2. Review of the Related Literature
CHAPTER – II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Research is a continuous process. It saves from stagnation, brings about change and advancement in the existing pattern of the society in all spheres. Information about the findings of various research studies get accumulated over a period of time in the form of books, abstracts and other form of records. When a new investigation is started, the investigator gets new ideas and directions from this huge mass of research findings.

In the absence of related studies the investigator is in wilderness as any ship may be without a compass in the ocean. At the initial stage of the present study, the search for related literature was carried out and work in the field of academic achievement and personality of adolescents in relation to academic, emotional and social stress was studied. This chapter reviews the important literature related to the present study. Previous researches studies are abstracted herein and significant writings of authorities are reviewed. This provides a background for the development of the present study and brings the reader up-to-date. With a view to seek some guidelines from the work of previous researchers, which could be of some help to the present investigation, the results of some of the related studies are discussed to formulate the hypotheses and to give some insight into the variables.

Best (1983) considers survey of related literature as an important pre requisite to actual planning and the execution of any research project. This is a time consuming, but a fruitful phase of the research work. He supports his view by putting forward another statement. "A familiar study with the literature in any problem area helps the students to discover what is already known, what others have attempted to find.
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out, what methods of attack have been promising or disappointing and what problems remain to be solved*. To make the research effective, adequate familiarity with most of the works done up to the time in that field is very essential. The real purpose of the review of the related research is the fitness of a particular project into a broader scheme enabling one to see its importance and to relate it to many studies. The review of the related literature helps the investigator:

• to define the limits of his field. It helps the researcher to delimit and define his problem.
• to avoid unfruitful and useless problem areas.
• to avoid unintentional duplication of well established findings.
• to know about the tools and instruments which proved to be useful and promising in the previous research.
• to know about the recommendations of the previous researchers for further research.
• in speculating useful hypotheses and provides helpful suggestions for significant investigation.
• to formulate an appropriate research design.
• to locate the sources of data and to collect the pertinent data useful in the interpretation of results.

The review of the related literature involves locating, reacting and evaluating of research as well as the reports of the casual observations and the opinions that are related to the individual’s planned research project. So the review of related literature is a very significant aspect of the research process. It helps the researcher by giving him some information about the status quo of knowledge in the area he intends to study. The success of his efforts will depend in small measures on the advances both theoretical and empirical made by previous researchers. To review the literature, for conducting research is a must for every research worker, so as to build the background for the project in hand.
The literature reviewed is not confined to India only, as stress disorders are common all over the world. An insight into the work of the pioneers in the field of Academic Achievement and Personality reflect how these are related to academic, emotional and social stress. Keeping in mind the objectives of the present research, a review of some of the research studies related to the variables under study is presented under the following classification:

2.1 Stress and Academic Achievement
2.2 Stress and Personality

2.1 STRESS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Armacost (1989) in the study about perceptions of stressors by high school students concluded that academic performance and keeping up with school work cause the most stress among American adolescents.

Fenzel (1989) conducted a study on Role Strain in early adolescence: A model for investigating school transition stress. The notion that stress derives from a poor person-environment fit has been incorporated by Fenzel into the idea of role strain and applied to understanding stress in early adolescence resulting from the transition from one school level to another. This increases the academic stress which effects the academic achievement of the adolescents.

Elias (1989) in a research on school as a source of stress to children: An analysis of causal and ameliorative influences found that major strains of adolescence include over emphasizing of success in schools and lack of support.

Hackett et al. (1992) conducted a research on Gender, Ethnicity and Social Cognitive factors predicting the Academic Achievement of students in Engineering. This study examines relationships of measure of occupational and academic self efficiency, vocational interests, outcome expectations, academic ability and perceived stress, support and coping to academic achievement of engineering/ science majors
Self efficacy for academic milestones, in combination with other academic and support variables was strongest predictor of college academic achievement.

Wentzel, Weinberger, Ford and Feldman (1990), Goodenow (1993), Harter (1993), Spencer, Dupree, Swanson and Cunningham (1998) found that the self threatening stresses and strains and feelings of alienation at school have negative consequences for the adolescent's academic performance.

