Factors Affecting Adolescent Adjustment and Scholastic Performance

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ABSTRACT
This work is based on the analysis of various studies in the field to identify available studies on adjustment, scholastic performance and other factors. The purpose of this review was to understand determinants of adjustment, assess the risk factors of adolescent phase like maladjustment. Through this search areas and need of school social work intervention is explored in suicide prevention and drop out. As methods, settings and intervention sought under each study differ hence synthesis was done normatively. Studies conducted in India and abroad by multidisciplinary practitioners have been included in this review. From this review the research gaps were identified and further study in the field is proposed by the researcher. Worldwide many researchers have studied the adjustment of adolescents and its relationship with academic achievement. However the risk factors that can be prevented and protective factors that can be promoted during the adolescent phase and school based intervention in form of family life education, school counseling is not research widely. There is a gap which can be filled to gain knowledge and understanding about exact status of adjustment and related factors which affect the scholastic performance and overall wellbeing of the adolescent students.

Key Words – Adolescent Adjustment, Scholastic Performance, Self Esteem, Family Environment, School Social Work

1 An overview
This paper is based on the literature review done for the doctoral research by Ms Neha Sathe under the guidance of Dr Usha Varghese under the Title ‘A Study of Adolescent Adjustment and Scholastic Performance of Secondary School Students and Need for Social Work Intervention

Through this paper an effort is made to gather facts which have come out of empirical studies made by eminent field practitioners in the field of educational research. The focus of this paper is to understand how adjustment affect the scholastic performance and what are the other related areas which can be controlled and modified through social work intervention for the optimal growth and development of adolescents.

As per Progress report for Children on adolescents by UNICEF adolescent population constitutes a one fifth of Indian Population. More than half of all adolescents live in Asia; India is home to around 243 million adolescents. They are not only the Nation’s wealth but they are the leaders, workers and future parents. The major focus of this paper is to examine studies done in this field to understand the relationship between various factors of adolescent adjustment its interdependence with scholastic performance.

Process and selection of studies
In order to do this literature review an effort was made to extensive search on Jstore, Indian Journals on Psychiatry, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology and google search for published studies done in India and abroad on child and adolescent population using keywords Adolescents, Adjustment, Family Environment, Scholastic Performance, Social Work Intervention.

While selecting the studies some of the criteria were considered
1. Studies carried out in India and abroad in schools or communities with the exception of a few studies which examined the adjustment of students in college.
2. Coverage of adolescent age groups 10-19 years (as per the WHO guidelines)

Literature review is carried out considering the objectives of the research
1. To study the nature of relationship between adjustment and scholastic performance
2. To study the how parental involvement contribute in adjustment and scholastic performance
3. To study the impact of locus of control on scholastic performance
4. To study the personality factors influencing the adjustment and scholastic performance
5. To study the how level of self esteem affects scholastic performance
6. To study the various factors inter related with scholastic performance
7. To study the different school social work intervention which can help in smooth transition of adolescent phase
2 Background

India is changing at a very fast pace and cities like Pune is becoming a big hub for job market. As it is changing very fast, it has affected not only the social life but many other areas for all the components of population including children and adolescents. The situation has changed the total social fabric of the family as an institution and hence it is important to support the most vulnerable section of the society. Adolescence is a turbulent period which takes a lot of toll on their social, emotional and physical life. In the school it is seen that girls and boys mature at a different age, the thinking and relating to challenging situations is different in them. Boys are relatively more aggressive and result oriented whereas girls are traditionally seen as a weaker sex and having more inclined towards having better social relationships. However now a day’s there is a very thin gap in societal expectations as regards to boys or girls hence it is equally troublesome for boys as well as girls to pass the difficult phase of adolescence. Hence as a researcher it will be interesting to see the level of adjustment amongst students, if it differs significantly. No one can survive this turbulent period without proper guidance and assistance. At this stage of life, the adolescent is overwhelmed with challenges and if they are unable to resolve it they may become social misfit. Many of the challenges certainly impact the academic achievement of the adolescents adversely and sometimes it is irrevocable impact on their academic aspirations. Due to the social change adolescents are getting disinterested in studies, school system no longer means much to most adolescents as they are so much engrossed with virtual social life (online) than the actual real social life. There is a risk of getting a generation which is technologically advanced but socially misfit.

