

# Psychosocial Adjustment of Young Adults in the Context of Autonomy and Parental Attachment

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## **ABSTRACT**

Psychosocial adjustment is crucial point in an individual's life. It depends on many factors like autonomy, parental attachment, home environment, school environment etc. All these factors directly or indirectly effect the individuals' psychosocial adjustment in the society. If a person has a good psychosocial adjustment, he/she will become self-sufficient, self-efficient, emotionally balanced, and confident and which will enhance their academic performance and overall function and quality of life. So it is important to study psychosocial adjustment of young adults. Psychosocial adjustment during adulthood depends on whether an individual feels independent in taking his/her decisions & directing his/her own life or not. Moreover, whether parents support the independent strivings of an individual or not. In order to examine this crucial matter, the present study is an attempt to study psychosocial adjustment of young adults in the context of autonomy & parental attachment. This study adapts normative survey research design and 200 students from different schools of lovely professional university were selected by using incidental sampling. t-ratio and Pearson product moment correlation were used to analyze the data. The results showed that males and females significantly differ from each other in terms of their psychosocial adjustment. The results also revealed significant positive correlations between psychosocial adjustment and parental attachment, attitudinal autonomy, functional autonomy and emotional autonomy (in case of girls only).

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**(RAJANDEEP KAUR)**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that work entitled " **Psychosocial Adjustment of Young Adults in the Context of Autonomy and Parental Attachment** " has been carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Radhika Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara. No part of this dissertation has formed the basis for the award of any degree or fellowship previously.

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**CHAPTER- I**



**INTRODUCTION**

The most surprising quality of human mind is the ability to face and cope up with various setbacks such as physical illness, death of a loved one, changed life style that he/she has not yet experienced.. Despite of various problems, many people are able to achieve a quality of life or level of happiness which is equivalent or even more than their expected level of satisfaction. But every person is not able to achieve contentment in life and adjust well with adverse situations.

### **Psychosocial adjustment**

The term adjustment means that how the individual function effectively in the society. It refers to sound relationship between the person and the environment. Adjustment is defined as a process where one behaves in a manner to attain the state of equilibrium and harmony with oneself, others and environment. A well adjusted person play his roles well which are expected from him in a social context and satisfies his needs. If he fails to fulfill his needs and if his behavior deviates from the norms then he may get disturbed which leads to maladjustment. Severe deviation from norms also called as abnormal behavior. Adjustment can be viewed from two perspectives: adjustment as an achievement and adjustment as a process. As an achievement adjustment means that how efficiently a person performs his duties in different situations. Adjustment as a process focuses on developmental changes in a individual psychologically and socially from the birth. From the birth only, the child depends on his parents for fulfilling of his needs. Slowly with the growth and development child learns to interact and adjust with the external environment.

The psychosocial adjustment being a unique event of an individual in social interrelations covers up different features in itself, several of which are related with the values of the society while others are linked with the behavioral norms of the personality. Psychosocial adjustment means psychological development while interacting with his/her social environment. Good and satisfactory

social relationships are most important factor in social well being and psychosocial adjustment which in turn helps in positive development and shapes up the future of an individual. Lack of skills in developing social relations leads to psychosocial disorder related to social cohesion.

Psychosocial adjustment is of two types: Normal and Abnormal adjustment. Normal adjustment means when the interaction between individual and his social environment is according to the set norms. Abnormal adjustment or maladjustment means when the interaction between individual and his environment is not according to the set standards.

Psychosocial adjustment helps to maintain balance between the oneself and environment and leads to acceptance. Psychosocial adjustment arises from satisfaction of psychological needs through social networks. When the environment conditions changes it activates the interpersonal activities which helps in achievement of needs and it also increase the expectation for meeting of needs in future.

Thus, adjustment process holds the two types of relationship like inner-inner and an inner-outer relationship. This relationship could be pleasant or incompatible. The major determinants of psychosocial adjustment are one's behavior, value-belief systems, affective reactions, etc. Disharmony between these determinants causes maladjustment.

Adjustment is a continuous process. Every individual has a need or motive which cause goal directed behavior. If any barrier comes in the way of fulfilling these needs, then the individual explore many ways to overcome these obstacles. During this time one feels uneasiness in accomplishing the needs. Individual eliminates the exploratory behavior which doesn't help in achieving needs and successful achievement of needs helps the person to develop excellence in goal directed behavior. Thus this makes the person to adjust well psychologically and socially.

When any problem arise in achieving any of the need, people do not take professional help rather they prefer their social contacts and individual resources. An individual's ability to manage their own behavior and their relationship with others help them to adjust well in the society. The first and the most significant relationship of a child are built with his/her parents, so attachment with the parents plays an significant role for the better adjustment in the society. As a child gets mature he start taking his own decisions and become autonomous. Autonomy attained by individual also help the individual to achieve their needs and behave according to the norms of the society which in turn helps in better adjustment.

Many studies focus on the significance of both autonomy and parental attachment for the psychosocial adjustment.(Connell and Wellborn, 1990; Ryan,1991, 1993, 1995; Baltes and Silverberg ,1994; Collins and Repinski,1994; Noller,1994; Koestner and Losier,1996; Silverberg and Gondoli,1996). Autonomy means ability to take decisions and control one's own actions without being enforced to do so by somebody else. Attachment is commonly explained as the quality of the rapport with significant others. A balance between independent self-confident action and positive relationship with significant others appears to be optimal for psychosocial adjustment (Sessa and Steinberg, 1991). Psychosocial adjustment has been divided into two components: psychological adjustment, socio-cultural adjustment. Psychological adjustment is linked with mental health aspects such as depressive warning signs, mood instability, overall well-being and contentment with life. Socio-cultural adjustment means social proficiency and ability to act together effectively in the society. Psychological adjustment in terms of psychological and emotional well-being is altered by changes in life, coping abilities, personality characteristics and social support. Good psychological adjustment is linked with optimistic lifestyles, capability to deal with the demands adequately and relationship satisfaction. As a result, low prevalence of life changes and satisfactory social support

assist psychologically adaptive outcomes (Searle & Ward, 1990). On the contrary, psychological difficulties are allied with high strength of migration-related stressors, occurrence of life changes, hopelessness and negative coping mechanism. On the other hand, socio-cultural adjustment, explain in terms of social and behavioral capability is exaggerated by culture-specific factors, such as span of habitation in the host culture, relations with host nationals, cultural distance and talking fluency. Flourishing socio-cultural effects are determined by satisfactory relations with own society, better cultural resemblance and advanced language awareness of the receiving community.

Arnett (2004) stated that emerging adulthood, described as the years between the late adolescence and the late 20s, characterized by a energetic and tentative life phase, different from the attributes of either late teenage years or young adulthood. Emerging adults are more involved in search of identity regarding work, education, sex, and close relationships before becoming financial self-sufficient. Budding adults show signs of significantly greater demographic, educational, and lifestyle mixture relative to late adolescents. Most of the young adults left their home for gaining higher education, start going to college, establishing new close relationships and become more independent of their parents. But they have not yet entered the secure, stable commitments typical of adult life, such as a long-term job, wedding, and parenthood. During this period, when they are neither playing the parental role nor of adulthood commitments fully, they have an excellent chance to seek out special ways of living and different opportunity for love and work (Arnett, 2004).

