

# SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT PROFILE OF ADOLESCENTS OF LUDHIANA CITY

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**Abstract:** This paper is an endeavor to study the social adjustment profile of adolescents of Ludhiana city. The sample consisted of 100 boys and 100 girls from 4 Government schools comprising a total of 200 adolescents of the age group 16 to 18 years from intact two parent families. Deva's Social Adjustment Inventory was used to assess social adjustment of adolescents. Statistical analysis using mean, standard deviation and chi square reveals that there is no significant gender difference in social adjustment among adolescents. Social adjustment of adolescents was also found to be independent of gender, birth order and type of family.

**Keywords:** adjustment; adolescent; gender; social.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition when the individual changes- physically and psychologically-from a child to an adult. It is a period when rapid physiological and psychological changes demand for new social roles to take place. Adolescence is both biological and social in nature. According to Peterson (1988), adolescence is the phase of life beginning in biology and ending in society. It means during the adolescent phase individuals have many different psychological and social developmental tasks to fulfill like striving for a separation from parents and family; coping with bodily changes; developing their own norm- and value-system; intensifying their contacts with the peers and increase their financial and vocational skills. Thus, adolescence is a period of dramatic challenge one requiring adjustment to changes in the self, in the family and in the peer group. Social adjustment is the psychological process through which individuals cope with the challenges that adolescents face daily (Sarka, 1989). Bier (2008) stated that adjustment is a process of altering behaviour to reach a harmonious relationship with the environment. It is a process of change and search by

an individual for some level of balance or acceptance with the environment, others, or oneself. Adolescence for both girls and boys is marked largely by social changes. Such factors as when an adolescent leaves home, gets a job and can vote determine when his or her transition from childhood to adulthood is accomplished. The length of this period is thus primarily a social phenomenon.

With regard to social changes, adolescents must cope with a larger and ever-changing peer network at a phase when, developmentally, peer relationships become quite integral and assume greater value in shaping and understanding the self. Individuals develop diverse needs that can be satisfied by distinctive social interactions at the different phases of development (Erdley *et al.*, 2001). Various personal as well as contextual attributes serve as moderating and mediating variables in the development of social adjustment among adolescents. It can be noted that social adjustment among adolescents is affected by family environment, parent child relationship, friendship patterns and micro and macro system of the adolescent.

Empirical studies conducted in adolescent social development supports the attributes of such personal and contextual attributes. Dornbusch and colleagues found independent decision making to be related to a maladaptive pattern of psychosocial functioning and to problem behaviour in particular (Dornbusch *et al* 1985, Dornbusch *et al* 1990). Joint decision making was consistently associated with more adaptive functioning (Brown *et al* 1993). Independent decision making was found to be associated with maladjustment among African American adolescents living in predominantly white community. Low self-esteem is also linked to social anxiety and shyness, which can impair people's chance of making friends and getting along with others (Leary and Kowalski 1995) but people with inflated (high) self-esteem tend to irritate others and turn them off, and in the long

run these self-centred, conceited individuals show poor social skills and psychological maladjustment (Colvin et al 1995). Friedlander (2007) examined the joint effects of stress, social support, and self-esteem on adjustment to university. It was found that increased social support from friends, but not from family, predicted improved adjustment. Increased global, academic, and social self-esteem predicted decreased depression and increased academic and social adjustment. In another study, Demir and Urberg (2004) investigated the relation of friendship and emotional adjustment in adolescents. It was reported that positive friendship quality was the only friendship variable that predicted adjustment. An examination of gender effects indicated that this relation held only for boys. The quantitative aspects of friendship had a small, indirect effect on adjustment through their effects on positive quality. Decrease in perceived parental support during adolescence affects social skills (Olivia.A. 2009). Adolescent assertion of independence not only leads to a renegotiation of parentally imposed restrictions but is also likely to fundamentally affect the nature of the parent-adolescent relationship (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Marital problems have been related to numerous indexes of maladjustment in children. Steinberg *et al* (1991) reported that although the associations between parenting style and adolescent adjustment appear to transcend socioeconomic class and family structure. Jacobson and Crockett (2000) suggested that there is a strong association between parental monitoring and adolescent adjustment. As direct supervision decreases, and opportunity and motivation to participate in deviant behavior increases, the distal effects of parental monitoring may become a more important factor for adolescent adjustment. Maternal employment seems to be related to better adjustment for girls and poorer adjustment for boys (Orthner, 1990).