Hence it is important that this significant part of population need to be re-integrated in scholastic activities. It is only possible through well thoughts out counseling programme geared towards improving academic achievement that will foster in the long run national development. There is therefore a need to explore the relationship between adjustment of the adolescent and scholastic performance of the same student in secondary schools and the corresponding factors which hinder or accelerate those.

Incidentally, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) which is responsible for developing curriculum, has stressed upon the guidance and counseling as part of academic curriculum. At the same time RMSA which is Rashtriy Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan a mission for making secondary school facilities and program run by Central Government has a not only prepared guideline but actually monitoring the process. As a researcher it is important to see the actual field realities with respect to guidance and counseling.

3 Theoretical & Conceptual clarity

As cited in the study of John Muray (2009) about Darwin’s (1860) theory of evolution the species which were successful in adapting to the change survived and also grew in multi-folds. Hence it can be argued that adaptation to the external environment is the significant element for our survival. This if fundamentally true for all the species existing and existed in past. As stated by Sushil Kumar, 2013 in his study of visually impaired and sited students, talks about the happiness and success can be only brought by adjusting to the needs where those who cannot cope with the changing needs may get vanished. So in other words it becomes utmost necessary for the human beings to be ready to make continued adjustment with the environmental aspects present in physical, psychological and social.

Erick Erickson (1902) has highlighted the socio-cultural determinants of personality in his theory of psychosocial development. It talks about the stage every adolescent goes through in which he or she gets the basic questions about their identities. Erickson describes this stage as identity verses role confusion. Children need to develop independence in order to develop a strong sense of self. Hence they are constantly exploring the world around them. According to Erickson children need to receive encouragement and guidance as that directly impacts their feeling about self and their capabilities. In the absence of such support they will not be confident about themselves or will not have the sense of security about their future roles and responsibilities.

4 Adolescence

The WHO definition of adolescence is a transitional phase of development between childhood and adulthood. As per WHO children between ages 10 years to 19 years are called adolescents.

There are three main stages of adolescence.

- Early adolescence (9-13 years) – children’s growth is like a spurt and they develop secondary sex characteristics
- Mid adolescence (14-15 years) – children develop individual identity and relationships with their peers and opposite sex (age of experiments)
• Late adolescence (16-19 years) – They development completes and they become more like an adult, they form their judgment and attitudes. (NCERT 1999)

5 Adjustment

The concept of adjustment means adoption to physical environment as well as social demands placed by the external environment. There is constant action and reaction going on between individual and his environment. There are social pressure and demands placed by socialization. The adjustment process becomes still more complicated during the adolescence as reaction to one situation gets into conflicts with the other situation. The resulting conflict causes disturbance in psychological process and social relationships.

Xinyin Chen and H. Rubin (1997) studied the academic achievement and social adjustment in Chinese children. Finding of this study revealed that children’s competency in forming social relationship especially with peers was influenced by achievement in academic areas majorly apart from other areas.

Sheena Sabharwal and Anamika Sharma (2012) studied the adjustment of students who had some or the other special needs from inclusive schools of Faridabad, Haryana, they found that there emotional and social and academic adjustment significantly affect learning in disabled children in Inclusive settings.

Basu Sarah (2012) carried out study on adjustment abilities of adolescent students in Bareli, Uttar Pradesh. These differences are found to be significant in all areas of adjustment were studied; another finding was children from joint families reporting better adjustment than their counterparts from nuclear families.

Taviyad Mansinghbhai (2013) studied adjustment of higher secondary school students in Himmatnagar, Gujrat. He found that not only there is significant difference on health, social emotional adjustment in genders but also in academics which has no reason to be different.

Joymalya Paramanik (2014) found that adjustment and gender is related but dwelling place if it is in urban or rural has no consequence. Study found that female students are better adjusted.

Gurmit Sing (2015) explored emotional intelligence and thereby its relationship with mental health and adjustment in secondary school students. It indicated positive results.

Khalid Mahmood (2015) found female proved to be better adjusted than male students. However the correlation between emotional adjustment and academic achievement was found to be negative.

Pooja Bhagat (2016) who has studied the Social-adjustment of students between Gender, Academic achievement and the relationship children have with their parents. Surprising in contract of the above studies, this study’s findings gave no significant interactive influence in two.

Subhash Sarkar and Sangita Banik (2017) studied the relationship of adjustment with academic achievement. The result confirmed significant difference among all the studied areas of adjustments in adolescent period. Study also revealed the positive relationship between adjustment & academic achievement in both genders.

