Loneliness is as natural and integral a part of human being as are joy, hunger, and self-actualisation. Humans are born alone, they experience the terror of loneliness in death, and often much loneliness in between (Rokach, 1988; Moustakas, 1961).

Moustakas (1961) and Rolheiser (1979), among others, maintain that loneliness is at the core of every person's ordinary life experience. Mijuskovic (1979) and Rokach (1987) suggest that loneliness is not a modern day social ailment but rather a condition that human beings have experienced since the dawn of time. Those who view loneliness as a historic rather than a contemporary phenomenon suggest that being human – sharing the experience of living, being and dying – means being lonely; there can be no escape from, or transcendence beyond, loneliness so long as man exists. Although loneliness is recognised as a socially prevalent phenomenon that has been described consistently as very painful, distressing, and disturbing, a lonely individual is commonly regarded as "deviant, as someone who is spoiled or generally undesirable" (Perlman & Joshi, 1989, p.63).

The present structure of society in different geographical areas appears to magnify the alienation and separateness that humans feel along with their need to belong, to be needed, and to lead a meaningful and satisfactory life. Although common to all people, the nature of loneliness as a subjective experience varies from person to person, occurring under many conditions with a multitude of causes, results, and
consequences (Rokach, 1988, 1989). Attempts to survive this agonizing experience are similarly varied, and coping strategies are numerous. The social importance of loneliness is also indicated by the large number of researches investigating its effects on emotional, physical, and behavioural problems (Jones, Rose, & Russell, 1990).

Weiss believes that some people are prone to loneliness because of their personality, social skills, or values and that some situations, such as the death of a spouse or changing jobs, increase the likelihood of experiencing loneliness. Psychodynamic theorists suggest that loneliness occurs when a basic human need for intimacy is not met (Leiderman, 1969; Sullivan, 1953). Sociological theories suggest that such social forces as mobility and technological changes foster loneliness by frustrating the basic desire of individuals for a sense of community and involvement with others (Packard, 1972; Slater, 1970). The environmental factors of change and disruption affect interaction. Changes caused by widespread social pressures can increase an individual's vulnerability to loneliness as can changes in an individual's life (Packard, 1972; Slater, 1970). Disruptions and changes in social and interpersonalities may engender a sense of disconnectedness, of nonrelatedness to others, which leaves the individual at risk for experiencing loneliness.

Rokach (1988) reviewed various theoretical approaches to loneliness in an attempt to sort out differing viewpoints and orientations.
A "univariate multidimensional" distinction was used to aid in distinguishing the various conceptualisations of loneliness. Some writers describe this experience as a specific and unique pain, an undifferentiated stressor. Others view loneliness as a response to various needs, circumstances, and situations and, as such, views it as more finely differentiated into several types of loneliness. Although useful as intellectual tools, these constructions of loneliness are artificial. They suggest that loneliness can be defined as a unified experience and, in so doing, fail to capture the complexity of the experience and its effects on the lonely. As Rook (1984) & Rokach (1987) have suggested, although recognizably painful and distressing, loneliness ultimately is experienced subjectively, and this individualistic essence of the experience should be the focus of investigations.

This universally recognized and experienced phenomenon gained the attention of researchers in the 1970's (West, Kellner, & Moore-West, 1986). In other words, loneliness is an experience that received active empirical investigation in the 1970s, based on theoretical developments beginning in the 1950s and 1960s. In a review article, Marangoni & Ickes (1989) cogently sorted out the many theoretical approaches that serve as the foundation for the explanation of why people become lonely. Those approaches can be broadly categorized as (a) the social needs approach (Bowlby, 1969; Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; Sullivan, 1953) and the social-support perspective (Weiss, 1973), (b) the behavioural/personality approach.
(Horowitz & des French, 1979; Russell, Peplau, & Ferguson, 1978), and (c) the cognitive-processes approach (Dykstra, 1990; Jones, 1982).

