CHAPTER – VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The term stress has accompanied homosapians right from the time they have evolved. Although in the earlier times also it was part and parcel of their lives, with the changing era stress has empowered their whole being and has started hampering their personality and capabilities. Stress is one of those peculiar terms which when used in a general context can be understood by everyone as a synonym for tension, anxiety, conflict, ego involvement, frustration, threat worry, withdrawal etc.

‘Stress’ means pressure, strain, force or emphasis (Oxford dictionary, 1974). In other words, it can be said that an individual is under stress when he reaches a breaking point, has weakness or reaches overload. Stress is one’s physical and mental responses to change, whether the change is positive or negative. It has also been defined as the extreme physiological and emotional arousal a person experiences when confronted with threatening situation (Papalia, Olds and Feldeman, 1998).

Stress is present at all stages of life but particularly more so at the adolescents’ age. Adolescence is the period of rapid growth and changes in all aspects of the child’s physical, mental, social and emotional life. It is very crucial period of one’s life, as the growth achieved, the experiences gained and the relationships developed at this stage determine the future of the individual. Life for many adolescents is a painful tug of war filled with the mixed messages and conflicting demands from the parents, teachers, friends and one’s own self.
Student life for an adolescent can be a rewarding experience, as well as a time of considerable anxiety and stress (Dyson & Renk, 2006). The combination of the many stressors of student life, such as planning for the future, struggling with exams and assignments, meeting the demands of challenging teachers, deciding on a major, and transitioning into financial and emotional independence, can be an overwhelming experience for many of them. Further, in addition to these stressors, adolescents may wonder whether they will be able to meet their own expectations as well as those of their parents and friends (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1981). Even as institutions of higher learning churn out more and more batches of students every year, the quality of education has seriously declined (Dhawan, 2007). Given all these factors, adolescents’ experience of anxiety and stress during their student years may be important to their overall functioning as well as to their academic performance. A multitude of variables such as frustration, conflict, pressure, and anxiety may be related to the academic related stress. These stressors have been appraised as taxing or as exceeding the resources that are available to an individual. In the present study attempt has been made to investigate the relationship among the academic-related stress experienced by adolescents and three selected variables that are likely to be relevant to their lives namely, Coping Strategies (employed usually by students during stressful times), Parental Attachment and Social Support.

Utilizing effective Coping Strategies can help alleviate the negative effects of stress. Coping can be described as the cognitive and behavioral efforts an individual uses to manage specific demands or stressors (Dressler, 1991). Coping strategies can also be viewed as what an individual actually thinks and does in a particular stressful situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). When selecting the Coping Strategies one has many options available to him/her. In a seminal work in the stress and coping literature, Lazarus and
Folkman (1984) distinguished between two types of coping strategies: problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping strategies tend to be employed when an individual has determined that a harmful, threatening, or challenging situation is amenable to change. Examples of problem-focused coping (Planful problem solving and Confrontive coping) might be moving out of a stressful roommate situation or creating a study plan for an upcoming exam. Such strategies have been associated with improvements in functioning (e.g., reduced levels of depression: McNamara, 2000). In contrast, Emotion-focused coping strategies focus on dealing with the negative emotions that are a product of the stressful situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Snyder, 1999). When the individual who is experiencing stress perceives the stressful situation to be outside of his or her control, emotion-focused coping strategies may be employed. In other words, these types of strategies are used when an individual has judged that nothing can be done to modify a harmful, threatening, or challenging environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These types of coping strategies may include Distancing, Escape avoidance, Accepting Responsibility, Self Controlling, Seeking Social Support and Positive Reappraisal, which may be used to maintain hope, deny the implications of the stressor, or act as if the stressor did not matter (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Specific examples of these types of strategies may include ignoring an obnoxious roommate, regulating emotions while studying for an exam, or talking to family members during a particular crisis. Such strategies have been associated with maladaptive functioning and strain (Terry, 1991).

Among these differing coping strategies of stress management, some individuals may have a strong preference to use one particular coping strategy. Different coping strategies are generally not mutually exclusive. Thus, most individuals tend to use different types of strategies so that the
selected strategies coincide with the situational context in which the individuals find themselves and with their view of the situational context (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Further, different types of coping strategies may be advantageous depending on the specific situations to which they are applied (Seltzer, Greenberg, & Krauss, 1995; Compas, Worsham, Ey, & Howell, 1996; Hart, Wearing, & Headey, 1995; Park & Adler, 2003).

