

Adjustment level of adolescent girls in college environment

✧ Nisha Saharan

• Dr. Kavita Kavdiya

The present study aims at studying the level of adjustment among adolescent girls in college environment. It deals with various changes they handle during college life. In addition to the physical changes students experience a great deal of emotional and developmental changes too. Individuals decide to go to college or university for many reasons. For some it is a certificate, diploma or degree as a stepping-stone for a job or career. For many, it is a chance to learn new things, interact with new persons and there by a challenge for themselves with new experiences and ideas. College is a huge transition for most of the students, especially for freshers (first year students), it is a time for adjustment.

Adjustment: In this rapid changing world, adjustment is a persistent feature of human personality. A man of adjusting nature can lead a cheerful and wholesome life. The biological concept of adaptation has been borrowed and changed somewhat by the psychologist and renamed "adjustment" to emphasize the individual's struggle to get along or survive in his/her social and physical environment.

Factors influencing the adolescent's adjustment are :

1. Environment/Surroundings: Changes in the environment or surrounding requires lot of adjustment. Learning to adjust to these changes improve one's ability and status within peer groups. Better adjustment of a person results in happy, cheerful & wholesome life. 2. Social pressures - The stronger the drive for social acceptance, the more the child will try to develop personality traits that confirm to socially approved patterns of behaviour. 3. Role changes - Leadership role in the home, school, or neighbourhood, helps to improve the child's adjustment level. 4. School Achievement - One measures social achievement in terms of social acceptance and the holdings of leadership roles among children. The school achievement can be assessed depending upon the value, the school places on curricular or extracurricular activities. Thus, a child's performances influence his adjustment level accordingly. 5. Parental favoritism - Parents who show favoritism toward their children encouraged them to develop feelings of self-importance. In a way, it helps in child's adjustment.

Types of adjustment

Home Adjustment : The adjustment to home is very

essential otherwise it may lead to deterioration in family relationship relationships and peer group relationship outside home. Not only parental relationships influences adjustment or maladjustment of children but relationship with grand parents and other relatives are also equally important. Gauge and Bukoueski (1996) using a sample of 138 early adolescents and their parents examined the family and friendship with children's perceptions of adjustment and well being. The findings revealed that experiences of the family and friendship domains interact in their associations with children's impressions of their adjustment.

Health Adjustment : Heightened emotionality even when the expressions are controlled tends to make one nervous or ill. It is often accompanied by specific mannerism such as nail biting or giggling, creates the impression that the person is silly or immature. Heightened emotionality is especially common among pre pubescent girls at the time of menstrual period of students. Baker and Siryk (1984) assessed the psychological adjustment of students in college. They recognized the importance of psychological adjustment, as well as the importance of academic and social integration into college systems.

Emotional Adjustment : Frequent, intense and apparently unjustified emotional outbursts lead others to judge the individual as "immature". Suppression of emotional expression results in moodiness, which tends to make the individual rude, unco operative and preoccupied with self. A satisfactory state of personal and emotional adjustment may said to be exist when an individual's physical and psychological needs can be satisfied by socially acceptable patterns of behaviour. Child's emotions exercise a potent influence upon his attitudes and behaviour. Unbridled emotional reactions may therefore, interfere seriously with young person's power to use the freedom of decisions making and behavior. Those adolescents who are pattern satisfied with their life styles, whose urges and desires are met with satisfactions tends to enjoy life to the fullest and become emotionally adjusted. Some students adjust well to the college environment whereas others struggle with the transition, some leaving school entirely (Ezezek, 1994; Holmbek & Wandrei, 1993).

Social Adjustment : Social adjustment is the most difficult developmental task of adolescent's life. This

✧ Research Scholar, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

• Asstt. Prof., University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

adjustment must be made to members of the opposite sex in a relationship that never existed before and to adults outside the family and school environments. Adolescence is a period of social expansion and development. Guo (1998) found that females scored higher than males on reading recognition and comprehension tests after controlling family background factors.

Educational Adjustment : School is more than a place where culture is transmitted and skills being taught. It is a world of varied human contacts that demands adjustment on the part of child. It is a world where friendships are made and those who do not easily make friends feel isolated. They are not self-bound. Particularly, minority and economically less favoured groups may feel lack of status and acceptance.

Level of academic achievement during adolescence and educational attainment later in life are strong predictors of variety of indicators of well being in adulthood. A well-adjusted adolescent meets his/her college environment with the initiative of full sharing with others and for the optimum development of himself/ herself. Student's perceptions of their teachers' interest in their education also seem to have implications for their expected and aspired educational attainment.