Adolescence is a period of developing self-identity, taking their own decisions independent of their parents but it continues into early adulthood age. The influence of parents and the search for identity dominates and hinder the progression of individual to next level. Some developmental tasks must be achieved to pass from adolescent to adulthood and to achieve healthy psychosocial adjustment. One component of the shift from teenage years to adulthood is the growth of autonomy

(Havighurst, 1948). There are many ways which helps to gain autonomy that are separation from the parents, psychosocial development, self-regulation, self-discipline, self-efficacy, self-rule, decision making, and liberty.

One of the theories among the psychological theories is Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. The meaning of word 'psychosocial' is related to mind and social which refers to relationships. Depending on biological processes and interactions with environment individual's mind, emotions and maturity level builds up psychosocially (Santrock 2004).

Erikson gave the stages of life according to the significant developmental changes occurring in that stage which develops the person's personality. He theorized that at every stage of life there is a impact of social experiences. One of the main component of this theory is the development of ego identity. Ego identity is a mindfulness of identity that a person build up through shared interactions with society. According to Erik Erikson, with the new experience and information we gain through our daily societal interaction with others, our ego identity changes constantly. In every stage of life, individual learn competency which motivates their behaviors and actions. If the individual handled the stage well, he/she gain the sense of mastery and on the other hand if the stage is managed inadequately then they can face crisis and inadequacy.

Among all stages of psychosocial development, stages covering adolescence and young adults are Identity vs. Role confusion (age 12-18 yrs) and Intimacy vs. Isolation (ages 18 to 40). In adolescence, the individual come out with clear understanding of their 'self', gain autonomy and self-esteem. But if they fail to 'find themselves' they get socially detached and find difficult to make choices of their own freely in future. The encouragement and support from significant others like parents and teachers help adolescence for attaining autonomy and psychosocial adjustment. Erikson

assumed that strong sense of personal identity which starts developing in adolescence help the young adults to maintain close and secure relationships with others. Young adults' with poor self-identity have a tendency to have less secure relationships and may suffer from emotional dissatisfaction, delinquency, adjustment problems and hopelessness. A study was conducted on adjustment and competence on children of ages of 11, 13 and 15 years and again same persons was assessed when they turn in 26 years. Adults with low self-esteem in adolescence have poor mental and physical health and high risk of unlawful activities than their well-adjusted adults (Santrock, 2011).

### **Autonomy**

Autonomy is characterized as basic and important need of an individual. It refer to as individual's ability to think, act and make decisions of their own. Autonomy starts developing in adolescence period and also it helps in successful transition to adulthood. Even throughout the adulthood, autonomy development continuous whenever someone faces difficulty and have to perform independently.

Steinberg and Silverberg (1986) have defined autonomy as an ability to regulate ones' own behavior and to select and guide ones' own decisions and actions without undue control or dependence on parents.

Social relations help the individual to develop autonomy. This help them to govern their behavior. It is important for individuals to develop healthy self-governance of their behavior. There are three types of self-governance are:- decision making, self-reliance and conformity. Autonomy helps the individual to take decisions of their own through abstract thinking. Self-reliance helps to become self-sufficient. With the development of autonomy, individual take their own decisions and conforms less with the peer group.

Achieving a sense of autonomy from parents is a complex task which occurs at cognitive, emotional and behavioral level of an individual and are considered as three dimensions of autonomy (Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986; Sessa and Steinberg, 1991; Steinberg; 1990). Cognitive autonomy is defined as the capacity for independent reasoning and decision making without excessive social validation. It gives the adolescents, the subjective sense of self-reliance, and believes that one has choices. Emotional autonomy is defined in terms of relationships with others and includes relinquishing dependencies and individuation from parents. It gives the adolescents, the ability to take the responsibility for one's thoughts, feelings and actions. Behavioral autonomy refers to the capacity for competent self-governance in absence of external guidance or monitoring. It gives the adolescent, the capacity to function on his own in a new or challenging situation or behave ethically when outside the purview of adult supervision. However, all the three dimensions are interrelated and influence one another. (Collins and Repinski, 1994; Youniss and Smollar, 1985; Steinberg and Silverberg, 1986).

Noom, Dekovic & Meeus, (1999) classified autonomy into three types:- attitudinal autonomy, emotional autonomy and functional autonomy. Attitudinal autonomy means one's ability to make decisions, set and achieve the goals. It is related to trust on one's competency, goal setting, decision making, aware of one's wishes and desires . Emotional autonomy refers to independence from parents or peers through self-confidence and individuality. It includes emotional independence, resistance to peer pressure, confidence on oneself and detachment from parents. Functional autonomy refers to ability to identify, choose, and apply strategy for goal achievement.

Autonomy is often conceptualized as detachment, self-regulation, separation-individuation, psychosocial maturity, self-control, self-efficacy, self-determination, decision making and



independence. There are many different viewpoints on autonomy that are emerged from the several researches.

Autonomy is a central concept in classic psychodynamic theories. Early writings on emotional autonomy were influenced by psychoanalytic thinkers who argued that physical changes of puberty cause disagreement inside the family system. Freud A. (1958) believed that intrapsychic conflicts that have been repressed since early childhood are revived at early adolescence by the resurgence of sexual impulses. These revived conflicts are not dealt with consciously and explicitly by the adolescents and their parents but expressed as increased tension among family members. As a consequence of this tension, early adolescents are driven to separate themselves, at least emotionally from their parents, and they turn their emotional energies to relationship with peers. This process of separation was called detachment and was considered normal healthy developmental process.

She proposed that it is detachment from the parental ties that makes possible emotional adjustment, healthy independence and later adjustment to extra familial objects. Freud saw adolescent's turmoil, with their emotional separation from their parents as a necessary and desirable stage for growth. Thus, parent-adolescent conflict was considered necessary for successful resolution of these intrapsychic concerns.

Erikson (1968) added the psychosocial outlook to the psychoanalytic view of adolescence. Erikson proposed that conflict is present during each stage of life and is not unique to adolescence. During childhood it is expressed in terms of autonomy versus shame, when children actively make a shift from external control to self-control. As adolescents become more self-aware, they strive for more autonomy from their parents. Parents who deny these beginning attempts for self-control may

lead adolescents to feel shame and doubt about the self that may have long term consequences (Erikson, 1980; 1982).

Psychoanalytic theorists now have modified their approach to parent-child relationship, suggesting that deidealization rather than complete rejection to the parents is necessary step towards adolescent autonomy. The transition to adolescence is better described as a period of realignment of family relationships during which there are temporary perturbations in the parent-adolescent relationship (Collins, 1990; Steinberg, 1986). Offer (1969) and Douvan and Adelson (1966) have suggested that psychic and interpersonal tension may modify the relationship between adolescents and their parents but it may in no case sever their emotional bond. There is a transformation but not a breaking off of family relationship.

Several researches share the general hypothesis that parent-adolescent interaction that encourage differentiation and an autonomous sense of self, but that also send a message of acceptance and connection should facilitate a variety of positive outcomes in the adolescents, including healthy identity formation, perspective taking skills, ego development and self-esteem. (Hauser et al., 1991; Powers et al., 1983).

Further evidence for a shift in conceptualization of autonomy is notable in Greenberger's model of psychosocial maturity. It is assumed that psychosocial maturity is reflected in two general dimensions: 1) Social responsibility- the capacity to function competently as a member of society; and 2) Autonomy- the capacity to function competently as an individual. She argues that self-reliance is perhaps the most basic disposition that underlies the capacity for autonomy. Self-reliance entails the absence of excessive dependence on others', a sense of control over one's life and a sense

of initiative. Thus Greenberger's model places an equal importance on autonomy and sense of responsibility.