Although research on loneliness has increased in the past two decades, no consensus has been reached concerning a definition of the construct (Medora & Woodward, 1986). Seligman (1983) described loneliness as one of the most poorly understood of all psychological phenomenon. DeJong – Gierveld (1987) considered loneliness multidimensional and defined it as a lack of opportunity to have a relationship with others on an intimate level. According to Peplau and Perlman, “Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relations is significantly deficient in either quality or quantity” (1982, p. 4). According to Peplau and Perlman (1982), the three essential characteristics of loneliness* are (1) that it results from deficiencies in social relationships, (2) that it represents a subjective experience (that is, it is not necessarily synonymous with social isolation as one can be alone without feeling lonely or lonely when in a group of people), and (3) that it is unpleasant and emotionally distressing. Despite

*A commonly recurring assumption that loneliness is synonymous with social isolation that is, a lack of associates with whom one can interact (Townsend, 1968). Lopata (1969), in an early sociological explication, discussed loneliness as a sentiment felt by a person whose experience level or form of interaction is defined as inadequate. Anderson (1986) defined social isolation as the experienced lack of relatedness to the social environment. In general, social isolation reflects a deficit in one’s social life. Qualitatively, social isolation is a crucial concern for persons, for numerous reasons. Hochschild (1973) reiterated in her discussion of problems of old age that it has become commonplace to associate old age with being alone. She indicated further that to the extent that loneliness results from isolation, isolation is a serious humanitarian problem. Her analysis of the ‘unexpected community’ gave considerable insight into these issues.
differences in conceptualisation, there is a general consensus among researchers on three fundamental characteristics of loneliness experience. First, loneliness experience is subjective, aversive and detrimental to psychological well being; second, loneliness is inevitable and a pervasive phenomenon in contemporary society; and third; loneliness is distinct from social isolation.

The situational and characterological theories by Weiss (1973) are alternate explanations for loneliness. The author does not consider the theories as incompatible but, instead, suggests that each emphasizes different processes to explain the experience of loneliness. Weiss (1973) situational explanation argues that relational deficits are the primary reason for loneliness experienced. Specifically, the disruption or absence of ties with attachment figures and/or engagement with peers gives rise to the experience of loneliness. Loneliness, then, is "a response to the absence of some particular relational provision". Relative to the situational explanation of loneliness, Weiss (1973) suggests there is an extensive reorganisation of the affective system of attachment during adolescence. Parents are relinquished as primary attachment figures in favour of some or opposite sex peers. This reorganisation of affectionalities is a dynamic, uneven process that spans adolescent development. Nevertheless, this reorganisation is initially experienced
during early adolescence, which may explain why early adolescents are especially vulnerable to loneliness.

Weiss (1973) characteriological explanation posits that certain personality characteristics hinder individuals from establishing and/or maintaining relationships with others. Weiss describes characteristics of individuals – such as being reclusive, shy, or self-absorbed – which make them prone to loneliness. Thus, the characterological view suggests that personality characteristics are associated with loneliness.

Weiss does not elaborate upon the characterological explanation of loneliness during adolescence. Other authors, however, have theorized that certain personality characteristics increase loneliness in adolescents (Brennen & Auslander, 1979). Perhaps this is because adolescence is the first time individuals consciously try to conceptualise themselves (Campbell, 1969), a process that would logically begin in early adolescence. Possibly, as early adolescents become aware of personal characteristics that hinder them from establishing and/or maintaining relationships with others, loneliness increases.

Persistent loneliness may jeopardize an individual’s psychological well-being and increase the risk of suicide (Draper, 1995; Blai, 1989). Additionally, loneliness has been found to be related to cardiovascular mortality in older adults (Olsen, Gunner, & Waldstrom, 1991).
Loneliness in adolescence

The close of the twentieth century represents both the best of times and the worst of times for adolescents. The lay public and health professionals have gradually changed their views of adolescence from a time of inherent stress and storm to one of opportunities for growth and positive development (e.g. Millstein et al., 1993, Feldman & Elliott, 1990; Peterson, 1988).

Paradoxically, the robust growth of a psychology of adolescence has been accompanied by a decline in the overall well-being and health status of adolescents. Although morbidity rates for most other age groups have declined in recent decades, adolescents morbidity has increased (Hamburg, 1992). The challenges faced by today's youth are reflected in a host of problems, including adolescents suicide (Garland & Zigler, 1993), depression (Peterson et al., 1993), violence and death due to violence (Earls et al. 1993, Hammond & Yung, 1993), unplanned pregnancy (Brooks-Gunn & Paikoff, 1993), substance abuse (Leventhal & Kesshan, 1993), and sexually transmitted diseases (Brooks-Gunn & Paikoff, 1993). Further evidence that problems of adolescence are on the rise comes from longitudinal research indicating that rates of emotional and behavioural problems of adolescents (and children) have increased over the past ten years (Achenbach & Howell, 1993).
According to recent surveys, loneliness constitutes an important aspect of adolescents' experience (Upmanyu, Upmanyu, & Dhingra, 1992, 1993; Ammaniti, Erocolani, and Tamballi, 1989, Mjuskovia, 1988; Brennan, 1982). According to Brennan (1982), a typical adolescent "experience" is that of a sense of loneliness that may be so overwhelming as to cause a feeling of deep estrangement and isolation. The pervasiveness of loneliness in adolescence has also been documented by Upmanyu, Upmanyu, & Dhingra (1992, 1993).