6 Scholastic performance & other factors

There are number of factors affect the adjustment and scholastic performance of individual student such as cognitive / intellectual ability, study habits, family environment, and capacity to adjust with the environment. Similarly some other factors like self esteem and locus of control impacts individual in the way he or she looks at life. While studying the literature it was found that there are certain factors which are present in the external environment however certain factors are internal and those too influence the scholastic performance.

A. External Factors

External factors are in the factors which contribute in outer environment of the individual, the family relationship, school environment, socio economic factors.

   ➢ Family & school environment

As per study conducted by Pathak Rambha (2011), Socio-environmental factors associated with emotional state and behaviour issues in adolescents. A big number of children exhibits this trait in entire phase of adolescent Study revealed that cordial relationship with both parents and teachers plays significant role in adolescent adjustment. Also of and connection with mother positively impacted on self esteem and scholastic achievement of female students.

Lalit Bhushan, (2012) studied the relationship between family climate and its impact on the academic success of different caste categories of students in Hariyana. He found that General Category students stand better on School
Adjustment than their counterparts BC and SC as the family climate of General categories is better that rest of the two. However when the academic achievement was compared, achievement of General and BC category was almost the same.

Yelliah (2012) examined the relationship of adjustment and academic success of high school students in Hyderabad. He concluded student’s positive relationship parents, teachers and group bring positive results in academics. In addition to this one of the conclusion was whether student is male or female gender it has no relation with academic achievement.

Children need support and role-modeling during their development period and it is only possible through parents, teachers, and other significant adults. Gorgina Cattley (2004) has given evidences of how parents, teachers and peer support directly linked with the adjustment and overall wellbeing of the adolescent and middle school children.

Some time parents are so busy in their own professional life that they are unable to find time to engage themselves in the child’s life. Study conducted by Jasraj Kaur (2013) students who received higher parental encouragement shown higher academic performance than the students who lacked it.

Edoh G.I and Iyamu F. (2004) in their study found that academic performance was significantly related to independence and conflict domains of family environment. Boys and girls differed in perception of the home and environment.

Deepu K Abraham (2010) studied the self-esteem and social relationships of adolescents having learning disability. It showed that there is a noteworthy relationship between the respondents relationship with parents with respect to respondents self-esteem.

Shah Jyotsna’s (2012) study about relationship of academic achievement with social maturity, school adjustment in the residential school girls showed the significant difference between the social maturity with the school performance if average or high.

**B. Internal psychological factors –**

Scholastic performance depends upon various factors like study habits, study skills and competencies, consistency in following instructions at school, intelligence. Some of the factors like intelligence are organic factors and has been widely studied by research scholars. Apart intelligence there are other internal factors which affect the scholastic performance. There are other factors like the self esteem, the attitude towards school education etc really matter

- **Self Esteem**

Self esteem is how the person looks at himself; it is nothing but evaluation of self. Self evaluation impacts many things like thinking, emotions and goals. The association between self-esteem and scholastic performance is widely known in the literature. Different researchers have confirmed that having positive self esteem mean better at scholastic performance.

Katyal, Sudha (2001) studied the relationship between self esteem and parental discipline in government school at Faridabad. It was found by them that the way parents discipline their children differs as per the gender of the child. In this study it was evident that boys had higher self esteem as they were allowed to be how they are whereas girls were constantly supervised.

Margaret Zoller Booth (2011) studied the associations between academic achievement with self-esteem and gender and for young adolescents from two different countries having similar cultural contexts: the United States and England. The findings of this study revealed that there is strong relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement and also it is partially dependent on societal context, and it is to be moderated by gender.

Similar results were found by Parisa Rahmani (2011) in England who studied the relationship of self esteem along with achievement goal and academic achievement. She found that boys showed a statistically significant level of self-esteem and performance than their other counterpart girls.

Eva Chris et al (2012) studied the self esteem in nursing students. From a general perspective, a high self esteem causes better performance and interpersonal success in turn leading to improved happiness and a healthier lifestyle. Their study results revealed that students’ population displayed a low level of self-esteem. Institution and gender played an important role but not their age or religion.