In eclectic perspective, the cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements are combined to describe adolescent autonomy. Self-determination theory (Deci, 1980; Deci and Ryan, 1987) hold that there are three psychological needs guiding development in adolescents- need for competence (to achieve certain goals), need for autonomy (to perceive sense of agency in making choices and understanding actions), need for relatedness (need to feel connected to other people).

Bekker (1991) suggests that there should be a sense of awareness of one's own desires and opinion, sensitivity to the opinion of others and a capacity to manage new situations. Still further, Flammer (1991) proposed that self-regulation is a defining characteristic of all living systems. Self-regulation is broadly applicable to five domains in adolescent development: 1) Social independence refers to reorganization of social relation with parents and peers. 2) Social regulation refers to the integration of social motives in the individual's behavior. 3) Internalization of actions is manifested through reflection of the reasons for one's own behavior. 4) A sense of personal control develops through an increase in cognitive process of action panning. 5) Regulation of development is conceptualized as the attempts adolescents make to direct their maturation by setting developmental goals.

Conclusively, it can be suggested that these different perspectives do not conflict, but rather emphasize on the different aspects of autonomy development. All theoretical perspectives, definitions and autonomy domains share commonalities and variance in the relationship between autonomy, family relationships and diverse outcomes. The diversity in conception indicate that

achieving a sense of autonomy from parents should be explained as a multidimensional task that is accomplished gradually as one moves from adolescence to adulthood.

### **Parental attachment**

Relationships with the significant people also help in achieving autonomy and maintaining good psychosocial adjustment. A central aspect of autonomy is a commitment to self-in-relation rather than self that stands alone. In this perspective parent-adolescent relationship in terms of attachment with parents, serve as a defining feature for the development of autonomy in adolescence.

Evolutionary theorists (Darwin, 1959; Huxley, 1942) point out that humans spend a much longer period of time in biological and psychological dependence on their parents than do members of other species. While some animals become independent within a few days or hours after birth, the human remains dependent upon their caregivers for many years. At the same time, from day one parents try to prepare their children step by step to develop into self-supporting adults: adults who make their own choices, who feel confident about following their own desires and who can reach their own goals. Though children start manifesting those needs and demands for autonomy at a very early age but it becomes a core psychosocial developmental issue during adolescence because of adolescent's advanced cognitive, emotional and behavioral capacities.

The ease, with which the young person's adjust to changed roles and new demands of adolescence, depends largely on their relationship with their parents. Noller (1995) described the three ways that the parents may promote the confidence and competence with which young people can give direction to their lives. First, parents may enhance adolescent autonomy by stimulating adolescents to participate in making important decisions. Parents can motivate their sons and daughters to think about their own ideas and contemplate possible solution by asking questions and

making suggestions. Second, parents can provide a model for young people to learn appropriate patterns of communication. Parents who clearly articulate their opinion may stimulate adolescents to think about their own ideas. Finally, parents can reassure the adolescents by creating a supportive environment. A warm and affectionate parent-adolescent relationship provides an opportunity for adolescents to explore and express their ideas freely and to test them in a family context without fear of criticism and rejection.

Affectionate and supportive parents tend to show respect for the view of their children and are open and responsive to those views. This helps adolescents to achieve a sense of emotional independence, feel free to adopt their own opinions and attitudes, make their plans and formulate their goals. On the other hand, when family interaction are characterized by a great amount of hostility and criticism, adolescents are less likely to be self-confident and more likely to use external standards, rather than their own judgment as a guide of their behavior. Adolescent growing up in such families tend to be more susceptible to both parental and peer pressures and less likely to function autonomously. Parents have to understand that young adults are more in need of support than nurturance, guidance more than protection and direction more than socialization. On other hand, young people have to set a harmony with mutuality, guidance, freedom and limit setting.

When youth want and need to learn to manage their own lives, they need guidance and support from an open and supportive family and community. Autonomous individuals do not rush to their parents when they are upset, worried or in need of assistance. They do not see their parents as all-knowing or all-powerful. Also, they are able to see and interact with their parents-as-people and not just as their parents. Moreover, young adults often have a great deal of emotional energy wrapped up in relationships outside the family. On the other hand, parents report that they confide in their adolescent children, something that was not possible when their adolescents were younger.

Moreover, young people can easily sympathize with their parents when they have any problem. These sorts of changes in the parent-individual relationship reflect the development of autonomy (Steinberg, 1990). It does not represent a complete separation from parents but a movement towards mutuality and reciprocity in relationship with parents.

Achieving autonomy while maintaining positive relatedness with parents have sometimes been placed at the opposite ends of a continuum and is referred to as a “double edged sword” (Frank et al., 1990), there is a growing evidence that a state of “autonomous-relatedness” is an optimum outcome for the adolescent’s relationship with their parents (Bowlby, 1980; Allen et al., 1994a). Bowlby (1980) asserts that the ability to separate paradoxically is dependent on having a secure attachment. Therefore, after being dissatisfied with the traditional models emphasizing on conflict and detachment, it is optimal to study the development of autonomy in terms of attachment with parents. According to attachment theory (Bowlby,1980), a primary role of attachment figure is to provide a secure base of support by encouraging the development of self-reliance yet remaining available as a source of help when needed. Thus, attachment with parents provides a source of comfort and safety during the multiple life changes of young people by supporting independent strivings and offering guidance when needed.

However, several researchers propose that detachment and withdrawing from the family enable the young adults to move towards new attachment and social bonds in the wider community that facilitate autonomy and young adults then no longer require reliance on parental support (Freud, 1958; Petersen and Taylor, 1980). They argue that young adults are to abandon infantile urges and desires directed at primary love objects i.e. parents. This involves emotional and physical detachment from parents as a vehicle for the development of autonomy.

The adolescent's task of establishing autonomy, while maintaining a positive parental relationship is functionally similar to the infant task of exploring the environment from the secure base of infant-parent relationship. In the same way the adolescents seek to explore living without being emotionally dependent on their parents. A critical distinction here is that this change appears to reflect the adolescents becoming less dependent on parents in a number of ways, rather than the relationship becoming unimportant as a whole (Buhrmester, 1992, Buhrmester and Furman, 1987; Larson et al., 1996; Wilks, 1986). Fuligni and Eccles (1993) believe that adolescents do not wish to withdraw completely from their relationship with their parents, instead they just want greater control over their lives.

Parents play a double role, one of providing comfort and security and other is guiding their child in exploring the environment to attain autonomy. Individual attachment is the result of both the individual and parent's ability to redefine their relationship while the development of autonomy, that is, developmental changes at the social, cognitive, and emotional levels. During this period, adult spent less time with their parents, as physical closeness is no longer needed to ensure security and comfort. The essential feature of secure attachment is the trust on parents support in the time of need. Parents motivate their child in exploring the environment with less proximity with the help of communication. This help the youngsters to internalize a secure image of their attachment figure, even in their absence, it also encourages them to explore outside of their bond. They share their personal views and feelings with the new social relationships they made with friends and romantic partners. Past studies (Allen & Land, 1999; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Smetana et al., 2006) revealed that good attachments with parents have healthier psychosocial adjustment than insecure adolescents. Cooper et al. (1998) discovered that individual with secure attachment had more have power over their sentiments and enhanced adjustment than those with insecure attachment. Secure

attachment is important in the development of identity and autonomy during adolescence (Allen & Land, 1999). In close and warm attachment with parents, mothers give more affectionate support whereas fathers offer material and informational help. In general, secure attachments with parents related to high levels of confidence and developing autonomy (Arbona & Power, 2003; Thompson, 1999).