Crystal et al. (1994) conducted a study entitled Psychological Maladjustment and Academic Achievement: A cross-cultural study of Japanese, Chinese and American high school students concluded that a greater emphasis on academic achievement would heighten the stress of high school students. The study was conducted in three large metropolitan areas: Minneapolis, Taipei (Taiwan) and Sendai (Japan). The subjects were representative cross-sectional samples of students attending high schools in each city. American students not only report higher frequencies of stress than their Asian counterparts, but also high-achieving American students report more frequent stress than do low achievers. Furthermore, those American students who attribute their stress to activities related to school report higher frequencies of stress than their peers for whom school is not a source of stress. To discover the source of stress i.e. “in what situations or on what occasions” they felt stressed, the most frequent response in all three countries was to describe some type of experience at school. However, more students in the United States than in Japan and Taiwan reported school as a source of stress.

Frazier and Schauben (1994) investigated the stressful life events and psychological adjustment among adolescents and found that the five most frequently named stresses were the pressures, financial problem, failing a test, being rejected and relationship breakup. It was found that the undergraduate are a stressed population.
Wentzel (1994) in the study on family functioning and academic achievement in middle school students concluded that students experiencing high levels of distress at school should be “at risk for academic failure due to a general withdrawal from school work and classroom activities.

Petrie and Russell (1995) in the study entitled: Academic and psychological antecedents of academic performance for minority and non-minority college football players studied the effects of academic variables and psychosocial variables, such as emotional and social stress, on the academic performance of minority and non-minority college athletes. The academic variable was weakly related to the academic performances of minority and nonminority football players' performance. For minority athletes, the psychosocial variables of life i.e social stress and emotional stress were unrelated to academic performance. In terms of the psychosocial variables, these findings differ from previous studies that have found inverse life stress-academic performance relationships (De Meuse, 1985; Garrity & Ries, 1985; Lloyd et al., 1980). This inconsistency in results may be due to demographic differences; that is, the participants in previous investigations were predominantly non-minority and represented male and female non-athlete undergraduates. Thus, academic, emotional and social stress may not be as important for understanding and predicting the academic performance of minority athletes as other non-cognitive variables, such as a preference for long-term goals (Young & Sowa, 1992).

Windle and Windle (1996) in their study of 733 high school students on coping strategies, drinking motives, and stressful life events among middle adolescents found a significant effect of school related stress on three variables: adjustment, performance, and behaviour. Negative daily events, primarily occurring at school, predicted “greater depressed affect, a lower GPA (Grade point Average) and greater delinquent activity. Research consistently indicates that the degree to
which students find school to be a source of negative experience is related to their poor academic performance. Poor academic performance may be either the cause or the effect of stressful negative school experience.

Akour and Ali (1997) in a study entitled Students Stress: The relationship of college students stress variables to goal orientations, academic self-concept and achievement variables reported that stressors like instruction and evaluation; classroom environment; work; teachers; family and negative personal beliefs influenced the academic self concept, goal orientation and grade point average of students. The instruction, classroom environment, work and negative personal beliefs caused more stress than other stressors.

Nonis (1997) selected a sample of 164 business students to determine the relationships between perceived control of time and academic performance as well as stress. Results showed significant relationships among the study variables. They found that stress perceived by college students is negatively related to their academic performance. A volume of literature discusses, the emphasis on time management which originated from the untested popular belief that effective time management not only results in lower levels of stress but also higher levels of performance. In this study they analyzed three stresses: academic stress, family/monetary stress and environmental stress. Mean values of the three dimensions of perceived stress indicated college students academic stress to be highest (mean=4.45), followed by family/monetary stress (mean=3.28), and environmental stress (mean=2.70). Academic stress is increasing as they begin junior and senior level courses, whereas the environmental stress is decreasing. Correlation coefficients showed academic stress and family/monetary stress to correlate negatively with academic performance. However, the correlation between environmental stress and academic performance was statistically insignificant. These findings showed that stress was
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negatively related to academic performance. The relationships between academic stress and academic performance and the relationship between family/monetary stress and academic performance were both statistically significant demonstrating the negative influence of stress on college students academic performance.

Gera (1998) in a study entitled achievement of IX graders in relation to classroom environment and academic stress of students concluded that classroom environment and variable of academic stress i.e. frustration, anxiety, conflict and pressure significantly influenced the academic achievement scores of students.

