in timing and rate of puberty among individuals growing up in the same general environment result chiefly, but not exclusively, from genetic factors. In this respect, the timing and rate pubertal maturation is the product of an interaction between nature and nurture, between one’s genetic
makeup and the environment conditions under which one has developed. "By far the two most important environmental influences on pubertal maturation are nutrition and health. Puberty occurs earlier among individuals who are better nourished and chronic illness during childhood is also associated with delayed puberty along with nutritional deficiency." (Dorn; 2011)

“The social as well as physical factors in the environment influence the onset of maturation especially among girls. For example, the puberty may occur somewhat earlier among girls who have grown up in less cohesive family environment. Stress, in turn may affect hormonal secretions in adolescent. A great deal of stress, however, is likely to slow maturation. The puberty maturation may differ from region to region and may also be influenced by the family economic conditions.” (Selvaraj; 2002)

“Some of the immediate impacts of puberty in adolescents are self-esteem, moodiness, changes in self-patterns etc. The biological changes of puberty cause changes in the adolescent’s self-image. The biological change in turn may elicit changes on how others react to the teenager. These changes in reactions may provoke changes in the adolescent’s behavior.” (Gupta; 2007)

“The emergence of more sophisticated thinking abilities is one of the most striking changes to take place during adolescence. The implication of these cognitive changes is also far reaching. The growing ability to think more capably in hypothetical and abstract terms affects the way adolescents think about themselves, their relationships and the world around them. The cognitive development proceeds through 4 stages: sensor motor period (from birth until about age 2), preoperational period (2-5), concrete operation (6 – early adolescence) and formal operations. (from adolescence through adulthood).” During adolescence, individual become better able than children to think about what is possible, instead of limiting their thought to what is real. Adults become better able to think about abstract things. They begin thinking more often about the process of thinking itself. Their thinking tends to become multidimensional, rather than being limited to a single issue. “There will be change in information
processing abilities during adolescence. The advancement in ability to pay attention is also seen. The memory abilities improve. Improvement in memory will help in increasing the speed of information processing. Adolescents also gain improvements in organizational strategies – more planful. Finally individual’s knowledge about their own thinking process improves during adolescence. But the cognitive transition may vary from gender, region and the socio cultural factors. Also it depends on the intellectual level of individuals.”

The intellectual skills can be gained through the everyday challenges and opportunities for learning. Lack of learning exposures may result in poor cognitive development. (Lai; 2000)

“Changes in social status permit young people to enter new roles and engage in new activities such as work and marriage that dramatically alter their self-image and relationships with others. As the young person’s treatment by society changes, so do relationships around the home, at school and in the peer groups. Changes in social definition at adolescence typically involve a two-sided alteration in states. On the one hand, the adolescent is given certain privileges and rights that are typically reserved for the society’s adult members such as economical freedom, voting right, marriage right etc. on the other hand, this increased power and freedom generally are accompanied by increased expectations for self-management, personal responsibility and social participation.” The changes in social status of adolescent are strongly depending on the environmental and cultural influences. (Larson; 2004)

“During adolescence there would be marked development in psychological aspects of the individuals. He will search for his identity (self conceptions) by questioning to self who is he and what his status in society is. As a result of this, the individuals may search for the answer where they may experience identity crises. Identity crisis will probe in result with crisis, which involves adult’s self-esteem. The need for autonomy is one of the significant developments, which will provoke the adolescent to behave in certain manner. The relationship between child and their parents changes repeatedly over the course of the life cycle. Whenever important transformations take place in competencies,
concerns and social roles, changes in the expression of affection, the
distribution of power and patterns of verbal interaction are likely to occur." By
end of adolescence, individuals are far less emotionally dependent on their
parents. Adolescents often have a great deal of emotional energy wrapped up in
relationships outside the family (intimacy). This may lead to developmental
hazards like drug abuse, anti social activities (Robert, et al; 2009)

Intimate relationship during adolescence, whether with peers/adults,
inside/outside the family, or sexual/nonsexual, plays an important role in the
young person’s overall psychological development. Adolescence often talks to
their friends to follow, the people they hope to get involved with, and the life
they expect to lead. Friends provide advice on a range of identity- related
matters from how to act in various situations, to what sort of occupational and
educational paths to pursue. Intimate relationship can have negative effects too.