In sum, during adolescence, adolescents begin to move away from their parents, take on new responsibilities and develop their own individuality. Parents, on the other hand need to adapt to adolescents desire for autonomy by creating an opportunity for them to experiment with their new role and by encouraging them to do so. As adolescent attachment behavior departs from pattern of attachment behavior seen in earlier ages, adolescents often appear to be actively and purposefully moving away from their parents. In this view attachment is not a regressive bond form which adolescents must free themselves but rather a dynamic relationship that change in according with the developmental tasks at hand.

Thus, autonomy and parent-child attachment influenced the psychosocial adjustment of an individual. A stability between independent self-efficiency and helpful relationship with significant others helps for good psychosocial adjustment (Sessa & Steinberg, 1991).





**CHAPTER- II**



**REVIEW OF**

**LITERATURE**

The concept of psychosocial adjustment, autonomy, parental attachment has always been a major area of attention to researchers working in the ground of developmental and youth psychology. There has been a continuous effort by the researchers in defining, explaining and exploring the correlates. For convenience the studies have been summarized under the following:

1. Psychosocial adjustment and Autonomy
2. Psychosocial adjustment and Parental attachment
3. Psychosocial adjustment , Autonomy and Parental attachment

### **Psychosocial adjustment and Autonomy**

Silverberg and Steinberg (1987) argued that adjustment to adulthood depends on how successful the adolescent is in achieving separation and connectedness to parents. Blos (1979) hold that on one hand, gaining emotional autonomy from parents lead to greeter self-reliance and self-governance, but on the other hand, this experience also involves a kind of loss and therefore results in distress. However, support of self-sufficiency and secure relationship with parents give an most advantageous atmosphere for psychosocial adjustment (Connel and Wellborn, 1990; Baltes and Silverberg, 1994; Noller, 1994; Ryan, 1995; Silverberg and Gondoli, 1996).

Individual's with high level of autonomy shows better psychosocial adjustment than with low level of autonomy. Autonomy also plays a task in how person perform health hazard activities. Many researchers try to investigate the relationship of autonomy and ill behaviors or psychosocial adjustment.

Allen et al. (1994a) noted that individual who displayed comparatively low levels of autonomy and relatedness also exhibited low levels of ego development and self-esteem. Individual's poor self-concept has been related to depression, anxiety, irritability and aggressive impulses (Rosenberg,

1985). Whereas, autonomous individuals are found to be more ego resilient, less anxious, and less hostile than insecure individuals (Allen et al., 2002; Kobak and Sceery, 1988; Zimmermann, 1999).

Similarly, Sheikholeslami and Moghaddam (2010) found negative correlations between autonomy and depression, anxiety, somatic symptoms and social dysfunction. Loevinger (1979) proposed that higher levels of ego development in past reflect sophistication in considering issues of autonomy and relatedness in social relationships. Ego development has been related to numerous observed qualities of social functioning, interpersonal sensitivity and responsibility and inner control (Helson and Wink, 1987; Rosznafsky, 1981). Successful management of this freedom may lead to healthier adjustment later in life. Autonomy is very important at every developmental period of life even in old age.

To examine the effect of autonomy in old age, Vallerand (2007) investigated the role of environment on self-determined motivation and psychosocial adjustment. He conducted a study on 83 elderly persons residing at 11 different nursing homes. After structural equation modeling, it had been seen that their psychosocial adjustment was increased when their autonomy in nursing home was supported which in turn increased their perception of autonomy and self-determined motivation in major perspectives of their life.

Achieving autonomy is a crucial point in the individual's life. As it help the individual to explore oneself and world. If a problem occur in autonomy attainment then it leads to misinterpretation of the world and oneself which may indulge the individual into a problematic situation. Individual in these situation shows maladaptive behavior like substance abuse, low academic achievement, disobedience, ill-behavior, low well-being etc.

Stok, De ridder, Adriaanse & De wit (2010) conducted a study on relationship of self-sufficiency and injurious snacking. Samples were taken from two Dutch secondary schools. 154 students contribute in the first part of the study while 105 students finished the second part. Results showed that adolescents' autonomy can have two different core drives, which are related to snacking behavior. They described the two motives for autonomy; agentic autonomy & self- presentational autonomy. Self rule scores were higher in teens' with agentic autonomy than in adolescents' with self- presentational autonomy. Further they correlated these two forms of autonomy with snacking behavior. Adolescents' high in agentic motives for autonomy buy fewer unhealthy snacks. Those with high self- presentational autonomy get more unhealthy snacks.

Another research done by Fleming (2005) on adolescent autonomy and disobeying parents. He conducted study on 994 students of different ages that is early (12-13 year-old) and late (18-19 year-old) adolescents. After statistically analysis of two different age groups of each gender, it has been concluded that autonomy achievement is related to establishment of relationships outside the family. It helps in judgment abilities and thoughts of self-sufficiency. It also has been seen that male students achieve autonomy and disobey their parents earlier than the girl students. There is not much difference between the late and young adolescents in attaining success.

While achieving autonomy, the individual distance himself from the parents which helps the individual to take his/her decisions independently, but on the other hand individual may adopt some negative behavior. Also, Culture and the place where the individual lived and reared greatly influence the autonomy and psychosocial adjustment.

Chance (2007) investigated the relationship between parent-child beliefs about autonomy and their relation to psychosocial adjustment and parental self-efficacy among the 89 migrant families

of Chinese background living in Canada. Hierarchical regression analyses was used and it has been seen that when parents expected high autonomy and child expect less then it leads to less depressive symptoms.

Ward & Kennedy (1993) conducted a study on psychological and socio-cultural adjustment among 178 students of New Zealand living in 23 different countries and 142 students studying in New Zealand schools. Through stepwise regression, it has been found that psychological adjustment is indicated by disturbances in mood, changes in lifestyle, locus of control, homesickness and socio-cultural adaptation. On the other hand, socio-cultural adjustment is indicated by a social difficulty index, quality of relations in host country, language ability, cultural separation, and psychological adaptation. It has been seen that students living in their own country have high psychological and socio-cultural adjustment than the students migrated to other countries.

In sum, various researchers try to show that psychosocial adjustment is affected by autonomy achievement of an individual. With the achievement of autonomy individual try to make significant relationship outside the family which sometime indulge the individual into unhealthy behavior. Detachment from parents and attachment with others (peers) affects both autonomy and psychosocial adjustment.

### **Psychosocial adjustment and Parental attachment**

Not only autonomy affects the psychosocial adjustment and vice versa, also parental attachment helps for better psychosocial adjustment. There are some studies which shows that the secure attachment with parents leads to healthier psychosocial adjustment and on other side poor attachment with parents leads in unhealthy behavior and poor psychosocial adjustment.

Wainright, Russell & Patterson (2004) examined the relationship of parental relationship, psychosocial adjustment and school outcomes among 88 adolescents'. After normative analysis it has been concluded that good parental relationship leads to better psychosocial adjustment and school outcomes.

Parental attachment play a significant role in initiating and making relationships, encouraging happiness, well- being and self- esteem which in-turn helps in psychosocial adjustment. There are many studies that revealed these effects of parental attachment.

kocayörük(2010) conducted a study on role of proficiency as a mediator between parental attachment and emotional well-being and adjustment of adolescents on 282 high school students of Ankara city. The findings suggested that parental attachment encourage adolescent happiness and adjustment by promoting high level of proficiency.

Smits & et. al. (2010) investigated the effect of parental support of autonomy on psychosocial adjustment of adolescents. Data was collected from 247 individuals. Results revealed that adolescents who have autonomy supportive parents showed good well-being than those who have controlling parents.

