

Research Paper :

Influence of gender, age and birth order on adjustment during adolescence

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the influence of gender, age and birth order on adjustment during adolescence. The study was conducted in urban area of Aligarh, district of Uttar Pradesh. A sample of 400 adolescents (200 girls and 200 boys), aged 14-17 years were selected randomly for the study. The Multistage Stratified Random sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The Adjustment inventory was used to collect the data. The data were analysed by using mean, SD, correlation and t-test. The result of the study showed that age and birth order had affected the adjustment of adolescent boys and girls significantly and also indicated that adjustment of girls was higher among the girls as compared to boys.

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The word adolescence comes from a Greek word "adolescence" which means "to grow to maturity". This means accomplishing a number of developmental tasks. It is characterized by rapid physical, social and psychological changes, increasing personal autonomy, social experimentation, idealism, conflict, and personal uncertainty, and identity formation via involvements. According to Cole (1950), a long period of adolescence has gradually replaced the short period of puberty that was recognized as important from early times.

Adolescence starts from about twelve years of age and continues through eighteen years. It extends from sexual maturity until the age when independence from adult authority is legally assured. Because there are such marked individual difference in the ages at which sexual maturity occurs, it is difficult to do more than mark off the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence by using average ages. Society recognizes the individual as mature at the age of 21 years as the legal age of maturity and gives him at this age the right to vote and to be responsible for his own behaviour. Pujar and Gaonkar (2000) revealed that as the adolescents advanced in age, their self- concept also increased among both high and low achievers.

Adjustment at the adolescent stage has an importance of vast magnitude. Adolescence is a period which goes a long way in the formation of personality apparent and

real. Good adjustment is helpful for a healthy mental life with a balanced personality. It is in this stage that any abnormality or even morbidity persistent, residual or latent in the adolescents gets the opportunity to grow, persist, subside or disappear depending upon the nature of mental adjustment with the environment. Adjustment is considered as the modifications of weighting of a series of results to compensate for or meet special conditions.

The problem of adjustment has become so vital in our complex and civilized society that psychologists have turned their deep interest in understanding it. The problem of adjustment, being faced by our adolescents, needs serious consideration. The prevention is essential not only for the individual, but for the society at large. Agarwal (2003) found that the successful adolescents were significantly superior in their social, emotional and educational adjustment in comparison to unsuccessful adolescents. The present generation, particularly the students, are passing through a critical stage characterized by confusion, transition, indiscipline and tension. This has posed a serious problem before the behavioural scientists in general and psychologists in particular. India being a country of traditional families, the ordinal position of child catalyses the adjustment of the adolescents. Sailaja and Punia (2005) found that children from single families and first order children would stand their counterparts. Kalyani Devi (2001) stated that self -concept of first born