Coping Strategies used by adolescents may prove to be an important variable in predicting their perceived levels of academic-related stress. In particular, the types of coping strategies adolescents tend to select and use may contribute to either an increase or a decrease in their academic-related stress.

Attachment is described as an enduring affectional bond of substantial intensity—the first and the most basic forms of love felt by the child towards another human. Bowlby (1982) has suggested that human beings at any age exhibit greater social and emotional adjustment when they have confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of a trusted other. Adolescent’s benefit from parental support that encourages autonomy development yet ensures continued monitoring and emotional connectedness. Parental support during stressful periods predicts positive adolescent adjustment. Given the potential importance of this relationship, the manner in which parental attachment is associated with academic-related stress deserves further study. A number of studies have suggested that there is a relationship between parental attachment during childhood and a number of behavioral outcomes and patterns related to students’ functioning, including stress and depression, self-esteem, self-perception, self-actualization, levels of perfectionism, and performance goals during school (Dominguez & Carton, 1997; Flett, Hewitt, & Singer, 1995; Gonzalez, Greenwood, & WenHsu, 2001; Klein, O’Bryant, & Hopkins, 1996; Oliver & Berger, 1992; Renk, Klein, & Rojas, 2005). Secure
attachment has been increasingly recognized as central to adaptive functioning over the life span. More recently attention has turned towards understanding the role of attachment with parents in healthy adjustment during adolescence. Parents play a significant role in supporting secure attachments (Laible et al., 2000).

Social support generally refers to helpful functions performed for an individual by significant others such as family members, friends, worker and relatives. Social support has also been defined as “those social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance (Hobfoll et al. 1990). During times of stress, students may seek social and emotional support from their family and friends. Social support, or receiving emotional, informational, and/or tangible support from other individuals has been linked positively with the maintenance of physical health during stressful situations (Brown and Harris, 1978). In addition, the perceived availability of social support, rather than the actual use of social support, sometimes may actually be more important in protecting individuals from the harmful effects of stressful situations (Holahan & Moos, 1987). In view of possibility of crucial role support from family can play can play in the lives of students during their school careers, particularly as they experience and make attempts to cope with academic-related stress, this variable has been included in the present study.

Child Development forms a significant constituent of the Home Science curriculum. Stress in the pre-schoolers and adolescence has always been the subject of interest to Home Scientist, especially those concerned with the Child Development. Most of the studies investigating Stress, Coping and Social Support have concentrated on the aged population. As far as the Academic Stress and its correlates among adolescents are concerned, more empirical concerted work needs to be done in this area.

The present study thus is entitled as below:
6.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A Study of Academic Stress Among Adolescents in Relation to Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support”.

6.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1) To examine the relationship of Coping Strategies with adolescents’ Academic Stress.

2) To study the relationship of Parental Attachment with adolescent’s Academic Stress.

3) To examine the relationship of Social Support with adolescent’s Academic Stress.

4) To identify the factor structure underlying the variables of Academic Stress, Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support.

5) To assess the relative and conjoint predictability of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support for the Academic Stress among adolescents.

6) To compare high and lower stressed adolescents on Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support.

6.4 DELIMITATIONS

1) The study is delimited to the adolescents studying in class XII, that too in the science stream.

2) Sample of adolescents was drawn only from Govt. and Public schools situated in urban areas of Chandigarh.

3) Only three independent variables i.e. two types of Coping Strategies, (problem focused and emotion focused), three types of Parental Attachment (Parental trust, communication and alienation) and two
levels of perceived Social Support (Satisfaction with support and number of support) were included in the study.

6.5 HYPOTHESES

Following hypotheses have been formulated:

1) There is a significant relationship between Coping Strategies and adolescent’s Academic Stress.

2) Significant relationship exists between Parental Attachment and adolescent’s Academic Stress.

3) Social Support and adolescent’s Academic Stress are significantly related to each other.

4) Measures of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support cluster together with Academic Stress in different combinations to yield significant results.

5) Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support are differential predictors of adolescent’s academic stress.

6) The conjoint contribution due to the independent variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support towards adolescent’s Academic Stress is higher as compared to that of three variables taken singularly.

7) (a) High and low stressed adolescents differ significantly on Coping Strategies.

(b) There are significant differences between the high and low stressed groups on Parental Attachment.

(c) Significant differences exist between the high and low stressed groups on Social Support.
6.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED

6.6.1 Academic Stress

For the purpose of this study the term Academic Stress has been taken as conceptualized by Bisht (1987) that is academic stress reflects subject’s perception as well as his way of coping with academic events: it reflects subjective feelings of distress or interpersonal perceptual responses; and it consists of the components of: (a) Frustration, (b) Conflict (c) Pressure and (d) Anxiety as measured by Bisht Battery of Stress Scales developed by Bisht (1987).