Parents and teachers have long suspected that stress, depressions, and anxiety all hamper young people’s academic achievements. Alva and de los Reyes (1999) have produced research that demonstrates how Hispanic students suffer from these problems. In particular, Alva and de los Reyes have found that stress debilitates Hispanic students’ perceptions of their own competence, which in turn makes them perform less well in school. The research was done on 171 Hispanic high school students in Los Angeles. Research shows that the stress and anxieties Hispanic students commonly suffer has a negative impact on their performance in school. High levels of stress are also related to students having poor self-confidence. Alva and de los Reyes suggested that students who suffer from stress are less likely to view themselves as academically competent. Student’s perceptions of their own competence have a direct effect on their grades. In other words, students who were more self-confident tended to perform better in school. Stressful situations in the home can contribute to anxiety that in turn weaken students’ own self-confidence. This held true regardless of gender, age and parental occupation.

Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura and Zimbardo (2000) conducted a research on Pro-social foundations of children’s academic achievements. This longitudinal research demonstrates robust
contributions of early pro-social behavior to children’s developmental trajectories in academic and social domains. Both pro-social and aggressive behaviors in early childhood were tested as predictors of academic achievement and poor relations in adolescence 5 years later. Pro-socialness included cooperating, helping, sharing and consoling and the measure of antisocial aspects included proneness to verbal and physical aggression. Pro-socialness had a strong positive impact on later academic achievement and social preference.

Buddington (2000) in a study on acculturation, psychological adjustments (stress, depression, self esteem), and the academic achievement of 150 Jamaican Immigrant college students drawn from Howard University in Washington, D.C. revealed that students experiencing less stress tend to achieve high academic standards. Pearson’s product-moment correlation, chi square coefficient and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship among the study variables. The tenuous relationship among the study variables revealed that discrimination of color towards immigrant people impacted their psychological well being and their academic achievement.

Kaur (2000) in a study entitled academic achievement and self esteem of IX graders in a relation to different dimensions of academic stress concluded that academic achievement of secondary school students was different under high, average and low academic stress condition. The mean achievement score of low stress group was higher as compared to that of high stress group.

Guoliang and Shifang (2001) attempted to study the life event stress status of elementary school pupils through 4-6 grades, and examined the relationship of life event stress and academic achievement to behavioral adjustment. The results showed that the major negative stress in elementary school pupil’s life was academic achievement. The elementary school pupil’s life event stress increased by age and without gender differences. Regression analyses indicated that academic
achievement, gender, life event stress and age were significantly predictive of the pupils' behavioral adjustments.

Cynthia (2002) investigated the adaptation of Chinese migrant adolescents in Australia and Canada, in terms of their academic achievement, parent-child conflict, and stress, in the light of various societal, situational, and individual variables. The participants included 75 Chinese-Canadian and 92 Chinese-Australian high school students. The results suggested that academic achievement in the host society was influenced by social stress such as auspices of immigration, and situational and individual variables such as amount of social support available, age, and their definitions of success. These results further supported researchers like Lin & Ensel, 1984 who found that social support was positively associated with mental health among Chinese immigrants in North America. Similar trends were found in other immigrant groups in Australia.

Cotton, Dollard and De Jonge (2002) in their study with Australian college students found that students with highly demanding work, with low control over it, and with low social support exhibited an overall decline in the levels of general well-being, which in turn resulted in poor academic performance. On the other hand, students who felt satisfied with their academic life and had low levels of anxiety and depression performed better, not only because they achieved better results but also because they were more involved with the school and actively contributing to its effectiveness.

Barchard (2003) conducted a study on 'Does Emotional Stress assist in the Prediction of Academic Success?' Some authors have claimed that emotional intelligence and emotional stress predicts success at work, at school, and in relationship, as well as or better than I.Q. Little research exists to support or refute this claim at present. In this study, the ability of emotional stress to predict academic achievement was examined in a sample of under graduate psychology students, using
year-end grades as the criterion. The predictive validity of emotional stress was compared with the predictive validity of traditional cognitive abilities and the Big Five dimensions of Personality. In addition, the incremental predictive validity of each of these three domains was assessed. In this setting, only some measures of emotional stress predicted academic success, and none of these measures showed incremental predictive validity for academic success over and above cognitive and personality variables.

Mary and Gregory (2003) conducted a study on Using Emotional and Social Factors to predict student success. They did a survey on 218 undergraduate students from a private Mid-Western university. This study in particular was designed to identify the relationship between student emotional and social stress and academic success and social health factors related to student performance and retention. Thus it was proposed that non-academic factors i.e. social and emotional factors significantly influence academic achievement.