The present study is an attempt to investigate the social adjustment profile of adolescents of Ludhiana city. This study also seeks to analyze the relationship between socio personal characteristics and social adjustment of adolescents if there exists any.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sample

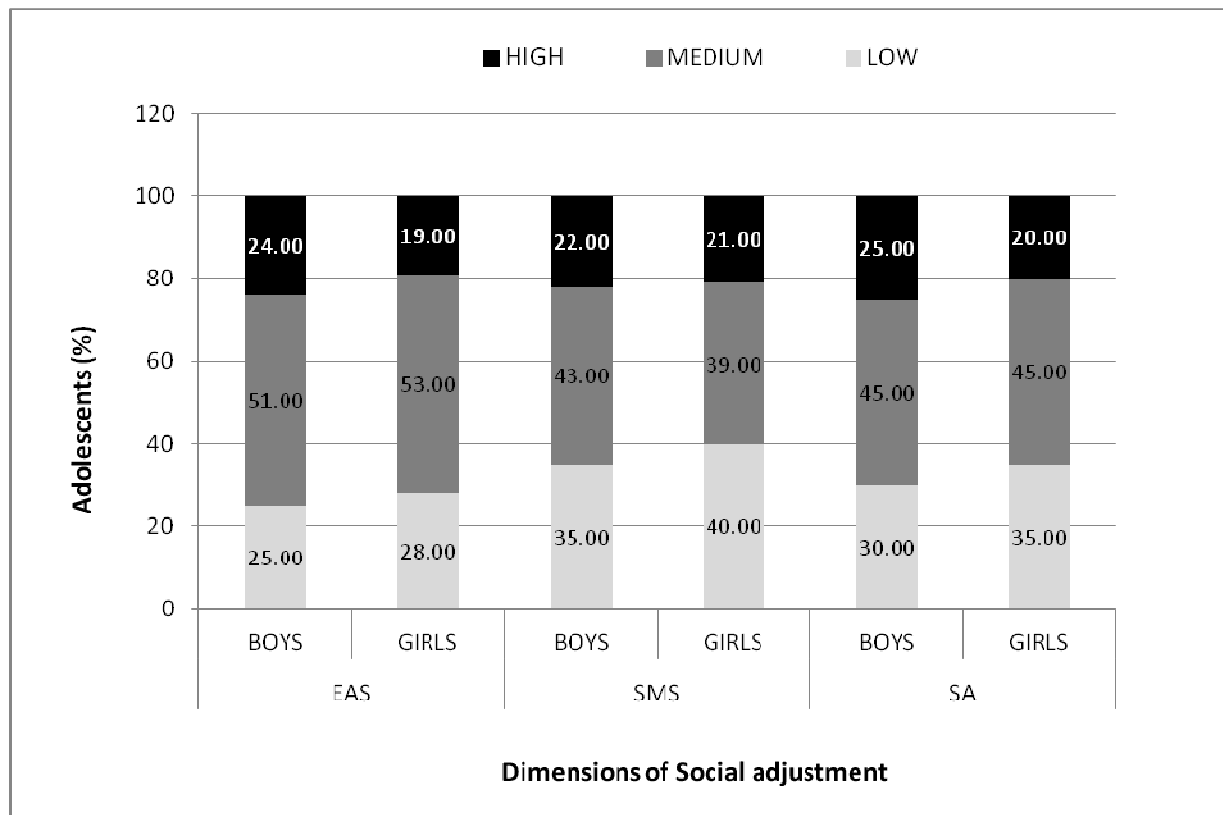
The present study was carried out exclusively in four Government Senior Secondary Schools in Ludhiana city in the year 2013. The sample size consisted of 200 adolescents aged between 16-18 years who belonged to intact two parent families. The sample was divided to have equal number of boys (n = 100) and girls (n = 100). The necessary criteria for the selection of sample were adolescents of age group of 16-18 years and belonging to intact two-parent families.

### Tools

Self-designed socio-demographic questionnaire was used to study the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Deva's Social Adjustment Inventory developed by R.C Deva (1990) was used to measure adolescent adjustment. Emotional adjustment is a pre-requisite for social adjustment therefore this inventory includes the two items of social adjustment i.e emotional adjustment and social maturity and the total score gives the score of social adjustment. It has 100 items. There are also 15 filter items designed to yield a Test Dishonesty score. If this score exceeds 20, the responses to other items cannot be relied upon and thus were rejected. The test-retest reliability of this scale is 0.91. Dimension wise reliability for the emotional adjustment and social maturity scales for this inventory are .81 and .79 respectively.