6.6.2 Coping Strategies

In the present study, the term “Coping Strategies” is operationally defined as viewed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), that is, individuals’ constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage (reduce, minimize, master or tolerate) the external or internal demands of person-environment transactions that are perceived as taxing or exceeding the persons’ resources. For the purpose of the present study both problem focused coping (Confrontive coping and Planful problem solving) and emotion focused coping strategies (distancing, self controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, positive reappraisal) as measured by the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WOC) developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1988) have been taken as measures of coping strategies.

6.6.3 Parental Attachment

The term Parental Attachment for the purpose of the present study has been operationally defined as the enduring affectional bond of substantial intensity—the first and the most basic kind of love felt by the child towards
parent or the caretaker. The Parental Attachment scores (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987) used as the measure of parental attachment, includes attachment under three dimensions that is(a) mutual trust,(b) quality of communication and (c)extent of anger and alienation.

6.6.4 Social Support

The term social support for the purpose of the present study has been viewed as the help people receive from family, friends and society in time of need. It is a mediating factor, a variable that acts as buffer against the adverse effects of life stress. The measure of perceived social support is the score obtained on Social Support Questionnaire developed by Sarason et al, 1983).

6.7 METHOD AND PROCEDURE

6.7.1 Design of the Study

The study was advanced with the help of descriptive survey method by involving the description of Academic Stress as well as its relationship with the variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support.

In order to have the analytical picture of relationship, bivariate correlations (product moment) were employed by including the sub-variables along with the main variables. That is, eight sets of scores were taken (along with the total score of Coping Strategy) on Coping Strategies, namely Confrontive Coping, Planful Problem Solving, Distancing, Self-Controlling, Seeking Social Support, Accepting Responsibility, Escape Avoidance and Positive Reappraisal. The variable of Parental Attachment had three sub-sets of scores, namely, on Parental Trust, Parental Communication and Parental Alienation, in addition to the total score on Parental Attachment. Similarly the Social Support variable included two sub-variables, namely, Number of
Support, Satisfaction with Support as also its total Social Support. In this way each of the seventeen sets of scores obtained on Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support was correlated with the variable of Academic Stress (totals) as well as with each of its four areas, namely, Academic Frustration, Academic Conflict, Academic Anxiety and Academic Pressure.

Further, the study was designed to identify the factor structure underlying these variables by involving multi-co relational approach. For this purpose 20 x 20 Intercorrelational matrix was obtained and subjected to Factor Analysis (P axis method and Kaiser; 1959) and rotation of factors.

In order to ascertain how best and with what combination of variables, the Academic Stress among adolescents could be predicted, application of multiple Rs was made. This was performed by taking Coping Strategies (along with its ten sub-variables), Parental Attachment (along with its four sub-variables) and Social Support (along with its three sub-variables) as independent variables. The predictive efficiency of these variables was examined for the criterion variable of Academic Stress. Various types of regression models were developed to locate the best predictor of Academic Stress.

In addition, an attempt has been made to examine the position of extreme groups that is high and low stressed adolescent groups on different parameters of three major independent variables, namely Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support. This was accomplished through significance of difference between means of extreme groups.

6.7.2 Sample

Selection of sample was resorted to at two stages, firstly at the level of schools and secondly for the selection of sections in a class. Following
Sapsford and Jupp (2006), stratified sampling was used for the selection of schools. Out of various types of schools, two types (strata) that is Government and Public schools were taken. Further, out of various schools in each stratum that is twenty Government schools and twenty two Public schools, seven Government and eight Public schools were selected through random sampling method. All these schools had science stream at the higher secondary level.

At the second stage of sampling, twelfth grade students studying in these selected schools and belonging to science stream. (both medical and non-medical) were drawn randomly by taking section as a unit of randomization. At least two sections were drawn from each of the fifteen schools. Thus, the total sample consisted of 700 (345 boy and 355 girls) adolescents (age 17+ to 18 years).

6.7.3 Tools

Following tools were used for the purpose of data collection

(1) Bisht Battery of Stress Scales by Bisht, A.R (BBSS-1987) was used to measure the Academic Stress.

(2) Ways of Coping Strategies by Folkman, S and Lazarus, R.S. (WOC-1984) was employed to measure Coping Strategies.

(3) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment by Armsden, G.C and Greenberg, M.T (IPPA-1987) was used to assess the perceived attachment of adolescents with their parents. Scores were only taken on the Parental Attachment.