Most researchers of response patterns to loneliness have focused primarily on college students or adults (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982; Rook & Peplau, 1982; and Rubenstein & Shaver, 1980). Relatively fewer researchers have examined how younger subjects, especially adolescents, respond to loneliness, although it is important to study this group for several reasons. Sullivan (1953) theorized that loneliness is experienced powerfully at adolescence as the result of new interpersonal needs for intimacy. Similarly, Erikson's (1963) theory of psychosocial development stated that the characteristic crisis for adolescence is "intimacy versus isolation", which deals with the establishment of an intimate relationship and leads people of this age group to be particularly concerned about being unattached (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1980). Brennan (1982) states that adolescence appears to be the time of
Past research has shown that loneliness is a relatively common experience in adolescence. In fact, data from national surveys (Brennan, 1982; Ostrov and Offer, 1978) indicate that between 20 and 50% of adolescents experience some degree of loneliness. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to loneliness due to the increased importance of friendship during this developmental stage. Loneliness is powerfully experienced in adolescence as a result of an increased need for intimacy and self-disclosure, which may only be satisfied by close relationships with same and opposite sex peers (Brennan, 1981). The importance of friends and peer group involvement increases with age and peaks during the tenth grade (Bell, 1981). Weiss (1973) argues that it is not until adolescence that individuals begin to scan their social worlds for non-familial attachments. They may experience unsatisfactory relationships with peers or become involved in broken love affairs that could result in loneliness.

Person in the helping professions such as psychology, psychiatry, nursing, counselling and social work who have contact with adolescent populations need to examine the phenomenon of loneliness in adolescents in greater depth in order to develop better strategies for coping with this phenomenon. The significance of this issue is summed
up in a statement by Gordon (1976, p. 64). The legacy of adolescence is frequently a lonely one. The association of love with failure, the inability to form close relationships, the overdependence on romantic fulfilment, and a sense of insecurity in the face of the family and the world. Rather than disappearing with age, these problems will shape the themes of loneliness in adults.

Chronic feelings of loneliness may put adolescents at risk for developing a variety of more severe emotional problems. For example, adolescent loneliness has been linked to self-reported depression (Kaiser & Berndt, 1985; Moore & Schultz, 1983), suicide (Tabachnick, 1981), anorexia nervosa (Gilbert & DeBlassie, 1984), and bulimia (Muss, 1986).

To date there have been a limited number of research projects devoted to the empirical study of adolescent loneliness. Most of the research on loneliness has, instead, focused specifically on the loneliness experiences of college students. Although this research focus has generated much data, one cannot assume that the results from studies with college student populations are generalizable to early or mid adolescence. The problem with such an assumption is that early and middle adolescents are at a different points in their social development than college students, who are either in late adolescence or young adulthood (Bell, 1981). College students function more independently and have more control over their social environments than adolescents,
who are attending middle or high school. Thus the factors that contribute to loneliness for the early and middle adolescent may not parallel those factors that predict loneliness for college students.

A number of factors contribute to loneliness in college students. For example, significant relationships have been found between loneliness and the following: self-esteem, causal attributions, self-consciousness, social skills, and social anxiety. Lonely people report lower self-esteem, higher public self-consciousness (Jones et al., 1981), and more fear of negative evaluation (Peplau et al., 1979) than non-lonely people. Those who are lonely have more internal and stable attributions (Cutrona, 1982), and are more likely to ascribe interpersonal failures to permanent defects in themselves such as ability and/or trait characteristics than non-lonely people (Anderson et al., 1983). In addition, lonely college students have more difficulty in self-disclosing (Solano et al., 1982) and exhibit more social skill problems than non-lonely individuals (Sloan & Solano, 1984; Chelune et al., 1980; Horowitz & French, 1979).

The personality characteristics of shyness in relation to loneliness has been studied, and, as might be expected, a positive relationship between shyness and loneliness has been found repeatedly in samples of college students (Anderson & Arnoult, 1985; Jones et al., 1985; Jones,
Freeman, & Goswick, 1981). Thus, shyness should be positively related to loneliness in early adolescents.

