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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON ADJUSTMENT LEVEL OF ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood and is considered as a period of 'storm and stress' which is characterized by many changes and challenges. Due to the rapid growth and development of adolescents, most adolescents experience adjustment difficulties in emotional, social and/or educational aspects of their life. The present study was taken up to find out the Emotional, Social and Educational adjustments of adolescents and if there is any gender difference in adjustment level of adolescents. The sample comprised of 80 (15-16 years) adolescents drawn from the Jorhat district of Assam. The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Sinha & Singh (2007) was administered to assess the adjustment levels of the adolescents. The findings of the study revealed that more than half of the respondents' level of emotional adjustment was excellent. In the area of social and educational adjustments more number of respondents had good level of adjustment. It was found that more number of male respondents had excellent level of emotional adjustment than their counterparts, while more number of female respondents had excellent level of social and educational adjustments.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. It is very crucial and significant period of an individual's life. This period is also considered as a period of 'storm and stress', during which the individual experience rapid changes in their physical, mental, moral, emotional, social and sexual aspects. Due to these challenges during this period, most middle age adolescents experience adjustment difficulties in emotional, social and/or educational aspects of their life. Adjustment means the behaviour which permits people to meet the demands of the environment. Emotional adjustment is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressors. This is facilitated by cognitive processes of acceptance and adaptation. Social adjustment is an effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. It involves coping with new standards and values. Some problems like starting arguments, breaking rules or withdrawing from family, delinquency, etc are some major causes of social adjustment of the adolescents.

Baumrind *et al.* (1995) reported that responsive parental involvement, encouragement of psychological autonomy, and demands for age appropriate behaviour and monitoring contribute to good psychosocial, academic and behavioural adjustment. An educational adjustment is something that the school does specifically to help a child to learn. In some cases, the adolescents face some problems in school and show decreased interest, negative attitude, and drop in performance. Ochoa *et al* (2007) found that quality of communication with father and teacher's expectations is associated with adolescent's involvement in violent behaviour at school. As the adolescents experience many adjustment difficulties, there is a need to explore the levels of adjustment problems in different aspects of adolescents in today's context. Therefore the present study was taken up to find out the Emotional, Social and Educational adjustments of adolescents and if there is any gender difference in adjustment level of adolescents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Jorhat district of Assam in the year 2014. For collecting the data two English medium schools of Jorhat town were selected. All total 80 middle adolescent boys and girls (14-16 years) were selected as sample to carry out the study. The "Adjustment Inventory for School Students" developed by Sinha and Singh (2005) was administered to assess the adjustment levels of adolescents.

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The inventory was provided to each respondent for self-administration. The instructions were provided on the first page of the scale booklets which are self explanatory. The inventory measured adjustment of the school students. The inventory also assessed adjustment of an individual separately i.e. in terms of Emotional, Social and Educational aspects. The inventory had provided a five categorization ('excellent', 'good', 'average', 'unsatisfactory' and 'very unsatisfactory') for an estimation and quick interpretation of adjustment scores earned by an individual student. Before distributing the inventory to the respondents the purpose of the data collection was explained to them and were also requested to answer all questions honestly and sincerely. It was made clear that they can take their own time and their responses would be used only for study purpose and would be kept confidential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of respondents according to Emotional adjustment

Adjustment levels	No. Of respondents (N=80)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Excellent	46	57.5	1.95	1.95
Good	26	32.5		
Average	8	10		
Unsatisfactory	-	-		
Very unsatisfactory	-	-		
Total	80	100		

Data (Table 1) regarding the emotional adjustment of the adolescents revealed that majority (57.5%) of the respondents had excellent adjustment and some (32.5%) of them had good level of emotional adjustment. It may be due to the fact that during middle adolescence, the adolescents are able to recognize and manage their emotions and learn to resolve their conflict constructively with the help of parental support. Oliva, *et al.* (2002) found that peer attachment and parental support promote emotional adjustment of adolescents, mainly during the period of middle adolescence. It can be also supported by the study conducted by Bestur and Mahmoudi (2010), who had also found that home and parents had positive influence over emotional adjustment of the students of middle adolescence period.