(4) Social Support Questionnaire by Sarason, Levine, Bashman and Sarason (SSQ 1983) was used to measure Social Support as perceived by adolescents.
6.7.4 Statistical Analysis:

Analyses of the data were accomplished using **SPSS (version 11)**, with the help of the following statistical techniques.

1) Descriptive statistics (Mean, Mode and Median) and measures of variability (SD) were used to examine the nature of distributions of variables involved in the present study; the normality of distribution being the underlying assumption of further statistical techniques used in the present study.

2) Product-moment correlations were used to examine the inter-relationship between the variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support on the one hand and the variables of Academic Stress on the other.

3) Factor analysis and rotation of factors were employed to identify the factor structure underlying various variables of the study.

4) Use of multiple R and regression equations was made to assess the predictability of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support taken as independent variables for the dependant variables of Academic Stress as also to identify the most potential predictor of adolescents’ stress, taken singularly and conjointly.

5) t-ratios were worked out to examine the significance of differences between means of extreme groups, namely, high and low stress groups of adolescents on the variables of coping strategies, parental attachment and social support.
6.8 RESULTS

6.8.1 Co-relational Analysis

The results obtained through product moment correlations (vide table 4.2.1-4.2.3), were used to examine the nature and degree of relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support show that:

A. Coping Strategies and Academic Stress

(i) Problem focused coping strategy (totals) has a significant positive relationship with one area of Academic Stress namely, academic pressure ($r = 0.081$) as also a negative significant relationship with another area of Academic Stress, namely, academic anxiety ($r = -0.138$). It does not relate significantly with remaining areas of Academic Stress.

(ii) Out of the two sub-areas of Problem focused coping strategy, the first that is Confrontive coping, is significantly and positively related to one sub-variable of Academic Stress i.e. academic pressure ($r = 0.120$). Greater use of confrontive coping strategy by adolescent, more is their academic pressure. On the other hand, Planful problem solving another component of Problem Focused Strategy, is negatively and significantly correlated with Academic anxiety ($r = -0.175$) and total Academic stress ($r = -0.078$).Greater the use of Planful problem solving leads to decrease in Academic anxiety and Academic conflict.

(iii) There is a consistently significant positive relationship of each of the six types of Emotion Focused Strategies, namely, Distancing ($r = 0.419$). Self controlling($r = 0.390$), Seeking Social Support($r = 0.477$), Avoiding...
responsibility (r=.307), Escape avoidance (r=.442) and Positive reappraisal (r=.322) with total Academic Stress (r=.524) as well as with all its sub-variables namely, academic frustration (r=.344), academic conflict (r=.376), academic pressure (r=.444) and academic anxiety (r=.232). In other words greater is the use of Emotion focused coping strategy, more is the Academic Stress.

In the light of the above results the hypothesis no 1 “There is significant relationship between Coping Strategies and adolescents’ Academic Stress in respect of Emotion Focused strategies”, stands accepted.

B. Parental Attachment and Academic Stress

(i) Parental trust and Parental communication, both constituents of Parental Attachment, are significantly and negatively related with Academic Stress (r=-.084 and r=-.094) respectively which indicates that trusting parents and effective communication with parents helps in reducing academic conflict and distressing the adolescents. Parental trust (PTR) does not relate significantly with any of the sub variables of Academic Stress, whereas Parental communication (PCO) has significant negative relationship with academic conflict (r=-.113).

(ii) Parental Alienation, a third sub-variable of Parental Attachment has a positive and significant relationship with academic frustration (r=.158), but its relationship is negatively significant with academic pressure (r=-.110). That is with increase in alienation from parents, adolescents become more academically frustrated but feel less stressed as far as academic pressure is concerned.
(iii) Total Parental Attachment is significantly and negatively related to academic conflict ($r=-.093$) and total Academic Stress ($r=-.089$), thereby indicating that more is the attachment with parents less is the academic stress.

Considerations of these findings lead to acceptance of the hypothesis no 2. “Significant relationship occurs between Parental Attachment and adolescents’ Academic Stress” only partially.

C. Social Support and Academic Stress

(i) Number of social support has significant correlations with all the four measures of Academic stress i.e. academic frustration ($r=.213$), academic conflict ($r=.129$), academic pressure ($r=.110$) as well as Total Academic Stress ($r=.177$) among adolescents. Greater is the number of support perceived by adolescents; more is the experience of Academic Stress.