Seema (2003) studied achievement of standard VIII students in Hindi with respect to academic stress and home environment and reported that high levels of academic stress caused low achievement in academics. The male students were less prone to academic stress than the female students and male students achieved better than female students even in equal levels of academic stress.

The research by Chambel and Curral (2005) attempted to study the relationship between work characteristics, student well-being and performance. A sample of 825 Portuguese University students answered a questionnaire comprising measures of academic work demands and control, peer support, satisfaction with academic life, anxiety/depression and academic performance. Results suggested that students' work control had a positive impact on performance. Student satisfaction with academic life and anxiety/depression levels are strongly dependent on their perceptions of academic work characteristics. Levels of satisfaction
have a direct impact on student performance and mediate the relationship between academic work control and performance.

Kaplan, Liu and Kaplan (2005) conducted a study entitled School related stress in early adolescence and academic performance three years later: the conditional influence of self expectations. The hypothesis was tested that educational expectations of junior high school students in interaction with school related stress during early adolescence would adversely affect grades during high school. Multiple regression analyses of data from home interviews of 1034 students during junior high school and 3 years later during high school supported the hypothesis. In their study on the adolescent and pre-adolescent students, they found that early adolescent school related stress both independently and in interaction with high academic expectations negatively affected academic performance three years later. These results suggest that for students in high stress school environments, an increase in academic expectations may serve to increase their school related stress and impede their academic performance. The result from this study provide evidence of the negative effect of school related stress on academic performance both independent of the other predictor variables and in interaction with the academic expectations variable, such that for students in perceived high stress school environments, an increase in academic expectations may serve to increase their school related stress and impede their academic performance.

Singh (2005) in a study on academic stress of 10+2 students in relation to their academic achievement and family environment found that academic achievement and academic stress were positively correlated and students with higher academic stress showed low achievement in academics.

Malik and Bala (2006) conducted the study which aimed at finding if any relationship exists between psychological stress and academic achievement of high IQ adolescents. Sample of the study consisted of 120
adolescents having IQ above 110 in the age group of 15-17 years from four schools of Hissar City (Haryana). Bisht Battery of Stress Scales was used to assess the amount of stress on these adolescents. Academic achievement was assessed on the basis of average of marks obtained in last three examinations. Correlation coefficient between stress scores and academic scores were computed. Academic achievement was found to be negative and insignificantly correlated with all types of stress except existential stress.

Bernard (2006) conducted a research on the topic “It’s time we teach social - emotional competence as well as we teach academic competence”. This article discusses the non-academic, social-emotional factors that contribute to student academic achievement, including the cognitive behavioral characteristics of under achieving students. The researcher did a derivative research of social-emotional capabilities, called the Five Foundations (Academic Confidence, Work Persistence, Work Organization, Getting Along, Emotional Re-silence) that, when delayed, produce achievement problems and recommendations for developing students’ social emotional competence. The research reviewed demonstrates that the Five Foundations and associated habits of the Mind can be taught to young people, producing increased effort with school work and better achievement.

Calicchia and Graham (2006), in their study examined the relationship between stress, spirituality and social support in a sample of graduate students in a counselor education program. Fifty-Six graduate students ranging in age from 25 to 51 years participated in the study. Each participant completed the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) and the Life Stressors and Social Resources Inventory (LISRES-A). Results showed that, for most variables, stress was negatively correlated with social support and spiritual well-being. However, specific domains of stress, social support, and spirituality showed no relationship and some complimentary domains were positively correlated. The results are
discussed in terms of their applicability to student related stress, and how the global constructs of stress, social support, and spirituality need to be addressed by examining specific domains/subscales and how they participate in moderating the effects of stress-related illness.

Graduate students involved in a rigorous program of academic and clinical instruction frequently experience stress related to increased workload and demands (Toews, Lockyer & Brownwell, 1993). Students have less time to dedicate to stress reduction activities in social and personal venues due to academic and intellectual challenges. Prior studies have shown that the increased stress of academia can have a negative impact on student's academic performance (Sloboda, 1990) and can lead to anxiety, depression, and lower well being (Frazier & Schauben, 1994). Students in a graduate course of study are at a greater risk of developing physical and psychological health problems as a result of the increased stress. Students who use effective coping strategies and have social support available report lower stress levels and experience greater success in graduate school (Nelson, Dell'Oliver, Koch, & Buckler, 2001).