Mattanah, Lopez & Govern (2011) study the connection between parental attachment and multiple adjustment outcomes and developmental advances during the college years. The study done by doing meta-analysis of 156 studies conducted between 1987 and 2009 of young adult participants (age range: 18–29 years).They kept 163 in print reports and 74 unpublished thesis that show the relation of parental attachment and college adjustment. They found during teenage period, close associates and loving partners facilitate a steady shift of attachment from parents to cherished peers by giving care and secure relationships.

Engels & et.al. (2001) conducted a study on attachment of adolescents with parents and its effect on social and emotional adjustment. From the sample of 412 adolescents of age 12-18 yrs, it has been concluded after structural equation modeling that individuals who have good interaction with their parents initiate and maintain good social relationships in turn have healthy psychosocial adjustment.

Martinez & et. al. (2007) conducted the study on parental style and self-esteem on 1,239 11- to 15-yr.-old adolescents sampled from Brazil. After analysis, results suggests that adolescent who has affectionate relationship with their parents has higher self-esteem than those adolescents who has strict parents.

Kafle & Thakali (2013) conducted a study on role of parent and peer relationship in adolescent psychosocial adjustment. They concluded that love and affectionate relationship of parents with adolescents encourage self-sufficiency as well as connectedness. Encouraging adolescent-parent relationship and peer relationship lead to adolescent psychosocial development. Peers and parents have the main influence in teenagers.

From the above studies it has been clear that good relationship with parents leads to positive and healthy behavior. If the attachment is insecure then the individual may indulge in negative behavior.

Dane, Kennedy, Spring, Volk and Marini (2012) examined relationship of parental attachment with adolescents' antisocial behavior. A total 7135 adolescents, aged 14-18 years participated in the study. Results indicate that parental attachment is related to adolescent anti-social beliefs. They also find that males with insecure attachments to mother are at greater risk than females for endorsing antisocial beliefs.

Higgins & et.al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study to reveal the influence of parental monitoring on adolescents' alcohol use among 4,775 sample of adolescents. Out of which 2,257 were boys and 2,518 were girls. Results showed that strong parental monitoring leads to less use of alcohol and on the other hand if adolescent use alcohol more they interact less with their parents to become independent.

Dubois-Comtois & et.al. (2013) stated that clinicians while working with adolescents should kept in mind about adolescent's attachment with parents and their coping abilities. Attachment with parents influence the coping of an individual with the issues faced during the developmental periods. It has been seen that adolescents with insecure attachment with parents are at risk of developing maladaptive behavior.

It has been also seen that parental attachment also influence the religious beliefs of the individual. A study by Kim-Spoon & et.al. (2012) examined the relationship of parent's religious belief and parent child relationship on adolescent's religious beliefs and psychosocial adjustment. They collect the data from 322 adolescents and their parents. After analysis, it has been seen that parent's religious beliefs and good parent- child relationship positively influence the adolescents' religious beliefs and psychosocial adjustment. That means adolescents with healthy religious beliefs and good attachment with their parents, have good psychosocial adjustment.

Mofrad et.al. (2010) revealed through study on parental attachment among 120 children that securely attached children understand that their mothers were more loving and kind towards them than insecurely attached children. Ambivalently attached children understand that their mothers were more controlling, worried than avoidantly attached children. This shows how the individual beliefs about their parents depend upon the style of parental attachment



Hence, these studies illustrated that secure relationship with parents and even with peers leads to healthier positive social behavior and better psychosocial adjustment.

### **Psychosocial adjustment, Autonomy and Parental attachment**

Both autonomy and parental attachment affects psychosocial adjustment. Secure attachment with parents of autonomous individual helps them to maintain good relationships with others and adopting healthier social behavior. Recent studies which showed the interplay of independence and parental attachment for better psychosocial adjustment are:

Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) conducted a study with the aim to inspect the statement that a high level of independence within a framework of attachment provides the best psychosocial adjustment. Participants were 400 adolescents. They claimed that attitudinal, emotional and functional autonomy were associated with attachment to father, mother and peers to guess indicator of psychosocial adjustment: social competence, academic competence, self esteem, problem behavior, and depressive mood. Adolescents need a secure relationships from which to discover the world, personality uniqueness of the adolescent and the worth of the relationship with parents and peers both play a vital role in numerous aspects of psychosocial adjustment.

Kasser & Ryan(1999) on the basis of structured interview and survey data from 50 nursing home residents concluded that greater autonomy support from nursing staff, parents, friends and relatives and self-sufficiency leads to low depressive symptoms and good well-being.

McElhaney (2000) conducted a study on the effects of independence compromise within parent-adolescent relationships on adjusting in close relationships. Data was collected from 136 adolescents, their parents, and their peers at two time points, once when the adolescents were approximately 16 years of age, and again when they were 18. The results suggested that Specifically,

adolescents' autonomy (particularly with mothers) led to decreasing clash and power within parent-adolescent relationship and led to increases in adolescents' social approval over time.

Olusola o. (2013) study the effect of competency, support from teachers and parental attachment on student's educational success. 250 sample is randomly select from senior secondary school in Ijebu-North local government area of Ogun state, Nigeria. After analysis is has been seen that proficiency, teacher support and parental attachment helping the students to score well in academics and adjust well in school environment. Out of three variables, competency is a good predictor for good academic achievement than teacher support and parent attachment.

Furman & Collibee (2014) investigated the relationship between sexual Activity with Romantic and Nonromantic Partners and Psychosocial Adjustment in Young Adults. Data was collected from 185 participants. The results revealed that sexual activity with both the partners' leads to good psychosocial adjustment but sexual activity with romantic partners also involve the person in risky behavior and substance abuse.

Young (2013) studied the Influence of Parental Attachment and autonomy on Adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors. Researcher found that secure attachment and high self-esteem are strong shielding factors against interest in risky behaviors during adolescence.

Soenens & et. al. (2007) conducted 3 studies, 2 on late adolescents and 1 on middle adolescents. They defined the parental autonomy support in terms of promotion of independence (PI) or in terms of promotion of volitional functioning (PVF).After the factor analysis and structural equation modeling, they concluded that parental autonomy support is related to positive psychosocial adjustment. They also found the similar results in both age groups that is middle and late adolescents. Although the both viewpoints are related to psychosocial adjustment but only

promotion of volitional functioning helps in forecast the changes in psychosocial adjustment. So, promotion of volitional functioning is positively correlated to psychosocial adjustment in both middle and late adolescents.

Parsa et.al. (2014) examined the relationship between parental attachment, conflicts with parents and adolescents self-efficacy. Sample of 374 adolescents of age 17-19 yrs from Iran was taken into study. After Pearson correlation coefficient, results revealed that secured parental attachment improve the self-efficacy of adolescents, reduce anxiety in initiating and maintain social relationships, enhance problem solving and academic achievement. Also, conflicts in parent-child relationship hamper the psychosocial adjustment of an individual.

Reppold & et.al. (2010) conducted a study to assess the psychosocial adjustment level in adopted and non- adopted adolescents in Brazil. There were 524 adolescents out of which 68 were adopted and 456 were nurtured by their biological parents. Many previous researches revealed that adopted children have poor psychosocial adjustment. But researchers involved in this study after analysis found that adopted adolescents have good psychosocial adjustment than the non-adopted adolescents. Non-adopted adolescents reported that their parents are not much indulgent and provide less supportive environment to them.