Deshpande, Akansha (2014) studied the how parental styles and their attitudes contributes to adolescents’ self-esteem. She concluded that parental acceptance attitude surely affects the self esteem of adolescents. In Similar study by Keisha M. Love and Deneia M. Thomas (2014) the parenting styles and adjustment outcomes were found significantly correlated. Also students having low self-esteem faced academic difficulties and stressed on the need of intervention.
Personality

Personality refers to the long lasting characteristics of individuals that differentiate one person from another and that makes different people in different situations to think, emote, act, reflect in a consistent and predictable manner. Lot of studies endorsed the relationship between personality, adjustment, and academic achievement.

Anjana Parashar (2006) studied the Cognitive Style, Self-Esteem and Socio-Economic Status Determinants. She found that those students who had higher self-esteem were dominant; at the same time those students who were having low self-esteem significantly had high psychotism and emotional instability. Another noteworthy result of the same study was the relational effect of variables gender and self esteem; both significantly affect the different personality factors as social desirability, psychotism ego-ideal, emotional instability and self confidence.

Grace Fayombo, (2010) in her cross-sectional investigation and observed the relationships between the big five personality traits: and psychological resilience among Caribbean adolescents. It proved the association between two variables. However, neuroticism was negatively associated with psychological resilience.

Nirmala Devi (2011) in Sonepat Haryana studied the relationship between adjustment, motivation for achievement and personality. She pointed out that adjustment issues affect the social life and also the overall efficiency of students which is required for academic pursuits. She concluded her study stating the positive effect of Extraversion on all the types of adjustment and also the negative effect of Neuroticism exactly reverse to Extraversion.

Locus of control

Locus of control concept was developed by Julian B Rotter. According to him the tendency of people to assign success and failures either to internal factors (efforts, ability, motivation) or external factors (chance, luck, others’ actions) (Rotter, 1966) It refers to the extent to which a person believes that he/she has control over the reinforcements which he/she experiences.

Abdul Raffie Naik (2005) studied the locus of control in college going students. His study revealed no significant difference on locus of control among different genders, different streams and locality.

Shepherd Stephanie et al (2006) has also examined the association between internal or external locus of control and scholastic achievement. Internal locus of control contributed in superior academic achievement and it was proved with co-relation of variables. Another significant finding was correlations of control were found by grade, ethnic group, and sex.

Sukhwant Bajwa and Shalu Goyal (2011) studied the responsible environmental behaviour of students and also their locus of control and motivation for academic achievement. The study revealed that students having internal locus of control had displayed better responsible environmental behaviour, developed more civic & educational action.

Social Work Intervention

The development task during adolescence is to learn how to manage challenges on family, academic and social fronts. Not all students can pass this turbulent phase smoothly due to organic or social reasons. Some students get help from parents and teachers while some student may not receive such help due to non-availability of parents at home due to their work schedules or non-cooperation of teachers. In order to prevent the students getting dropped out, school counseling can help.

Risk factors and need for intervention

There are developmental hazards during adolescence and one of the most common is suicide ideation. The emotional issues depression and anxiety are also causes of academic under-performance. Number of studies till now has brought out the relationship between scholastic achievement and behavioural problems.

David M. Fergusson (2002) has studied the adolescent students aged 14-16 to examine the extent the students were at risk adverse psychological outcome in the later stage. Students having depression in their adolescence were at significantly higher risk of later major depression, anxiety disorders, nicotine dependence, suicidal attempt and educational under achievement. These things can be prevented by treating the students having depression.

Anees Ahmed (2003) studied the combined behavioural problems of students in Aligarh (educational difficulties, substance abuse and conduct disorders.) Based on study results behavioural problems are more prevalent as compared to emotional problems. Both emotional and behavioural problems show an opposite relationship with academic achievements of students.

Children are falling prey to social evils like addictions and crimes and there is increasing need of talking to children on such changes that the
society is going through. Teachers are overburdened with academic pressure and the value education is not being handled the way it should be. The combined effect of all this is acting on young children’s life. They are losing interest in academic activities and their performance is going down.

Angela S. Richardson, et al (2005) in her study found that those students who thought they are going to fail, had increased risk of following behaviours - thinking of suicide, making plans, giving threats to significant others, deliberately harming one self and lastly attempting suicides.

Saraswati (2007) found that unsatisfactory adjustment of juveniles was one of the major contributing factors for their reason to be in the institution. These children displayed various emotional and social and behavioural issues which put an obstruction in their adjustment in the institutional living as well.

