

## A STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GENDER

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**Abstract:** In the present study an attempt is made to see whether adolescent boys and girls studying in standard X differ in their level of adjustment and self esteem. In this study 100 adolescent boys and girls studying in Guwahati city were randomly selected. Here Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1968) (which measured adjustment of an individual in 4 areas—home, health, social and emotional) and Self-Esteem Inventory developed by Cooper and Smith (1987), which measured self esteem of an individual in 5 areas-general self, social self, home parents, lie scale and school academic. Independent samples V test was applied to see the differences between adolescent boys and girls students. Results revealed that male students found to have higher levels of self esteem compared to female students. Further, Gender had no differential influence over adjustment scores in home, health, emotional, and social areas.

**Introduction:** Adolescence is the Physiological learning period and the Physical adaptation which varies from person to the other (Alan, 2000). Adolescence will start with puberty and end with growth and general development termination. Both periods of adolescence and puberty start at the same periods; however, adolescence lasts 8 years and includes pubescence changes in the body along with mental, drive, tendency, interaction, emotional development, job satisfactory and moral and religious purification. The adolescence period lasts about 7 to 8 years and ranges from 12 to 20 years old (Weissman, 1975).

Adjustment refers to adoption of the organism to demands of the environment. Human being not only adapts to their environment but through the use of intelligence changes the environment to meet the needs more effectively. He learns to develop his self by exchanging the demands and influence of his environment. In the process of meeting the demands of life one may be encountered with problems of health. Duncan (1949). Many studies have been conducted on problems of adolescents and various factors influencing adolescents' behaviour. Conflict between parents, mother's low level of education, lack of support from parents, negligence by parents, adverse affect of television viewing giving rise to unfulfilled unrealistic demands, exposure to peers who smoke, drink or use drugs, their social status in modern society etc. were some of the important factors found to be responsible for development of problem behaviour in adolescents. Problem

behaviour in adolescent gives rise to symptoms such as frustration, obstinacy, aggressiveness, impulsiveness, violent behaviour, antisocial behaviour, etc. On the whole, satisfying the needs leads to every single individual adjustment.

Self-esteem is a positive and negative attitude toward oneself (Rosenberg, 1965) and the personal adjustment of worthiness (Coopersmith, 1967). Global self-esteem is an overall feeling of self-worth (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1965).

Self-esteem is assumed constantly as one of the aspects of personality in close interaction with the others. Since the family environment plays a significant role in malign personality, it can pave the way for self-evaluation. Possessing the feeling of self esteem is a vital asset which can engender talent and flourish initiative. (Douglas, 1968) low self-esteem is as an Index in diagnosing the children's abnormalities. Despite the fact that it is not clear whether low self-esteem is the chief cause of every abnormality, the study conducted by Shamlou (2005) revealed that it is obvious that low self-esteem children face unsurmounted and numerous challenges. In other words, cognitive process, affection impetus, initiative and decision making are affected by self-evaluation.

Presently gender-related influences on adolescence adjustment and academic achievement has become more important for researchers in the country or outside the country. Hence a better understanding of concerns in these areas will be necessary not

only for promoting optimal individual development, but also for meeting the nation's social and economic needs (Brown & Finkelhor, 1986). Contemporary theory and research reflects a shift from studying gender as static, relatively isolated indicator to examining their mutual implications for adolescence adjustment within more process-oriented, integrative frameworks (Chandy & Blum, 1996). Using this approach, Contextual and psychological experience of group members can be considered in relation to normative processes of adaptation within specific periods or stage of development. Several factors pointed to early adolescence as a period of particular importance for issue pertaining to gender (Cohen & etc., 1996).

Therefore, the adolescence with the same age group who are present at school can feel the tangibility of Pedagogical changes. Since school is a social environment, it is fundamental that every single individual keeps in touch with his/her peer groups. Besides, the adjustment conflict can be posited in terms of the manner of adjustment to the school atmosphere, principals, teachers and subject matters is incorrect behaviours and will be pessimist to the future (Douglas, 1968).

### Objectives

The purpose of the present study is to investigate

- (1) To study whether there is a significant differences between the adjustment of Standard (X) adolescent boys and girls.
- (2) To find whether there is a significant differences between the Self-Esteem of Standard (X) adolescent boys and girls.

### Method

**Sample:** The Standard (X) students in Guwahati city were considered as its total population of the study. The present study was conducted on the random sample of 100 Standard (X) students (N = 100), boys (N = 50) and girls (N = 50) of secondary schools of Guwahati city. The age of the subjects of class (X) range between 14 and 15 years of age.

### Tools:

1. Bell Adjustment Inventory for Adolescent Students (BAI) (1968). The inventory comprises of 140 items in relation to five areas of adjustment (Home 35, Health 35, Social 35, and Emotional 35 items). The test is helpful in screening the poorly adjusted

students who may need further psycho-diagnostic study and counseling for their adjustment problems. The reliability coefficients were determined by split half and test-retest methods, where the reliability coefficients varied from .81 to .89 for various areas of adjustment through split half and reliability coefficients varied from .89 to .92 through test-retest method for different areas of adjustment. Cross validation of the scale with K. Kumar's adjustment inventory resulted in Pearson's *r* of .72, .79, .82 and .81 for home, health, social and emotional areas respectively.