Distribution of respondents according to Social adjustment

Adjustment levels	No. Of respondents (N=80)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Excellent	8	10	4.82	2.40
Good	42	52.5		
Average	18	22.5		
Unsatisfactory	12	15		
Very unsatisfactory	-	-		
Total	80	100		

Results (Table 2) regarding the social adjustment of the adolescents showed that very few (10%) numbers of respondents had excellent adjustment while more than half of the respondents (52.5%) had good and some of them (22.5%) had average level of social adjustment, again fifteen per cent of them had unsatisfactory level of social adjustment. During middle adolescence, involvement of adolescents with peer group increases and for them peer groups remain important and provide a much-needed sense of belonging within the culture (American Psychological Association, 2002).

Peer group involvement may be an area of conflict between parents and adolescents for which adolescents are confused and develop complexity while maintaining social relationship with peers and other adults. Similar finding was also reported by Louis and Emerson (2012) in which the middle adolescents showed a very unsatisfactory adjustment level in the domain of social development.

Distribution of respondents according to their Educational adjustment

Adjustment levels	No. Of respondents (N=80)		Mean	SD
	Frequency	Percentage		
Excellent	24	30	3.35	2.12
Good	42	52.5		
Average	10	12.5		
Unsatisfactory	4	5		
Very unsatisfactory	-	-		
Total	80	100		

Findings (Table 3) regarding educational adjustment revealed that most of the respondents (52.5%) had good level of adjustment and 30 per cent of them had excellent level of adjustment. Whereas few (12.5%) of them had average level and only 5 per cent of the respondents had unsatisfactory level of adjustment. It may be due the fact that the respondents are in the last year of their schooling and suppose to appear in the final examination (board examination) in near future which make them competent enough to adjust with the curriculum. The findings is in the same line with the study done by Basu (2012), who had also found that the students of middle adolescence scored better in the area of educational adjustment.

Distribution of respondents according to the Adjustment of Male and Female

Aspects of Adjustment	No of respondents (80)				T- value
	Male (40)		Female (40)		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Emotional	2.11	1.83	1.81	2.10	0.51
Social	4.30	2.34	5.25	2.4	0.08
Educational	2.72	2.31	3.86	1.7	0.01

Table 4 revealed the findings regarding the gender difference in different aspects of adjustment. It was found that that with respect to the emotional adjustment, the mean score of male (3.86) respondents was higher than their female (2.72) counterparts. It may be indicative of the fact that the males are considered as emotionally more stable than female. Rahamtullah *et al.* (2007) examined the adjustment problems of middle adolescence and found that boys are significantly better adjusted than girls in the dimension of emotional adjustment. Similarly another study reported that male students were better adjusted than female students in emotionality dimension (Kasinath, 1990) Findings (Table 4) also revealed that in social aspect of adjustment, mean score of female (5.25) respondents was higher than male (4.30) respondents. It may be indicative of the fact that during adolescence period, many adolescent boys mostly get involved in antisocial activities and fail to conform the societal norms, values and expectations. Study conducted by Anita (1994), Roy and Mitra (2012) also reported that adolescent girls are socially better adjusted than adolescent boys.

Further analysis revealed that with respect to the educational adjustment mean score of female (3.86) respondents was higher than their male (2.72) counterparts. Similar findings were also reported by different studies (Basu, 2012; Chauhan, 2013), where the educational adjustment of adolescent girls was significantly better than that of adolescent boys.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that more than half of the respondents' level of emotional adjustment was excellent. In the area of social and educational adjustments more number of respondents had good level of adjustment. It was found that more number of male respondents had excellent level of emotional adjustment than their counterparts, while more number of female respondents had excellent level of social and educational adjustments.

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