Mandeep Sharma et al (2011) studied the association between parenting style and depression among adolescents, authoritarian parenting style had significant positive co-relation with depression.

Savita Malhotra (2014) in her epidemiological study in India found that there is no proper reporting system; many students having psychiatric disorders are not diagnosed during adolescence. This study revealed children and adolescent having prevalence of 6.4% in community samples and 23.33% in school samples

Thakur, et al (2015) studied suicide ideation among school going adolescents residing in Shimla district of North India. The study revealed that suicidal ideation is a common experience among adolescents. The supportive environment at home and in school decreases its vulnerability.

➢ Social work response and impact

In such situations school there is no other option but the counsellors can only one to rescue the students from such situations. Preeti Louis (2012) has found distress in adolescence transition can be predicted by counsellor and other helping professionals.

However, there are a very few number of schools have school counselling support which can help students to tackle the hindering factors. Now a day’s most of the schools appoint a counsellor but the counsellor and student ratio is such that they do not get opportunity to reach out to each and every student they are responsible for.

Some studies reported that counseling service is available to students but the stigma associated with the need of counseling hold back students from availing it. Jin Kuan Kok (2012) studied the perception about school counseling program in Schools in Malasia. In her study it was found that counseling program is not well received due to its stigma and clients were not voluntarily availed the counseling service. Sometimes counseling is availed for only academic reasons and not for family issues or personal matters even though it is needed.

Counseling service or school social work is carried out with three approaches viz preventive, remedial and developmental. The first and foremost approach should be preventive, as in India the increasing number of teenage suicides indicates the need for support to school children through school counseling program.

Laura A. Kuhn (2004) examined the perceptions of students, teachers and parents about the role of a school counselor and the functions associated with those roles. Counselors touched three areas – academic, social and career and performed roles as leader, advocate, collaborator, and consultant.

Irfan Mushtaq and Shabana Nawaz Khan (2012) studied the factors affecting students’ academic performance in Pakistan. The study revealed that students’ communication with people around, facilities for studying guidance by a trained professional has shown the positive impact on the student performance. At the same time there is higher level negative impact of family stress on students’ performance.

Kodad H.S (2014) has taken review of the emerging area of school counseling in India. In his study he has stressed upon the need for school counseling services in India. His research has also pointed out the remedial and developmental needs of students apart from helping them in realizing their potential through academic achievement.

Venkata Satya Ramesh P. (2014) studied how counselling can help to reduce stress, dealing with depression and anxiety in school girls at Ahmedabad, India. Results showed that counselling could help problems at home, reduced depression, and reduced stress related problems significantly. Also it helped in reducing substance abuse. However it was found that counselling could not help significantly in reducing anxiety among female adolescents.

School counselors not only help students but also can contribute in the making teachers aware about the needs and challenges of adolescent students considering concerns during adolescence.

Rinnel Gunnersinda Atherton (2009) studied the Adolescent Adjustment in Rural youth in middle
school. His study findings suggest that students’ sense of belonging and how they felt the status of their group were found to be the vital important factors of adolescent adjustment. Similarly, the associations adolescents have at school have been associated with Academic adjustment. Hence the intervention should focus on teachers training for engaging students in school and promote connect between all the stake holders of school system.

7 Research gaps

After studying the available research studies, it is evident that there are numerous studies on adolescent adjustments and academic achievement which gives an idea about the significance to study this topic. Although, there are number of related studies, the studies are done based on one or two factors. Most of the studies direct us towards the important issue about the challenge we have before us in form of establishing services and intervention strategies to help adolescent students, their families and their teachers to deal with the maladjustments.

The studies based on social work interventions are still limited. Further, research dealing with adolescent adjustment and its implications for education can be done to know gender differences. Maladjustment in Boys and girls has different manifestations, reparation and implication. There is a need to examine interplay between the home and school environment and its impact, however, to the best of our knowledge; there is very limited research on the contemporary issues related to socialization in urban setting and we didn’t find many studies, which explored the need and scope of social work intervention on adolescent adjustment which thereby improve the scholastic performance. The school mental health professionals are in scarcity and very few studies have done a comprehensive analysis of the school social work situation. It suggests that there is a major need for more research in this area. Proposed study on scholastic performance in relation to adolescent adjustment attempts to fill this gap and will bring out the need of social work intervention in this field.

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