2. Self - Esteem Inventory for adolescent Students developed by Cooper Smith (1987). The Inventory comprises of 58 items in relation to five areas of Self-esteem. (General self 25, Social self 8, Home parents 8, Lie scale 8, School Academic 8). The alpha coefficient for the total self esteem scale was .88 and .79 for the Anglo-Indian and Vietnamese-Australian samples respectively. The validity of the scale was ascertained by Convergent and discriminate validity using EPQ (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire), where negative and significant correlations were obtained for neuroticism scale and positive and significant correlations were obtained for extroversion dimension.

**Procedure:** The Tools were administered on the sample of 100 selected adolescent subjects. The items in the answer sheet were scored according to the scoring keys for four different areas (Home, Health, Social, and Emotional). The data obtained was analyzed & interpreted by making use of various statistical techniques.

The obtained scores were recorded on master sheet and later fed to the computer using SPSS for Windows software (version 16.0). Depending on the scores the subjects were classified into two levels of self-esteem-low and high. Using Independent samples 't' test, influence of self esteem was verified on 4 areas of adjustment and total adjustment scores, taking self esteem as independent variable (varied at 2 levels-low and high) and adjustment scores as dependent variables.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS : Self esteem of both sexes:** In all the components of self-esteem significant

differences were observed between male and female students except in school academic self esteem. In the case of general self esteem ( $f=5.581$ ;  $P=.000$ ), social self ( $T=6.962$ ;  $P=.000$ ), Home, parents ( $t'=6.574$ ;  $P=.000$ ) and in total self esteem scores ( $f=8.10$ ;  $P=.000$ ), where male students had higher self esteem scores than female students. In the case of school academic self esteem male and female students (means 3.54 and 3.54 respectively) had similar self esteem scores and t test revealed a non-significant difference between them ( $t'=.841$ ;  $P=.912$ ). The male students seem to have higher self esteem (with respect to total self esteem, general, social self, home-parents) than female students may be because of our patriarchal culture wherein boys are always being made to feel they are superior compared to girls. Since girls are hardworking as seen on annual results and they are more studious, may lead to scoring more than boys.

**Adjustment of male and female students:**In all the areas of adjustment, gender did not have significant influence as all the obtained 't' values found to be non-significant. In other words male and female students did not differ significantly in their adjustment scores. In areas like home, health, social, emotional and in total adjustment scores, male and female students had statistically similar scores.

#### FINDINGS

1. Male students found to have higher levels of self-esteem compared to female students.
2. Male students had higher self-esteem than female students in the cases of general self esteem, social self and home self.
3. Only in academic self-esteem male and female students had similar scores.
4. Gender had no differential influence over adjustment scores in home, health, emotional, and social areas.

The relationship among gender identity, sex typing, and adjustment has attracted the attention of social and developmental psychologists for many years. However, they have explored this issue with different assumptions and different approaches. Generally the approaches differ regarding whether sex typing is considered adaptive versus maladaptive, measured as an individual or normative difference, and whether gender

#### References

identity is regarded as a unidimensional or multidimensional construct. In this context, Lurye, Zosuls, & RubJe (2008) consider both perspectives and suggest that the developmental timing and degree of sex typing, as well as the multidimensionality of gender identity, be considered when examining their relationship to adjustment.

Our self-concept reflects a variety of beliefs that begin to develop in early childhood. The experiences that we have, the basic ideas we formed about ourselves, and the messages we heard growing up, help to form our self-concept and influence our self-esteem. Gender Socialization creates expectations for the way women and men behave, think and feel about themselves. Girls entering adolescence struggle with many issues such as body image, which can lead to eating disorders, fears of rejection and mixed messages from society. These cultural messages have tremendous impact on the self-esteem of women. Boys and men also live by social pressures to behave in the prescribed roles that define manhood. Boys and men are also subject to inauthentic feelings of self if they do not fulfill the definition of being "male". In research and policy design, gender issues need to be addressed more explicitly, rather than as a sub-category of the poor. Modelling and planning tools, such as Social Accounting Matrices should incorporate gender disaggregated data where available. The use of rapid, qualitative, participatory and action oriented research techniques may be of more value than top down quantitative exercises in identifying the implications of adjustment for women. Resources might be usefully geared to community level monitoring and evaluation, for example of service provision, with the involvement of women who are the users of services. This should be tied to some form of accountability of service providers.

However, the period of adolescence is considered as stress and storm of human life where rapid transition takes place both psychologically and physically among adolescents. This may lower the self esteem of the adolescents which is more pronounced in adolescent girls. This in turn, affects the adjustment process of the adolescent boys and girls in different settings.

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