"Like other aspects of psychological development, sexuality is not an entirely
new issue that surfaces for the first time during adolescence. Young children are
curious about their sex organs and at a very early age derive pleasure (if not
what adults would label organs) from genital stimulations. The sexual activity
and sexual development continue long after adolescence. Adolescence is a
fundamentally important time if not the most important time in the life cycle for
the development of sexuality. There is an increase in the sex drive in early
adolescence as a result of hormonal changes. In addition to this, growth of
sophisticated thinking capabilities, influence sexuality during adolescence.
Socio-cultural factors add the restriction in expression of curiosity related to
sexual development in adolescence." (Rutherford; 2002)

"Achievement is a lifelong concern. Achievements during the adolescent years
require special attentions for several reasons. Fact is that adolescence is a time
of preparations for adult work roles questions about the nature of the
preparations that many people receive and the process through which they sort
themselves into the other roles that may influence the reminder of their lives.
Many achievement related issues surface for the first time during adolescence.
One major reason for this relates to the social transition of adolescence. Virtually all societies, adolescence is the period when important educational and occupational decisions were made, and society has structured its institutions accordingly.” Sex differences in achievement related motives and beliefs appear around puberty as well. These sex differences are related primarily to the differential responses that boys and girls receive from others as a result of changes in their appearance at puberty and as a result of differences in how adolescent boys and girls view themselves. This differential treatment may have important implications for attainment. Environment also influences in achievement during adolescence. (Chaube; 2002)

Problems of Adolescence

“Most problems of adolescence are due to failure in understanding the anatomical, morphological and psychological changes expected during adolescence. Psychologically, adolescence is such a vulnerable stage that boys / girls of this age are easily carried away by perceptions generated by misleading and misleading parents, teachers, friends, brother/sisters, ignorance of elders, half - informed or ill - informed friends, brothers, sisters, wrongful messages depicted through TV serials, advertisements, films, and publications carrying partially or fully false information. Such perceptions can be anything in the range of studies, sex, society, married life, career, religion, politics, or any relevant subject. Every adolescent boy or girl is prone to such exposures - which ultimately are retained as perceptions in their minds to form their behavioural patterns.” The problems of adolescence are classified as: morphological / developmental, psychological, social, and educational. Some problems are absolutely unimportant and trivial. They could be easily ignored. But even such problems cause great concern to adolescent people. (Steinberg; 2008)
Causes of problems

“Psychological- individuals with certain personality characteristics which typically are present before adolescence are more likely to develop problems than their peers. These characteristics include anger, impulsivity, depression and academic difficulties. Individuals with distant, hostile or conflicted family relationships are most likely to develop problems.” Adolescents who lack with knowledge towards development, possess negative attitude towards developmental issues and having ineffective coping strategies and are likely to experience developmental problems.(Kakar;2009)

We need to distinguish between occasional experiments and enduring patterns of dangerous/troublesome behavior. We need to distinguish between problems that have their origins and on set during adolescence and those that have their roots during earlier periods of development. It is important to remember that many, although not all, of the problems experienced by adolescents are relatively transitory and is resolved by the beginning of adulthood, with few long term repercussions in most cases. Problem behavior during adolescence is virtually never a direct consequence of going through the normative changes of adolescence itself.

“Psychosocial problems are those problems caused or influenced by life experience, as well as maladjusted cognitive and behavioral process. Psychosocial problem is interdependent on each other. The problem may be psychological but it can be manifested in any social form or in other hand social maladjustment may be exhibited in the form of psychological difficulty. Generally, it affects both social and psychological aspects of one’s life and most of the time it is expressed in the form of psychological distress or psychosomatic complaints.” (Ausubel; 1977)
Antisocial behaviors