The shift between high school and college can be challenging and many changes occur in emotional, social and academic adjustment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994)

Adjustment difficulties, Loneliness and depression are much more common nowadays among college students than their peers who are not in college. Specifically, adjustment difficulties arise from unresolved family problems, the differences between the expectations and the realities of college, academic deficiencies, financial difficulties, and the lack of developing sufficient social support in the campus. When adjustment difficulties arise, many college students try to resolve such problems through unwise and sinful behaviors. A significant degree of our culture's dissatisfactions and disappointments with life, work and relationships are that we expect too much from them.

First year students might have some adjustment problems as :

1. They are far away from their family and their network of support.
2. They are inexperienced in making new acquaintances.
3. They have limited funds.
4. They may be unaware that they are exhibiting a spoiled or "high and mighty" attitude that inhibits the healthy development of new friendship.
5. They found independence but at the same time learning the cost of it.
6. They are discovering that college is not just an academic experience, but also a social adventure.
7. They are beginning to learn what really counts in all kinds of interpersonal relationships

and the concept of "win some and lose some".

First year students encounter obstacles which interfere with their involvement, integration and thus, prevent them from taking full advantage of the college experiences. First year students face a number of problems in adjusting to university life. These include developing an appropriate identity and becoming socially integrated into the college as well as attaining and learning generic skills and qualities such as critical thinking and intellectual rigour. (Astin, 1984 and Tinto, 1987,1993)

Adolescence is a period of social expansion and development. The adolescents spend a great deal of their life around the activities, interest and attitudes of their peers. As the result, the peers attain great importance during this period. According to Slas (1993) the belongingness to the group becomes progressively important for the adolescents. This replaces family ties to some extent and thus, prepares them for new conformities and identification implicit in the group life of adults. The role of adolescents in the group determines their present and future social adjustment. An adolescent whose ego is involved, finds non-acceptance by a given peer group and has difficulty in adjustment. Insecurity among adolescents leads to poor social and personal adjustment. Traditionally, adolescence has been thought as a period of "stress and storm" - a line of heightened emotional tension resulting from the physical and glandular changes that are taking place. Along with adjustment to these age specific changes, adolescents need to adjust in college environment which laid a foundation for their future placement. Keeping this as important phase of one's life the present study was planned with following objectives:

Objectives : 1. To assess the level of adjustment of first year and final year students(girls)with respect to five areas of adjustment i.e. Home, Health, Social ,Emotional, Educational. 2. To study the differences in the level of adjustment of first year and final year students with respect to five areas of adjustment separately.

Methodology : A total of 100 girls (50 first year students and 50 final year students) with in the age range of 13-19 years were taken randomly from four girls Colleges of Jaipur city for the present study. Adjustment inventory for College Students (AICS) developed by Deo and Mohan(1985) was used to assess adjustment level of adolescent girls in five areas of adjustment (Home, Health, Social, Emotional and Educational). Mean, standard deviation and 't' test was computed.

Findings : Findings revealed a significant difference (t value-3.08) in the emotional adjustment of first year and final year students, while no such significant difference was observed incase of home, heath, social

and educational level of adjustment. This may be due to the reason that first year students as making a transition & adjusting to college life, feel anxiety & at the same time also develop a sense of adventure. This is a period of turmoil and adjustment, it can potentially lead to emotional stress. Emotionality can be attributed to the fact that they come under social pressures & face new conditions for which they received little if any preparation during childhood. Since they have to make adjustment to new patterns of behaviour & social expectations, they experience emotional instability. These emotions are often intense, uncontrolled & seemingly irrational. If these emotional reactions are not controlled it may interfere with decision making and social behaviour. For them the college environment is strange which involves different types of procedure and new people. There is generally an improvement in emotional behavior as they reach to the final year. Braxton et al. (2000) stated social integration as the amount of congruency between the student and the social structure of the school. To become integrated into a college or university, the contact with a student's peers, their extracurricular activities, and their contact with faculty and staff, is very important. Many adults outside the college sphere do not realize how instrumental faculty and staff is. They play a

wide range of roles to a struggling student. Mathis et al (1999) examined whether hardiness can be used in identifying students who have difficulties with academic, social, emotional and attachment adjustment. Results showed that hardiness overall was a better predictor of mental rather than physical health. Uehara et al (1999) investigated the relationship between coping strategies and personality traits. The results indicated that personality traits such as neuroticism were associated with emotional oriented coping in major depressive disorder. Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) pointed out that students who are leaving high school, attending college full-time, and living on campus tend to experience the most dramatic adjustment. Younger commuter students who are still living at home and maintaining high school friendships will experience slightly less change, and adult students who are attending part-time and are balancing school, work, and family may require the least adjustment. Belch, Gebel, and Maas (2001) noticed that academic performance made a difference in the retention of students. Also, they found that the more adjusted student in the institution have higher grade point average and more success in college.

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