Denham (2006) in “Social-emotional competence as support for school readiness” revealed the importance of school and emotional domains of development, and their status within educational programming and assessment. During early childhood, they are crucial for concurrent and later well being and mental health, as well as learning and academic success. Teachers view children’s readiness to learn” and “teach ability” as marked by positive emotional expressiveness, enthusiasm and ability to regulate emotions and behaviors.

Aviles, Anderson and Davila (2006) in a study on child and adolescent social-emotional development within the context of school, revealed that children and adolescents exposed to violence may develop mental health problems, impacting their ability to develop appropriate social-emotional skills. Limited development of social-emotional skills
which leads to social and emotional stress has been associated with poor performance in school. A review of the literature was conducted to better understand social-emotional development in children and its role in a child’s ability to function in the school setting. Specifically, the context of school is explored to identify its role in providing services that address the needs of children and adolescents with social-emotional limitations.

Brown, Savannah and Carter (2007) investigated the influence of stress and test-anxiety on the academic performance of management science students as indicated by quiz scores. Using a pre- and post-test design, they measured the responses to stress and the test anxiety of participants. In their study they used structural equation modeling to examine the moderating effect of responses to stress and test anxiety on the performance of college students enrolled in several management science courses. Findings indicated that responses to stress and test-anxiety moderated the college student-performance relationship. Gender differences existed across the nomological network.

Merrell, Carrizales, Feuerborn, Gueldner and Tran (2007) conducted a study on Strong Kids- Grades 6-8: A Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum. They emphasized that competence is a critical part of every child’s school success, and just like any academic subject, children need instruction in it. Developed by a top expert, these proven curricula will help promote the social emotional competence and resilience of children and adolescents. Divided into four age levels from kindergarten through high school these innovative social and emotional learning curricula are filled with engaging, thought provoking class activities that help students develop vital skills they will use for the rest of their lives. They revealed that the students trained in understanding emotions, managing anger, relieving stress and solving inter-personal problems showed better academic outcomes.

Rafidah et al. (2009) conducted a study on Stress and Academic Performance: Empirical Evidence from University students. In their
study, they investigated the relationship between stress factors, perceived stress and academic performance among 154 Pre-Diploma Science students in a Malaysian public institution of higher learning. The results indicated that the students experienced stress but at a moderate level. There is no statistical significant difference between the level of stress at the beginning and middle of the semester. The correlation was not statistically significant between the level of perceived stress with academic performance of students. Their main objective was to find out whether there was a correlation between the students’ level of perceived stress and their academic performance. These findings were not surprising, given the fact that these students were normally school leavers and they are used to the school system where terms were used and only final exams were counted. The implication is that the stress level they experienced was not that high to the extent that they could not cope with their academic activities. The results were consistent with research on stress and various academic factors by Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Evans & Fitzgibbon, 1992; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992; Fisher, 1994; Pfeiffer, 2001; Ratana, 2003; Rafidah et al., 2007; Schafer, 1996; Struthers, Perry, & Menec, 2000.

Sosa, Barrientos, Castro and Gracia (2010) conducted a study to describe academic performance and the emotional paradigm of the university students. They found that low academic performance was related to stress, depression, distrust, lack of communication, lack of respect, lack of social support etc.

The academic or school performance is the level of knowledge and development of abilities and skills that an individuals has at a certain level of education. They studied the omen-process-product model that includes three phases: presaging variables (students’ characters and the learning environment), process of variables (self adjusted focuses on the student which means studying habits in order to learn and study and variables of products (learning results). Academic performance problems
with low grades are significant predictors of health problems, depression, stress, social difficulties paired with low quality of life. They found that social factors like race, ethnic group, gender, age, language, socio-economic status, family structure, level of education of parents, place of residence are causes of social stress. In the academic performance emotional surroundings are important part of educational environment which can influence the academic results positively and negatively. Social and emotional factors play important role in academic success of the students. Socio emotions perform important role in the collaborative learning and academic performance. It has considerable impact on the cognitions, behavior, and success of students in the academic area. These findings were consistent with the Gumora (2002) who found that students who are more responsible and have positive relationships operate better in academic contexts.

2.2 STRESS AND PERSONALITY

Farber (1983) studied that physical, psychological and behavioural stress responses sometimes appear together in patterns known as burnout and post traumatic stress disorder. Burnout is a gradually intensifying pattern of physical, psychological and behavioural dysfunction in response to a continuous stressor.