"Violations of the law are more common among adolescents and young adults than among any other age segment of the population. The causes of antisocial behavior in adolescence are: disorganized families, lack of self regulation (ADHD) and peer influence. Depression is the most common psychological disturbances among adolescents. Depression has emotional symptoms, including dejection, decreased enjoyment of pleasurable activities and low self-esteem." (www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/adolescence/index.html; 2004)

Adolescent suicide

"Vast majority of adolescents attempt suicide during this period, fortunately are not successful. Adolescents who attempt to kill themselves usually have made appeals for help and have tried but have not found emotional support from family/friends" (Salinger; 2007)

Stress and coping in adolescence

"The effect of any one stressor is exacerbated if other stressors accompany it. Adolescents who have certain resources—either internal (self esteem, healthy identity) or external (social support) are less likely to be adversely affected by stress. Some adolescents use more effective coping strategies than do others. Coping strategies that involve taking steps to change the source of the stress and those that involve efforts to adapt to the problems are different from each other. Adolescents who use primary control strategies are better adjusted, less depressed and less likely to have behavior problems." Adolescents today report difficulty in coping with stressful rituals at home/at school. These successors include major life changes, chronically stressful conditions and day to day hassles. Stress can affect individuals in different ways. For some teenagers, stress can lead to internalize disorders such as anxiety, depression, headaches and indigestion. For others, the consequences of stress are externalized in behavior and conduct problems. For few still, the impact of stress is manifested in drug and alcohol abuse. For some adolescents, however the very same sources and levels of stress do not seem to be associated with psychological/physical upset at all. (Brent; 2005)
“Practitioners arming themselves to work more effectively with adolescents are aware that the needs and behaviours of today's young people can shape the problems of the next generation. Adolescents account for 18-22% of all admissions to the hospital, rising from 54% in 2000 to 56% in 2008. The most common reason for adolescent referral: unexplained medical symptoms, behavioral problems, prolonged school absence, primary mental health problems, and previously diagnosed chronic illnesses. There was a time when all young people required were antibiotics for a chest infection, or the patching up of a sporting injury. In 2010 however, some of the hot topics of discussion are: ‘sexing'; the transition from primary to secondary school; cyber-bullying; sadness and depression; sexual abuse; suicide attempts; body image and how to talk to parents about sensitive or embarrassing issues.”
(http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth;2006)

“A significant amount of future adolescent problems could be solved by speaking to them. A survey by National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development in 2000 had found out that a large number of teenagers wish their parents to be more approachable on the topics of their concern and curiosity, and their questions be answered.” Our population is changing and so must the skills of personnel handling these adolescents. However, diverse cultural backgrounds have implications for the provision of culturally sensitive and accessible services. A broader synthesis of studies on children, adolescence, youth and families need to be launched by national authorities. The inclusion of interdisciplinary group of researchers who can explore the different strands of research in adolescence is also important. Policy makers, educators, community health specialists and others concerned with the life challenges facing adolescents must look for ways to use scientific findings to better serve young people and their families. (Chaube; 2002)

“Some unprecedented challenges facing young people at the start of the 21st century: they are the first generation to grow up in a world characterized by instantaneous global communication and the widespread socio-cultural threats. They will be the first generation to fully compete in a global economy and the
first generation of whom the majority will spend at least part of childhood in a single-parent household. The professionals who work with young people in this fast-changing environment need a clear understanding of the processes of adolescence, yet models for understanding this phase of life are rapidly changing in ways that can significantly influence practice.” Recognizing the significant changes occurs in the social contexts in which adolescents live, social influences may interact with biological and behavioral processes that occur during the second decade of life is also the major challenge for professionals. Thus, it is important to overview those critical processes that emerge during adolescence and explore current views of what is going on in the minds and bodies of young people. A theme of new insights on pubertal maturation and adolescence from a developmental framework may provide the proper grounding. (DiClemente; 2005)