### Procedure and Data Analysis

The respondents were approached in their classroom in the school itself during their free period after taking due permission from the Principal and class teacher. Firstly, the purpose of the study was made clear to them. Then, they were requested to give honest responses and were assured that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purpose of research work. The scales were translated into regional language (Punjabi) for the present study. Each sampled student was given questionnaires individually and was asked to fill the questionnaires there and then only under strict supervision of the investigator. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires within the given time and then the investigator collected the questionnaires from the students immediately. Statistical analysis was done by using Arithmetic mean, Standard deviation, t-test and chi square test.



EAS indicates Emotional Adjustment Score, SMS indicates Social Maturity Score, SA indicates Social Adjustment

**Figure 1: Gender wise distribution of adolescents across dimensions of social adjustment**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1 depicts the gender wise distribution of adolescents across dimensions of social adjustment. A quick glimpse of the figure depicts that in all the dimensions of social adjustment, majority of the adolescents were confined in the medium category. Emotional adjustment score was reported low by 25.00 per cent of boys and 28.00 per cent of girls; moderate adjustment reported by 51.00 per cent and 53.00 per cent of boys and girls respectively. 24.00 per cent of boys and 19.00 per cent of girls were also reported to be highly emotionally adjusted. In the social maturity domain, it can be noted that, among

boys, 35.00 per cent, 43.00 per cent and only 22.00 per cent were in the category of low medium and high respectively. However, among girls it can be pointed out that 40.00 per cent of the girls had low social maturity score, 39.00 per cent were in the medium category whereas 21.00 per cent were highly socially matured. The total social adjustment score also presented a similar picture. A close perusal of the figure depicts that in both boys and girls, lowest proportion (25.00 percent of boys and 20.00 per cent of girls) were least socially adjusted. 45.00 per cent of both boys and girls were reported to be moderately socially adjusted. High social adjustment was prevalent among 30.00 per cent of boys and 35.00 per cent of girls.

**Table 1: Gender differences in social adjustment (mean scores  $\pm$  S.D) among adolescents**

Dimensions of Social adjustment	Boys	Girls	t-value
	Mean $\pm$ S.D	Mean $\pm$ S.D	
Emotional adjustment	40.66 $\pm$ 16.24	40.15 $\pm$ 16.10	0.22
Social maturity	46.78 $\pm$ 22.35	45.20 $\pm$ 24.65	0.47
Social adjustment	87.44 $\pm$ 35.99	85.35 $\pm$ 37.47	0.40

**Table 2: Chi-square value of independence between dimensions of social adjustment and socio-personal characteristics of adolescents**

Variables	Dimensions of social adjustment		
	Emotional adjustment	Social maturity	Social adjustment
Gender	0.79	0.55	0.94
Birth order	2.39	1.15	1.60
Type of family	1.66	2.21	5.74

Table 1 denotes the gender differences in adolescents among different levels of social adjustment. It clearly highlights that there is no significant gender difference in emotional adjustment, social maturity and overall social adjustment.

However, it can also be noted that even if there is no significant difference boys were found to score slightly higher in all the dimensions of social adjustment. Similar finding was reported by Dutta et al (1998) who reported no significant difference in area of social adjustment. The result bears resemblance to the study of Athanimath and Yenagi (2011) who reported non-significant gender

difference among adolescents on social maturity and in contrast to that of Dhyani and Singh (2013) who reported girls to be more adjusted than boys.

It is evident from Table 3 that gender, birth order and type of family have no significant influence on social adjustment of adolescents. In other words, social adjustment is independent of gender, birth order and type of family. A possible reason for this finding may be due to the fact that social adjustment of adolescents is affected more by parent adolescent relationship, relationship with peers, family environment etc. and thus there is a need for further in-depth research in this area.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that there is no significance gender difference in social adjustment of adolescents. Social adjustment among adolescents has been found to be independent of gender, birth order and type of family. Adjustment has been considered as an index to integration; a harmonious behavior of the individual by which other individuals of the society recognize the person as well adjusted. Coping during adolescence is essential in the modern society as life is becoming very complex and conflicting day by day. Furthermore, the influence of aspects of parent adolescent relationship, family environment, peer relationship and adolescent's relationship with his/her micro and macro environment on social adjustment should be given due consideration.

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