Mansour & Sabeti (2012) conducted a study on 250 adolescents out of which 125 are boys and 125 are girls to examine the relationship between attachment to parents and friends with the development of autonomy. They concluded that separation from their parents and friends help them to attain autonomy.

Imtiaz & Naqvi (2012) conducted a study on parental attachment and identity styles among 252 adolescents. They revealed that parental attachment helps the adolescents' to develop the sense of identity and also found that girls are more attached with their parents than boys.

Psychosocial adjustment is also influenced by culture and religion. Culture and religion also effect the well-being of the individual and it also lessen the risk of ill-behavior. Studies which shows effect of psychosocial adjustment are:-

Kelley (2006) conducted study on effect of culture on psychosocial adjustment and behavior of young adults. It had been found that multiracial young adults have high levels of depression, drug abuse, and lower levels of self-worth than their monoracial peers.

Good & Willoughby (2014) examined the effect of Spirituality/religiosity on psychosocial adjustment. Data was collected from 803 adolescents from Canada. Results revealed that high Spirituality/religiosity leads the good psychosocial adjustment which means healthier well-being, good parental- child relationship, lower substance abuse and high academic achievements.

Manzi et. al. (2012) conducted a cross-cultural studies among 1361 late adolescents sampled from four different countries: the US, Belgium, Italy and China. They collected the data regarding three different domains of promotion of autonomy - promotion of autonomous thought, promotion of autonomous decision-making, and promotion of physical separation. Covariance among these domains showed that all three dimensions has positive correlation with psychosocial adjustment which differ across the different cultures.

Therefore, all these reviews showed that both autonomy and parent-child attachment both play a significant role in the psychosocial adjustment. There are also many other factors which play in role in influencing psychosocial adjustment like culture, religion, attachment with friends etc. Good

psychosocial adjustment leads to good well-being, good performance in academic achievement, positive behavior etc. but if the individual has a poor psychosocial adjustment then it leads to poor behavior, poor coping ability, poor well-being and the individual may involve in risky behavior etc. This may occur due negative attachment with parents and peers and poor autonomy development. Thus, psychosocial adjustment play a important role in individual life and is depend on autonomy development and parental attachment.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Students during their college life find difficulties in adjusting with their college and family environment. An individual adapt to their outside environment depends upon their relationship with the parents. First, a child learns to adjust well in family and then in society. During the adolescence and young adulthood phase, they start moving away from the parents and they like to spend time with the peers in order to experiment with their different roles and responsibilities. So this autonomy from parents is required for becoming a self-significant, self-efficient and a confident person. If the parents support the individual's striving for the autonomy then they are better able to adapt to their environment. If they restrict their small attempts to be independent then they become frustrated and irritated. They are not able to maintain their confidence level and generally have low self-esteem which is reflected in the form of psychosocial maladjustment. So in order to understand the concept of psychosocial adjustment of the young adults, it is important to study it in relation to parental attachment and the level of autonomy gained by the young adults. The present study is conducted on young adults because it has been seen that in our culture adolescents' remain economically and psychologically dependent upon their parents even in their late adolescence. So the present study is an attempt to see the role of parental attachment, autonomy on the adaptive skills of young adults.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Keeping in mind the nature and aim of present study, the following objectives were framed:

1. To study the relationship between autonomy of young adults and their psychosocial adjustment.
2. To study the relationship between parental attachment with psychosocial adjustment of young adults.
3. To study the gender differences on psychosocial adjustment, parental attachment & autonomy.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

On the basis of previous studies and theoretical consideration, following hypotheses were framed:

1. There will be a significant relationship between autonomy of young adults and their psychosocial adjustment.
2. There will be a significant relationship between parental attachment and psychosocial adjustment of young adults.
3. There will be a significant gender differences on psychosocial adjustment, parental attachment & autonomy.



**CHAPTER-III**



**METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a way to scientifically solve the research difficulties. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done. Research methodology is a systematic procedure which carries on the research work in the scientific and valid manner. It provides tools and techniques by which research problem is dealt with.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The course of this study includes first to select the sample group to carry out the study. In this case, sample includes a group of young adults of age 18-22. Suitable scales were used to assess the variables. For the data analysis, appropriate statistical approach were applied. At last, the proposed hypothesis as well as the old literature was crosschecked with the original results to elucidate the purposeful result. The present study is the normative survey and is non-experimental in nature. This chapter is organized under following headings:

- 3.1 Sample
- 3.2 Psychological measures
- 3.3 Administration of Psychological Measures
- 3.4 Statistical Analyses

### **3.1 SAMPLE**

In the present study, a sample of 200 young adults (100 boys and 100 girls) in the age range of 18-22 years was taken from Lovely Professional University. The incidental sampling technique was used to collect the data.



## **3.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURES**

Keeping in view our variables of study to be measured, the aim of the study, and the nature of the sample, appropriate instrument with satisfactory psychometric properties are selected. In this study following tools was used to assess the variables:

### **3.2.1 Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)**

- Armsden and Greenberg, 1987

### **3.2.2 Global Adjustment Scale (GAS) (Student Form)**

- PSY-COM SERVICES, 1994

### **3.2.3 Adolescent Autonomy Questionnaire**

-Noom,et.al. 1999

### **3.2.1 Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) - Armsden and Greenberg (1987)**

Armsden and Greenberg (1987) developed IPPA to assess the quality of perceived parent and peer attachment. Attachment to parents and peers is defined as a general feeling of trust, an adequate level of communication, and the absence of feelings of alienation. The IPPA is composed of 25 item self-report questionnaire. Questionnaire asks the questions regarding parents. Responses were recorded on five-point scale ranging from “almost never or never true” (1) to “almost always or always true” (5). It is scored by reverse scoring the negatively worded items and then summing up the response values in each section. Scores can range from 25 to 125. Higher scores indicate more attachment.

IPPA is based on Bowlby's (1980) theoretical formulations concerning attachment behavior. The measure assesses both positive and negative affective and cognitive dimensions related to attachment. The three dimensions used to measure attachment are-

- (i) **Trust** refers to the extent to which adolescent believe the attachment figure recognizes and appreciate the adolescent's wants and needs. Children build trust in relationships by learning that others are consistently there for them.
- (ii) **Communication** measures how the adolescent view the attachment figure in terms of understanding and sensitivity to his or her feelings. Healthy communication creates strong emotional bond between parents and children.
- (iii) **Alienation** assess for emotional detachment and anger directed towards the attachment figure. When one senses that the attachment figure is not available, attachment becomes less secure and individual become alienated.

### **Psychometric properties**

The authors report internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) as .87 for mother attachment, .89 for father attachment and .92 for peer attachment. Satisfactory convergent validity has been demonstrated by correlations with constructs such as family conflict, support and cohesion (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). Research has also demonstrated the predictive validity of IPPA is evidenced by its strong correlation with adjustment measures (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). The test has been used successfully by Daisy and Tung (2010) and Kaur (2009) in Indian context.

### 3.2.2 Global Adjustment Scale (GAS) (Student Form) (PSY-COM Services, 1994)

The term adjustment refers to the adequacy of the personal and interpersonal processes that we use to adapt to our environment. The global adjustment scale provides separate measure of adjustment in five areas:

- (i) **Emotional Adjustment-** it focuses on the emotional state of the adolescents, i.e. how mature/immature and stable/unstable they are in controlling their emotions.
- (ii) **Family Adjustment-** it tends to capture the family environment in terms of freedom and cohesion in the family. It focuses on the adolescent's relationship with their parents and siblings.
- (iii) **Health Adjustment-** it is assessed in terms of physical functioning of the body i.e. whether the adolescents enjoy a good or suffer from bad health.
- (iv) **School Adjustment-** it tends to capture the school environment in terms of academic involvement and school life. It focuses on the adolescent's relationship with their teachers and peers and their school performance as well.
- (v) **Social Adjustment-** It focuses on the adolescent's relationship with their friends and acquaintances outside the home, i.e. how hostile or submissive they are around them and how much trust they have on people around them.