(ii) Satisfaction with Social Support has significant positive relation with only two measures of Academic Stress i.e. Academic conflict ($r=.147$) and Academic anxiety ($r=.082$). In other words higher the satisfaction with Social support higher the conflict and anxiety in adolescents.

(iii) Total Social Support relates positively with academic frustration ($r=.173$), conflict, anxiety ($r=.163$) and total Academic Stress ($r=.164$). This shows that with increase in perception of Social Support, the stress also increases. The perceived Social Support thus seems to have a reverse buffering effect.
On the basis of the results, as stated above of hypothesis no 3 “Social Support and adolescents’ Academic Stress are significantly related to each other” may be accepted partially.

6.8.2 Factor Analysis

Statistically, the purpose of factor analysis was to obtain the factorial structure underlying various variables included in the present study. The results (vide table 4.3.2-4.3.9) revealed that

(i) The constellation of variables in the original and rotated Factor matrices, when viewed holistically, indicates that Academic Stress, Coping Strategies, and Social Support belong to the same affective domain (appearing together in General Factor I-original) and yet these are distinguishable from one another in respect of rotated group factors. The variables that are significantly loaded together on original factor I are Academic Frustration (AF, .485); Academic Pressure, (AP, .610); Academic Conflict (AC, .549); Academic Anxiety, (AA, .455) and Total academic Stress (ASTOT, .763); Coping strategies of Confrontive coping (CCV, .320); Distancing (CDG, .702); Self-Controlling (CSC, .709); Seeking social support, (CSS, .687); Accepting Responsibility (CSAR, .600); Escape Avoidance (CEA,.679) and Positive Reappraisal, (CPR,.552); and the Number of support, (SSQN .546) And Total Social support (SSTOT .535).

a) The variable of Coping Strategies shared significant factor loadings with the criterion variable of Academic Stress in all the five original factors.

b) The measures of Parental Attachment shared significant loading with criterion measure of Academic Stress in original Factor II
(Factor of Social Bonding v/s Alienation) and V (Factor of Academic Stress v/s Alienation’) but in rotated factor matrix, only one sub-variable of Parental Attachment constellated with Academic frustration and Academic pressure by appearing on Factor V (Factor of Academic Stress v/s Parental Alienation’).

c) Measures of Social support shared significant loadings with criterion measure of Academic Stress on original Factor I (Factor of Emotionality), III (Factor of Social Support v/s Academic Stress) and IV (Factor of Coping Strategies v/s Social Support). In rotation of factors it differentiated itself from Academic Stress that is it did not share significant loadings with Academic Stress on any of the five factors baring Factor I (Factor of Emotionally Focused Coping Strategy) wherein only one of its sub-variable namely, number of Social Support showed appeared with just significant loadings along with a measure of Academic Stress.

In the light of the results presented in this section, the hypothesis no 4 “Measures of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support cluster together with perceived Academic Stress in different combinations” stands accepted.

6.8.3 Multiple Regression

Various models were set up to ascertain the predictive efficiency of independent variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support (singularly and conjointly) for the criterion variable of academic stress (vide table 5.1.1). This was done also to decipher the variable, which singularly or conjointly best predicted the Academic Stress.
Out of the total seventeen variables and sub-variables considered for the present study, only eight namely, Emotion Focused (R² = .524), Seeking social support (R² = .296), Planful problem solving (R² = .311), Escape avoidance (R² = .321), Distancing (R² = .330), Total Parental Attachment (R² = .339), Positive reappraisal (R² = .343) and Self-controlling (R² = .348) came out to be significant predictors of the criterion variable of Academic stress. Social support did not emerge as effective predictors of the criterion variable of Academic stress. In other words though Social Support is a correlate of Academic Stress, it is not an effective predictor of Academic Stress.

On the basis of the results the hypotheses no.5 i.e.:

“Coping strategies, Parental attachment and Social Support are differential predictors of adolescent’s Academic Stress.” stands accepted.

Emotion Focused Coping Strategy, when taken singularly accounted for 27.5% towards predicting Academic Stress. The addition of Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Total Parental Attachment, Positive Reappraisal and Self-controlling variables in different models accounted for 29.6%, 31.1%, 32.1%, 33%, 33.9%, and 34.3% variance respectively, thereby explaining in all 34.8% variance for the criterion variable of Academic Stress.

The total percentage of variance attributed by the conjoint effect of all eight variables, namely, Emotion Focused coping, Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Total Parental attachment, positive reappraisal and Self-controlling for prediction of Academic Stress is higher (34.3%) than their separate
contribution (the maximum being 27.5% by Emotion Focused Coping strategies) towards Academic Stress.