“A significant conceptual shift has been from a risk or deficit model—a focus on all that can go wrong with teenagers—to what is called a positive youth development model. Such a model—particularly relevant to the design of programs for young people—incorporates protective factors and emphasizes ways of tapping young people’s passionate enthusiasms, energy, and potential in positive ways. The point is not to ignore the importance of prevention strategies or the need for intervention and treatment with troubled adolescents, but rather to develop a broader framework that serves their needs and promotes positive outcomes for all young people, not just those who are already in trouble. While the positive youth development model, has had an important influence, many youth programs and policies remain focused on adolescence as a time of high risk.” Over the same time period, those who study adolescence have generally moved from a conceptualization of adolescence grounded in the stages of life described by 20th century scholars, such as Piaget and Erickson, to an ecological model in which contextual factors and social settings are viewed as major sources of influence on developmental processes in a young person’s life. As a result, increasing attention is focusing on the ways in which social and cultural factors in the environment of today’s youth exacerbate or soften sources of stress and disruption that influence biological, behavioral, and developmental processes. (Flay; 2005)
The behavioral choices and development are influenced by a complex system of genetic and environmental factors that act through three streams such as intrapersonal or psychological, interpersonal or social, and socio-cultural or attitudinal influences on action and are also affected by both cognitive and affective influences. Therefore we need a program for adolescents providing with an important reminder of the immediate need for strategies that work with young people by influencing their decision-making processes, their selection of friends and social networks, and their engagement with health care professionals, teachers, and other service providers and initiated a comprehensive attempt to link research-based theories of adolescent behavior with intervention strategies. The intervention need to consider the question of whether the time is right for a comprehensive synthesis of the diverse array of research findings that are contributing to an understanding of adolescence. The principal questions to be considered, as were whether there is an adequate, cumulative knowledge base, and whether an effort to synthesize this base would help researchers and policy makers take stock of what has been established, plan future directions, and inform policy and practice. We need to identify the formidable challenge that was inherent in producing a synthesis of the diverse body of research on adolescent development, if only because of the significant variations in the theoretical models that characterize these fields.

Need for the present study
Adolescence, known for its frequent 'storm and stress', has been a significant topic for the researchers in course of time. Each adolescent has an individualistic way of understanding their growth and development which influences coping skills either in a constructive manner or in a pathological way. Being a lending hand for them during their period of identity crisis and support those to attain adult autonomy always remain as a challenge for the educators, social workers, psychologists and many other helping professionals. In recent days the developmental demands for adolescents invite careful examination in the era of globalization. A need was felt to dissect this much-discussed developmental stage more closely in the context of Indian culture by revisiting the issues concerned to adolescents at present.
There is also a need felt for analyzing the relationship between knowledge, attitude and coping skills during adolescence and scope for social work interventions in the field of adolescent development.

**Conclusion:** Adolescence is a stage of storm and stress, may lead most of the teens into identity crisis. The strategies employed to adjust with the challenges by the adolescents during their development may at times be pathological and may even destroy the future. Positive youth development is possible through imparting adequate unbiased knowledge of development by encouraging positive attitude which may assist adolescents with adapting effective coping skills. The introduction chapter in this study focused majorly on describing the research problem and the need for present study. The developmental problems and coping skills among adolescents may be the result of various socio-cultural factors like gender, age, geographical background, education, income, parenting style and exposure to awareness services which will be the supportive knowledge provider at need and crises for adolescents. Therefore, a thorough understanding of adolescent development in contemporary society depends on being familiar with numerous perspectives on adolescence. Within the biological and psycho-social perspectives, adolescence is viewed as a transitional period, whose chief purpose is the preparation of children for adult roles. Rather than viewing adolescence as having a specific beginning and a specific ending, it makes more sense to think of the period as being composed of a series of passages biological, psychological, social and economic from immaturity to maturity. In recent days the developmental demands for adolescents invite careful examination in the era of globalization. A need was felt to dissect this much- discussed developmental stage more closely in the context of Indian culture by revisiting the issues concerned to adolescents at present. Therefore, a sincere attempt was made by the researcher to understand the concerns of adolescents and test the interventions as tool for effective adolescence management. Literatures were reviewed by the researcher to understand the concept well and develop the research design to carry out the planned study and a detailed view of literatures will be available in chapter II. (Review of literature)
“Personality development is self-improvement which can really help you to rise high in your life especially when you are down and out”

-Swami Vivekananda