The inventory consists of 100 items which are equally distributed amongst the five areas of adjustment. Each of the item in the questionnaire has three response alternatives from which the subject selects any one answer i.e. yes, no and sometimes. Scoring is done with the help of scoring keys available in the manual. Scores on each of these subscales can range from 0-40 and

a combined score of subscales can range from 0-200. Low scores on GAS indicate better adjustment.

### **Psychometric properties**

The test-retest reliability of the subscales ranges from .65 to .75 and split-half reliability of the subscales ranges from .69 to .89. The factorial validity of different dimensions of GAS ranges from .61 to .72. The GAS has proven to be very useful with both school and college students of both sexes in locating the areas of adjustment and maladjustment.

#### **3.2.3 Adolescent Autonomy Questionnaire (Noom et.al., 1999)**

It consist of 15 statements about the ability to exercise control over one's life. This scale consist of three sub scales: attitudinal, functional, emotional autonomy, each consisting of five items.

**(i) Attitudinal autonomy** - It refers to the perception of goals by means of opportunities and desires (e.g. "I know what I want").

**(ii) Emotional autonomy** - It refers to the perception of independence through self-confidence and individuality (e.g. "I have the tendency to give in to others easily", reversely coded).

**(iii) Functional autonomy** - It refers to the perception of strategies by means of self-regulation and self-control (e.g. " I always go straight for my goal").

The young adults were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on the five-point scale, ranging from "a very bad description of me "to "a very good description of me".

### **Psychometric properties**

The authors report internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) as 0.71 for attitudinal autonomy, 0.60 for emotional autonomy and 0.64 for functional autonomy. Correlations between the three autonomy-subscales ranged from 0.38 to 0.49, indicating both that they referred to a general concept of autonomy and also that they tapped different elements of autonomy.

### **3.3 ADMINISTRATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURES**

A rapport was established with the subjects before administering the tests. The subjects were assured that the information was being collected purely for research purpose and would be kept confidential. The tests were administered to students within the classroom during their free period. The instructions were provided to students as based on manuals. The questions and doubts were cleared from time to time. All the tests were filled up by the students themselves. Scoring was done according to the instructions available in the respective manuals.

### **3.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSES**

Keeping in view the variables, objectives and hypothesis following techniques were used.

- Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients were computed to study the relationship of psychosocial adjustment and other variables in the study.
- t-test was applied to study the gender difference on psychosocial adjustment, parental attachment & autonomy.



**CHAPTER-IV**



**RESULT AND  
DISCUSSION**

## **CORRELATIONS**

Pearson product moment correlation is the most common and appropriate parametric technique to know the relationship between two variables. One of the objectives of the present research was to examine the relationship of psychosocial adjustment with other variables included in the study. Therefore, Pearson's product moment correlations were computed between psychosocial adjustment and the different dimensions of autonomy and parental attachment. Correlations were computed for boys and girls separately. The results are presented in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 for boys and girls respectively.

### **Inter-Correlations (Boys)**

For adolescent boys, the correlation matrix (Table 4.1) reveals that psychosocial adjustment has significant correlations with parental attachment, attitudinal attachment and functional autonomy.

The correlation pattern shows that psychosocial adjustment significantly correlates with parental attachment ( $r=0.332$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. The correlation indicates that boys who feel secure and have good attachment with their parents display better psychosocial adjustment. It means boys with secure attachment with parents, have good emotional state, good and trustworthy relationship with family and family, enjoy good health, and good academic achievement. Kafle & Thakali(2013) also found that good relationships with parents leads to healthy psychosocial adjustment. Mattanah, Lopez & Govern (2011) also found that loving and caring parents facilitate the psychosocial adjustment of the individual and help them to build secure and trust with friends.

A further glance of the correlation matrix reveals that psychosocial adjustment significantly correlates with attitudinal autonomy ( $r=0.35$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. It indicates that boys who know their goals and know what they want, are able to adjust well in family, with friends, in school and society. Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) also found that high attitudinal autonomy has positive relationship with psychosocial adjustment. They found that individual who choose their goal have high self-esteem and well-being.

Further, the correlation matrix shows significant relationship of psychosocial adjustment with functional autonomy ( $r=0.494$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. It indicates that boys who know which strategies to use to achieve their goals have good psychosocial adjustment. Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) also found that individuals' with high functional autonomy have social and academic competence and good relationship with parents and peers.

Further correlation pattern (Table.4.2) indicate that parental attachment is positively correlates with attitudinal autonomy( $r=0.258$ ) and functional autonomy( $r=0.228$ ). It indicates that boys who feel secure with their parents know their goals well and have a strategy to attain that goals.



**Table 4.1: Showing Correlations of Variables under Study with psychosocial adjustment for the Boys Sample (N=100)**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Psychosocial adjustment</b>
1	Parental attachment	0.332**
2	Attitudinal autonomy	0.358**
3	Emotional autonomy	0.099
4	Functional autonomy	0.494**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 4.2 : Showing Correlations of Variables under Study for the Boys Sample (N=100)**

<b>Variables</b>	Parental attachment	Attitudinal autonomy	Emotional autonomy	Functional autonomy	Psychosocial adjustment
Parental attachment	1	.258**	.195	.228*	0.332**
Attitudinal autonomy	.258**	1	.180	.256*	0.358**
Emotional autonomy	.195	.180	1	.051	0.099
Functional autonomy	.228*	.256*	.051	1	0.494**
Psychosocial adjustment	0.332**	0.358**	0.099	0.494**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

### **Inter-Correlations (Girls)**

For girls, the correlation matrix (Table 4.3) suggests that psychosocial adjustment has significant correlations with parental attachment, attitudinal autonomy, emotional autonomy and functional autonomy.

The correlation pattern reveals that psychosocial adjustment positively correlates with parental attachment ( $r=0.32$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. The positive relationship among variables reveals that girls who have secure attachment with parents enjoy healthy psychosocial adjustment. It means that girls who have trust and strong emotional bond with parents shows better academic performance, maintain good relationship with family and peers, enjoy good health. Wainright, Russell & Patterson (2004) also found that good parental relationship leads to better psychosocial adjustment and school outcomes. Mattanah, Lopez & Govern (2011) also found that loving and caring parents facilitate the psychosocial adjustment of the individual and help them to build secure and trust with friends.

Further, results reveal positive correlation between psychosocial adjustment and attitudinal autonomy ( $r=0.267$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. It means girls who know their goals shows healthy psychosocial adjustment. Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) also found that high attitudinal autonomy has positive relationship with psychosocial adjustment. They found that individual who choose their goal have high self-esteem and well-being.

Correlations are also suggestive of positive association of psychosocial adjustment with emotional autonomy( $r=0.210$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. It implies that girls who try to establish an independent sense of self, are able to adapt themselves psychosocially. They regulate their emotions and adapt well with their family, school and social environment and also have no health issues. Blos (1979) explained that gaining emotional autonomy from parents leads to greater self-determination. Lamborn

and Steinberg (1993) argued that high emotional autonomy leads to high academic competence and good psychosocial adjustment.