On the strength of the above results:

Hypothesis no. 6 i.e. “The conjoint contribution due to the independent variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support towards adolescent’s Academic Stress is higher as compared to their respective contribution when taken singularly.” stands accepted.

6.8.4 t- Test

Significance of differences between means (t-ratios) were worked out between the extreme groups that are high and low academic stressed groups on various measures of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support. Top 27 percent and bottom 27 percent cases (Kelley’s, 1939 criterion) on the basis of academic stress (totals) were identified as the high and low extreme groups respectively. The results show that:

A. Coping Strategies and Academic Stress

(i) There was significant difference between the means of high and low stressed adolescents (t=3.283) in the use of Confrontive coping and Planful problem solving coping strategies. Comparison of values of means of both groups show that Confrontive coping was used more by the high stressed groups (M=11.45), as compared to the low stressed groups (M=10.20). Mean differences between high and low groups on academic stress in the use of Planful problem solving were also significant at .01 level (t=2.658). Values of means of high (M=11.87) and low groups (M=12.56), when compared, are in favor of the low
stressed groups. Thus a mixed picture of differences between high and low groups on Academic stress emerges on sub-variables of Problem focused Coping, with high stress adolescents using more of Confrontive coping and low stressed adolescents using more of Planful problem solving vis-à-vis their counterpart groups.

(ii) No significant differences were found between mean scores of high and low groups on Problem Focused Coping, taken as a whole. Values of means however were in favor of high stress group.

(iii) Significant differences were found between high and low groups on Emotion Focused coping strategies (t=13.016), as also on all its sub measures i.e. Distancing (t=11.905), Self-Controlling (t=9.01), Seeking social support (t=11.782), Accepting Responsibility (t=6.974), Escape Avoidance (t=11.207) and Positive Reappraisal (t=9.302). Higher is the academic stress greater is the use of all sub types of coping of Emotion Focused coping strategies.

(iv) Adolescents in the high group on academic stress are characterized by significantly greater use of Emotion Focused Coping including Distancing (M=12.58 v/s 9.02), Self-Controlling (M=13.28 v/s 10.09), Seeking Social Support (M=13.70 v/s 9.61), Accepting Responsibility (M=9.29 v/s 7.29), Escape Avoidance (M=14.37 V/S 10.08), Positive Reappraisal (M=15.08 v/s 11.04) and Total Emotion Focused (M=78.29 v/s 58.06) when compared to low stressed group of Adolescents on Academic Stress.

B. Parental Attachment and Academic Stress

(i) Significant differences also emerged between high and low stress groups on Total Parental Attachment (t=2.952), as also on its sub-
variables i.e. Parental trust (t=2.847) and Parental communication (t=3.224).

(ii) Adolescents in high group on Academic Stress consistently achieve low score on Parental Attachment (M=105.36 v/s 110.07), Parental trust (M=35.46 v/s 37.22) and Parental communication (M=35.25 v/s 37.15) than their counterpart adolescents in low stressed groups on academic stress. In other words low stressed group of adolescents as compared to high stress groups, perceives greater attachment with parents, exhibits more trust in parents as also is more communicative to parents.

(iii) High and low groups on academic stress do not differ significantly on parental alienation, although parental alienation in respect of values of means is more in case of high stress groups (M=15.29) than the low stressed group (M=14.80).

C. Social Support and Academic Stress

(i) The perceived Number of Social Support differs significantly (t=4.801) between high (M=144.89 v/s 124.06) and low academically stressed adolescents; number being perceived more in high stressed adolescents.

(ii) There are no significant differences in perceived degree of Satisfaction with Social Support between adolescents with high and low Academic Stress.

(iii) Total Social Support differed significantly (t=3.876) between high and low stress groups (M=263.62 v/s 241.57), with Support being perceived more in high stressed adolescents.
Based on the above results the hypothesis no 7, “High and low stressed adolescents differ significantly on (a) Coping Strategies” stands accepted. (b) “High and low stressed adolescents differ significantly on Parental Attachment” stands accepted (barring alienation) and (c) “High and low stressed adolescents differ significantly on Social Support” stands partially accepted.

6.8.5 Main Findings

Following findings of the study can be concluded as:

Results indicate that greater is the use of Problem focused coping strategies (efforts undertaken to manage or alter the troubled person’s environmental stressors), higher is the academic pressure, but lower is the academic anxiety. A mixed picture of results of relationship between Problem Focused Coping Strategy and Academic Stress has been obtained. Higher is the Confrontive coping more is the Academic pressure, whereas greater is use of Planful problem solving lesser is the Academic anxiety and Academic Stress.