A number of studies of college students have also supported the relationship between self-esteem and loneliness, indicating the lower the self-esteem, the higher the loneliness (Vellet & Joshi, 1986; Moore & Schultz, 1983; Jones et al., 1981, 1985).

Loneliness has been associated with a variety of psychological difficulties including depression (Young, 1982), suicide ideation (Diamont & Windholz, 1981), psychosomatic symptoms – such as headaches, fatigue, and poor appetite (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1980), anxiety (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980), neuroticism and general maladjustment (Goswick & Jones, 1981; Houcks, 1980), aggression and rape (Check, Perlman, & Malanuth, 1985; Sermat, 1980), and problem behaviour among ‘adolescents’ – such as poor grades, running away from home, and illegal behaviour (Brennan & Auslander, 1979).

Social support* has been found to have a variety of positive influences both as a direct effect on healthy adjustment and growth and as a buffer against the disorienting effects of stressful life events (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Sarason et al., 1983). Specifically social support has been

* Social support has been defined as "the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us" (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983). Thus, social support is an interwoven net work of personal relationships that provides companionship, assistance, attachment, and emotional nourishment to the individual.
linked with decreased morbidity and mortality (Berkman, 1985), increased mental health and positive psychological functioning (Kessler & Mcheod, 1985; Leavy, 1983), and physically healthy status (Wortman & Conway, 1985; Broadhead et al., 1983; Mitchell, Billings, & Moos, 1982). Thus, the presence of supportive people in one's life enhances both physical and emotional well-being.

The most thorough theoretical elaboration to date regarding the conceptual distinctiveness of social support and loneliness has been presented by Rook (1984). While acknowledging considerable overlap between loneliness and social support, she emphasizes several important differences in the two concepts. She suggests that these distinctions hinge on different deficits in social exchanges, different implications of self-labelling, and different personal and public connotations. From an empirical standpoint, a significant and negative association was found between the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1980) and the social support questionnaire (Sarason, Sarason, Hacker, & Basham, 1985; Sarason et al., 1983). Similarly, scales from the Differential Loneliness Scale (Schmidt & Sermat, 1983) were found to be significantly and negatively associated with measures of social support (Schmidt & Kurdek, 1985). Despite these intriguing relationship noted in the context of larger studies, no systematic attempts have been made to explore these associations. Thus, little additional empirical work
has attempted to link these important constructs, leaving the two literatures largely independent empirically. *

Furthermore, sex differences in the level of loneliness perceived by adolescents are rarely reported. A few studies, however, have found sex differences in those variables related to adolescents loneliness. For example, Stokes & Levin (1986) found that social network variables such as the number of confidents and the density of the social networks (i.e., the extent to which network members have relationship with one another) were better predictors of loneliness for male than female late adolescents. In addition, Franzoni & Davis (1985) found a relationship between self-disclosure to peers and loneliness for female but not male adolescents. Adolescent girls have more intimate and more exclusive friendships than adolescent boys, and list intimate conversations with friends as an important characteristic of friendship (Berndt, 1982; Bigelow & La Gaipa, 1980). These findings suggest that although the overall level of loneliness may not differ for adolescent males and females, there may be sex differences in those variables that can predict adolescent loneliness.

Studies employing loneliness questionnaires indicate that girls do not report themselves to be lonelier than boys. In fact, when gender

* Most thorough theoretical elaboration to-date regarding the conceptual distinctiveness of social support and loneliness has been presented by Rook, 1984. While acknowledging considerable overlap the author emphasises several important differences in two concepts.
differences do emerge (which occurs in approximately half the studies), they are in the opposite direction. Males report themselves to be lonelier than females (e.g., Page, 1990; Davis & Franzoi, 1986; Schultz & Moore, 1986; Stokes & Levin, 1986; Booth, 1983; Avery, 1982; Solano, Batten, & Parish 1982; Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980).

These findings suggest that painful deficits in one's social attachments have severe implications for psychological functioning and adjustment that may require professional intervention. The incidence of adolescent loneliness is high enough that the development of appropriate intervention and treatment programmes seems warranted. Nevertheless, more empirical research on this topic is required before programmes can be adequately designed. It is essential because of the pervasiveness of loneliness in adolescence. Although a number of writers have thought and written about loneliness as a typical and painful experience during adolescence, surprisingly little is known about the personality characteristics of young people from non-clinical samples who experience loneliness. Thus the present study was designed to study more comprehensively about adolescent loneliness by including in its purview a wide range of variables, namely depression, locus of control, perceived stress, state and trait anger, social support and coping in a single study.