Viglione and Exner (1983) conducted a study on “the effects of state anxiety and limited social evaluative stress on the Rorschach.” To test the hypothesis, 60 non-patients were administered Rorschach, 30 under high social evaluative stress and 30 under minimal stress. The results do not support the hypothesis that social- evaluative stress is associated with personality dimensions. The critical implication of these results is that the personality is not affected by social- evaluative stress and its concomitant, ephemeral state anxiety. Such stress although empirically relevant in other contexts does not exert a demonstrable effect on the personality of normal subjects.
Aggression was especially seen among those who, as children, saw their own parents' reaction to stressors with violence towards each other or towards them (Seltzer and Kalmuss 1988).

Bharathi (1988) probed role conflict and personality type as stressors of educated working women and concluded the influence of stress on personality of educated working women of Bangalore city.

De Anda et al. (1997) in their study of stress, stressors, and coping strategies among middle school adolescents found that the experience of stressful life events could have negative consequences on the physical health, mental health, and emotional maladjustment.

Welsey and Courtney (1999) conducted an year long qualitative study: “I have had too much done to my heart”: The dilemma of addiction and recovery as seen through Seven Youngsters’ Lives. They examined seven formerly addicted youth committed to recovery and how the addicted youth become and remain sober. Bending to social stress, personality of three out of seven participants relapsed. However, personal commitment augmented by familial, community, spiritual and educational support encouraged four to remain sober.

Malik and Rehman (2000) conducted a study entitled: Relationship of Optimism/ Pessimism, Vulnerability to Stress and Academic Achievement of college students. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 college students of Rawalpindi city to find out the effect of an individual personality traits such as optimism/pessimism on ones vulnerability to physical and psychological stress. It was proved that optimism is inversely correlated with vulnerability to stress. The results revealed that there exists relationship between optimism/ pessimism and vulnerability to stress. Optimism is inversely correlated with vulnerability to stress. High achievers are more optimists as compared to low achievers. And also it was found that high achievers are less vulnerable to stress.
Ansari et al. (2001) did a research on Risk factor associated with overdose among Bahraini Youth which aimed to identify risk factors such as family pathology and psychosocial stress of overdose suicide attempts among Bahraini Youth. Stresses from living in a non-intact family, interpersonal relationships and school performance emerged as main risk factors causing the youth develop suicidal aspects in personality.

Barchard (2003) conducted a study on “Does Emotional Stress assist in the prediction of Academic Success?” Some authors have claimed that emotional intelligence and emotional stress predicts success at work, at school, and in relationship, as well as or better than I.Q. Little research exists to support or refute this claim at present. In this study, the ability of emotional stress to predict academic achievement was examined in a sample of under graduate psychology students, using year-end grades as the criterion. The predictive validity of emotional stress was compared with the predictive validity of traditional cognitive abilities and the Big Five dimensions of personality. In addition, the incremental predictive validity of each of these three domains was assessed. In this setting, only some measures of emotional stress predicted academic success, and none of these measures showed incremental predictive validity for academic success over and above cognitive and personality variables.

Archana (2004) in a study, effect of academic achievement on mental health and self esteem of secondary school students found that variable of academic stress and mental health were found to be correlated i.e. when academic stress increased among adolescents their mental health deteriorated and vice versa.

Kaur (2005) in a study on mental health and personality in relation to academic stress reported that extroverts perceived less stress than the introverts. The good mental health led to low level of academic stress.
The students with good mental health and extrovert personality perceived low academic stress than others.

Academic stress impairs regulatory behavior by consuming self-control strength (Oaten & Cheng, 2005). Oaten and Cheng (2006), in their study tested whether a study intervention program, a form of repeated practice of self-control, could improve regulatory strength and dampen the debilitating effects of exam stress. They assessed 2 cohorts at baseline and again at the commencement of exams. Without any intervention, they replicated their previous findings of deteriorations in regulatory behaviors at exam time. Students receiving the study program, however, showed significant improvement in self-regulatory capacity as shown by an enhanced performance on a visual tracking task following a thought-suppression task. They found that students who were dealing with academic examination stress reported breakdowns in regulatory behavior that were not matched during the control phase, replicating our previous findings (Oaten & Cheng 2005).

Calicchia and Graham (2006), in their study examined the relationship between stress, spirituality and social support in a sample of graduate students in a counselor education program. Fifty-Six graduate students ranging in age from 25 to 51 years participated in the study. Each participant completed the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) and the Life Stressors and Social Resources Inventory (LISRES-A). Results showed that, for most variables, stress was negatively correlated with social support and spiritual well-being. However, specific domains of stress, social support, and spirituality showed no relationship and some complimentary domains were positively correlated.