(i) Emotion Focused coping strategy significantly and positively relates to total academic stress as well as to all of its four components, namely academic frustration, conflict pressure and anxiety. In other words greater is the use of emotion focused strategies greater is the academic stress.

(ii) There is a significant and negative relationship between perceived Parental Attachment and Academic Stress. It implies that Parental Attachment decreases stress by providing strong foothold to resolve academic conflict and to effectively deal with academic stressors.
(iii) Total perceived social support has a reverse buffering effect on academic stress of adolescents.

(iv) The Factor structure underlying the variables of Academic Stress, Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support reveal a common structural togetherness in the form of General Factor of Emotionality. In other words four variables are structurally bonded together, but functionally independent of each other.

(v) The obtained factor structure involving the variables of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Social Support explains a total variance of 67.181% variance towards Academic Stress. The remaining variance may be contributed to factors, which lie beyond the scope of the study.

(vi) The total percentage of variance attributed by the conjoint effect of all eight variables namely Emotion Focused coping, Seeking social support, Planful problem solving, Escape avoidance, Distancing, Total Parental attachment, positive reappraisal and Self-controlling for prediction towards Academic Stress is higher than their respective separate contribution. Neither Social Support nor any of its sub-variables were significant contributors towards Academic Stress.

(vii) High and low stressed groups differ significantly in the use of Coping Strategies. High stressed groups employ more of Emotion Focused coping strategies than the low stressed groups.

(viii) High and low stressed adolescents differ significantly on Parental Attachment, the later group having more of the Parental Communication and Trust than the later group, implying thereby that higher Parental Attachment leads to lowering of stress in adolescents.
The overall perceived Social Support and Number of Social Support are significantly higher among adolescents in high group on academic stress than the low group of adolescents on academic stress.

Taking a holistic picture of the results, it can be stated (as seen in the summary table below) out of seventeen sets of variables and sub-variables (of Coping Strategy, Parental Attachment and Social Support), Emotion focused has the highest positive significant correlation with Academic Stress; it also constellated in the factor structure (Factor I, original and rotated); its predictability for Academic Stress is also significant; and the position of extreme groups (high and low stressed groups on Academic Stress) too is significantly different on this variable. This variable was followed by Escape avoidance coping strategy (a type of Emotion Focused strategy) in terms of its association with Academic Stress by the way of degree of correlation; it contributed significant loading by appearing together with Academic Stress in the Factor structure (Factor I, original and rotated); increased the predictability of the Academic Stress in terms of its variance and also, high and low stress groups were significantly distinguishable by this variable.

On the contrary Problem focused (totals) coping strategy, did not have significant correlation with Academic Stress; it was neither significant predictor of Academic Stress and nor were the high and low stress groups significantly distinguishable on this variable. Somewhat similar to this, Satisfaction with Social Support also did not have significant relationship with Academic Stress (totals); although it constellated with Academic Stress in the factor structure (I-original and IV-original and rotated), yet it neither
significantly predicted Academic Stress nor were high and low stress groups significantly different on this variable.

A holistic view of the results of all the variables at a glance

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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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^Significant at .05 level.

**=Significant at .01 level

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6.9 IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

The results of the present investigation have clearly highlighted the role of type of Coping Strategies, Parental Attachment and Perceived Social Support in Academic Stress of Adolescents. Considering that lack of effective Coping Strategies, inadequate Parental Attachment and Supportive relationships have an effect on the Academic Stress of Adolescents, the findings assume special significance.

The results of the present study have implications for adolescent development, which formulates a basic unit of curriculum of Home science. The subject of Home science is taught in schools with a view to generating knowledge, skills and attitude in various areas such as Child Development, Foods and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles Home Management and Extension Education. The study of Child Development is closely related to physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of a child from infancy through adolescence till old age. While framing the curriculum, the home scientist could aim at developing wholesome personality by way of focusing on the outcomes which includes the attainment of developmental related tasks, and appropriate coping behavior among adolescents to handle the life stress in general and academic stress in particular.

The findings of study can be of immense use in designing the curriculum, planning the program of action and evaluation procedures in such a way so to minimize the stress levels in students. To the planners, the higher secondary stage should not be taken as a mere interregnum between school and college, but also between adolescence and youth. It means handling someone delicate, tender and priceless. It is the task of the educationist to
offer diversity in terms of academic curriculum and courses so that the students and their parents are able to pursue their goals in life with adequate options at their disposal. Further, one of the major academic conflict an adolescent undergoes, is due to choice of subjects. Educationists have got to budget for change of plans and it is important not to put students in the higher secondary stage into strait-jackets. If by chance a student finds it unsuitable for his needs, there should be in-built shock absorbers to enable him pursue another path either at the same stage or the next stage, which follows the higher secondary period.