Over the time considerable research has supported the idea that a positive correlation exists between stress and psychological/physical illness (Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Rabkin & Struening, 1976), yet illness is only one of several possible reactions to stress (Mattila & Salokangas, 1981). Adaptation to change has been associated with health related
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concerns and is usually experienced as an inability to adequately meet demands or challenges. The majority of these demands can best be described as social stressors, which require life change (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Social stressors, although seldom life threatening, produce life threatening consequences via stress related illness. Other researchers reported significant relationships between life change and illness (Bramwel, Masuda, Wagner, & Holmes, 1975; Rahe & Lind, 1971). Using a longitudinal model, Billings and Moos (1986) attempted to assess the impact of negative life events while controlling for the propensity of experiencing stressful events and current symptoms. The results showed that an increase of stressful events during the follow-up period was positively related to an increase in stress related symptoms. Other early research has also demonstrated that life stress is related to an increase in psychological problems such as depression, tension, and anxiety (Monroe, Imhoff, Wise, & Harris, 1983).

Luria and Torjman (2009), in a longitudinal, quasi-field experiment tested whether perceived stress and increase in perceived stress are related to the resources of the individual, namely, personality (core self evaluation scale (CSES)), physical fitness, social support (acceptance and/or rejection by peers), and cognitive abilities. Perceived stress scale (PSS) was administered at two points in time to participants in a two-day selection process for a military unit, whose stressful environment formed the manipulation in this study. As expected, participants perceived more stress during the selection activity. Participants with higher CSES, higher cognitive abilities and higher levels of social support perceived lower stress levels prior to the activity. The increase in stress level was lower for participants with better fitness levels, but greater for participants rejected by their peers. Exploratory analysis of resource overlap was conducted and revealed a contribution of few key resources to coping, even in the presence of other resources.

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Emotional stability is comprised of positive self-evaluation, and a sense of confidence and security (Judge & Bono, 2001). It is the personality variable that has received the most attention with regard to stress and coping (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995), and is usually measured on a scale that ranges between high emotional stability on one end and neuroticism (N) on the other. Neuroticism is a predisposition to negativity (McCrae, 1990), and high N is related positively to specific types of negative events and daily stressors. For example, high N is associated with higher rates of undesirable family and friend stressors, undesirable leisure stressors, and undesirable financial stressors. High N individuals tend to experience interpersonal stress (Bolger & Schilling, 1991). Not only are they more vulnerable to stressors, but they also react more strongly to them, experiencing greater distress in response to major life stress (Parkes, 1990) and to daily stressors (Bolger & Schilling, 1991). Furthermore, high N individuals find it difficult to cope with stress, and their reactions are more hostile (McCrae & Costa, 1986; O'Brien & Delongis, 1996).

Kai-Wen (2009) investigated the sources of stress among college students in Taiwan. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect research data. A total of 230 questionnaires were distributed, and 201 valid responses were obtained. Research findings suggested that male students feel stronger stress from family factor than female ones; students in higher grades feel more stress from physical/mental, school, and emotional factors; students who take a student loan also feel more stress from physical/mental, school, and emotional factors than those who do not. Adolescence is a dangerous period of time where young people experience self organization and role confusion. For them, stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, life changes, and career exploration. Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioral problems.
The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor. Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual’s adaptability or stimulates an individual’s body or mentality. Stress can be caused by environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors. It can be negative or positive to an individual, depending on the strength and persistence of the stress, the individual’s personality, cognitive appraisal of the stress, and social support. According to Chang’s Dictionary of Psychology Terms, stress is “a state of physical or mental tension that causes emotional distress or even feeling of pains to an individual” (Lai et al., 1996).

The selected review of literature on the present study consists of both empirical studies and conceptual research papers. In short, it may be summarized that there is a complex relationship of academic achievement and stress and also personality and stress of adolescents.

In India, especially, very few attempts have been made to study the academic achievement and personality of adolescents in relation to academic, emotional and social stress. Apart from it, very few researches have attempted to explore the relative impact of emotional and social stress on academic achievement and personality of adolescents. To explore this, it will be in itself a worthwhile endeavour in the present context to lower the stresses related to academics and also emotional and social stress among adolescents.