The major onus of attaining educational goals falls on the schools. Schools are viewed as vehicles for imparting knowledge in rightful way. The school going students of today is an army of boys and girls having undergone a dramatically speeded up physical metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood. They are fatigued, anxious and stressed, stemming from feeling of inadequacy and pressure of work (Hashim and Zhiliang 2003). Identified sources of academic-related stress include fear of falling behind with coursework, lack of motivation to study, time pressures, financial worries, and concern about academic ability, struggling to meet academic standards, time management worries, and concerns over grades (Olpin, 1997). These sources may exist easily throughout the span of students’ academic careers and may result in their experiencing a great deal of stress during their school career. In the school climate, the results of the present study have implication for the teacher who constitutes an important aspect of educational climate in the schools. The teachers are also the best poised to offer immediate guidance to growing students. They can inculcate strong sense of perceptions that problem can be resolved more through Problem focused rather than Emotion

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focused coping strategies. They can do these by modeling this for students through formal and informal ways.

The study holds the significance for parents, as they are the most important influence in children's lives. Studies of children exposed to various kinds of trauma have found that the strongest protective factor against the development of mental health problems is the presence of a positive attachment figure (Garbarino, 1999). The great demands on parents during stressful periods intensify the need for self-monitoring and self-care. For the parents, it is a period of great anxiety; parents suffer as their children struggle to cope with the great demand-supply hiatus in so far as seats in prestigious professional and general colleges go. Results suggest that perceived attachment to parents is a component of wider patterns of social competence and adjustment that may function as protective or compensatory factors during key transitions in young adulthood.

The finding in this study suggests that Social Support may have more limited ability to forestall negative consequences of stressor when the stressors are more severe. In other words reverse benefitting effects indicate that benefits dissolve when stressors are more severe (Rauktis & Koeske, 1994). This has important implications for stress management. The findings suggest that institutions, instead of encouraging the adolescents of falling on people for Social Support, when under stress, should include problem-solving training, especially for adolescents that emphasizes the cognitive component to deal with academic stress.

School counselors can also utilize results of the present study. Persistent Academic Stress if not handled properly may lead to neurotic
disorders like depression, anxiety, withdrawal, physiological and behavioral disorders. Sometimes adolescents also become the victim of negative motivation and behavior disorders like taking drugs, attempting suicides etc. in this mad race to compare, contrast and trying to score higher in life. We loose many of our building citizens into lost horizons of mangled personalities. For taking preventive measures as also for assisting the students so that they don’t fall prey to the behavior disorders, the counselor can utilize the appropriate strategies by cashing upon the parental bonding and involving the parents. They can help the students in developing insight and training in the conditioning use of appropriate coping strategies and deconditioning the inappropriate coping strategies. School counseling centers can focus on making use of problem-oriented coping methods for dealing with stress. Regular counseling session like group counseling and career counseling can be organized in the schools by the administrator for the stressed adolescents.

The present study provides an empirical perspective on the many factors that may be related to student’s functioning during his or her academic career. Identifying issues that may help or hinder students can be incredibly important in helping students make the most of their academic years. With the support of their social networks, school facilities, and their own passion and drive, students can achieve a positive academic experience that will serve as a launching pad for rewarding and successful careers. This information could be provided in workshops designed to help students cope with academic-related stress, which can be held from time to time for teachers as well as adolescents.

Results also have implications for agencies, which deal with the optimizing academic health and quality of life among adolescents. Among
other aspects, these agencies can carry out interventions, which promote open
communication between parents and adolescents and help in adapting school
activities with family life, as well as promoting aid search styles based on
social support resources.

6.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Following suggestions were given for further research in this area:

1. Future studies may examine more closely the relationship between
parenting styles and adolescents’ academic-related stress, particularly
with regard to the differential effects of the fathers’ and mothers’ styles
of parenting on academic stress.

2. The findings from this study are limited to students who were attending
schools in the urban areas. It would be important to examine the
relationship between the stress and selected variables in other academic
settings like professional institutions.

3. Longitudinal research could be conducted in establishing the causal
connection between perceived stressors and coping.

4. Experimental studies can also be undertaken by inducting the variables
that have appeared as effective predictors in this study as intervention
for stress management.