Further results (Table 4.3) reveal positive correlation between psychosocial adjustment and functional autonomy ( $r=0.291$ ) which reflects that girls who know which strategies to use to achieve their goals have good psychosocial adjustment. Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. Noom, Dekovic and Meeus (1999) also found that individuals' with high functional autonomy have social and academic competent and good relationship with parents and peers.

Correlation index (Table 4.4) also reveal that parental attachment is positively correlates with attitudinal ( $r=0.345$ ) and emotional autonomy( $r=0.267$ ). It indicates that girls who have good attachment with their parents know their goals, are emotionally stable and regulate their emotions.

**Table 4.3: Showing Correlations of Variables under Study with psychosocial adjustment for the Girls Sample (N=100)**

Sr. No.	Variables	Psychosocial adjustment
1	Parental attachment	0.324**
2	Attitudinal autonomy	0.267**
3	Emotional autonomy	0.210*
4	Functional autonomy	0.291**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level .

**Table 4.4 : Showing Correlations of Variables under Study for the Girls Sample (N=100)**

<b>Variables</b>	Parental attachment	Attitudinal autonomy	Emotional autonomy	Functional autonomy	Psychosocial adjustment
Parental attachment	1	.345**	.267**	.085	0.324**
Attitudinal autonomy	.345**	1	.300**	.192	0.267**
Emotional autonomy	.267**	.300**	1	.077	0.210*
Functional autonomy	.085	.192	.077	1	0.291**
Psychosocial adjustment	0.324**	0.267**	0.210*	0.291**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

In sum, results suggest a high resemblance in the correlation pattern of boys and girls with few exceptions. From the correlation analyses, it can be suggested that both boys and girls, significant positive correlations have been observed between psychosocial adjustment and parental attachment, attitudinal autonomy, functional autonomy and emotional autonomy (in case of girls only). It indicates that individuals get secure biases for exploring the world.

It means secure attachment with parents help the individual in developing the autonomy and this help the individual in better psychosocial adjustment. Individual who adjust well maintain good relationship with parents, sibling and peers, show good academic performance, are emotionally stable and have good well-being and health. Results also reveal that parental attachment is positively correlates with attitudinal autonomy, functional autonomy (Boys) and emotional autonomy (Girls). It indicates that in boys if the parental attachment is good then the attitudinal and functional autonomy is also high and in girls if the parental attachment is secure then the attitudinal autonomy and emotional autonomy is high. Hence, the proposed hypothesis 1 & 2 is proved and partially accepted.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS – t-ratios (GENDER DIFFERENCES)**

One of the objectives of the research was to study the gender difference in psychosocial adjustment. For this purpose t-ratio analysis was used to know any significant differences in the boys and girls regarding their psychosocial adjustment. Table 4.5 shows the means, standard deviations, and t-ratios of all the measured variables for both the boys and girls. Figural representations of t-ratios of all the variables included in the study have been presented in Fig 4.1 to Fig 4.3.

The result (Table 4.5) shows that boys and girls significantly differ in psychosocial adjustment ( $t(200) = 2.115, p < 0.05$ ). Mean score of boys ( $\bar{X} = 84.64$ ) on psychosocial adjustment is lower than girls ( $\bar{X} = 89.73$ ). Lower scores on Global Adjustment Scale imply better adjustment. It shows that boys are better psychosocially adjusted than do girls. Boys are more mature and emotionally stable than girls. They feel more adaptive to their family environment and also enjoy a better physical health as compared to girls. Chen (2010), Kim et al. (2011) and Moon and Rao (2010) also found girls to be lower on psychological

adjustment than boys.

It has been also seen that there is no gender difference in parental attachment and dimensions of autonomy. Haigler, Day, Marshall (1995) also found no gender difference in parental attachment. Mansour & Sabeti (2012) also found that there is no difference in autonomy development of boys and girls.

In conclusion, it can be suggested that boys and girls do not differ from one another regarding their development of autonomy from parents and parental attachment. However, boys significantly differ from girls only in psychosocial adjustment which indicates that boys have better adaptive capacities than do girls. Hence, the hypothesis 3 is proved and partially accepted.



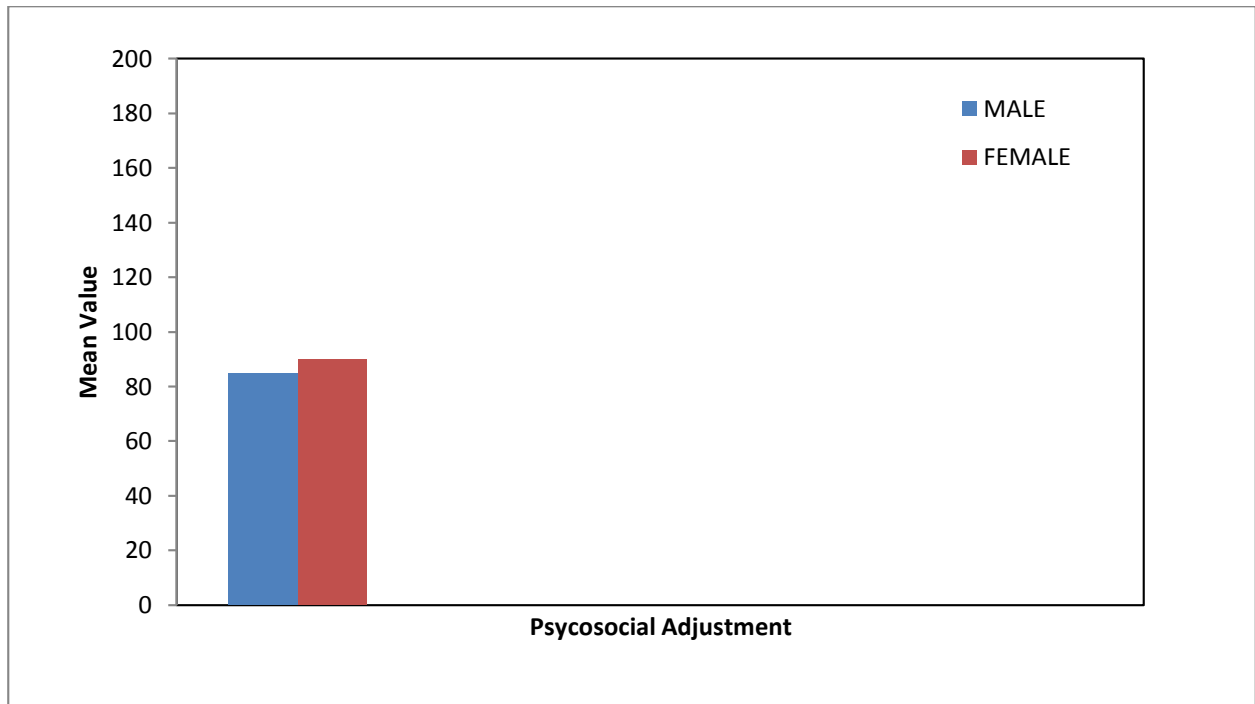
**Table 4.5: Showing Means, Standard Deviation and t-ratios of Samples of Boys and Girls on Different Variables**

S. No.	Variables	Boys		Girls		t-ratios
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1	Psychosocial adjustment	84.64	16.24	89.73	17.76	-2.115*
2	Parental attachment	89.40	12.75	91.41	15.10	-1.017
3	Attitudinal autonomy	16.41	2.58	16.27	2.92	0.359
4	Emotional autonomy	15.96	2.41	16.08	2.64	-0.335
5	Functional autonomy	17.18	3.15	16.96	3.08	0.499

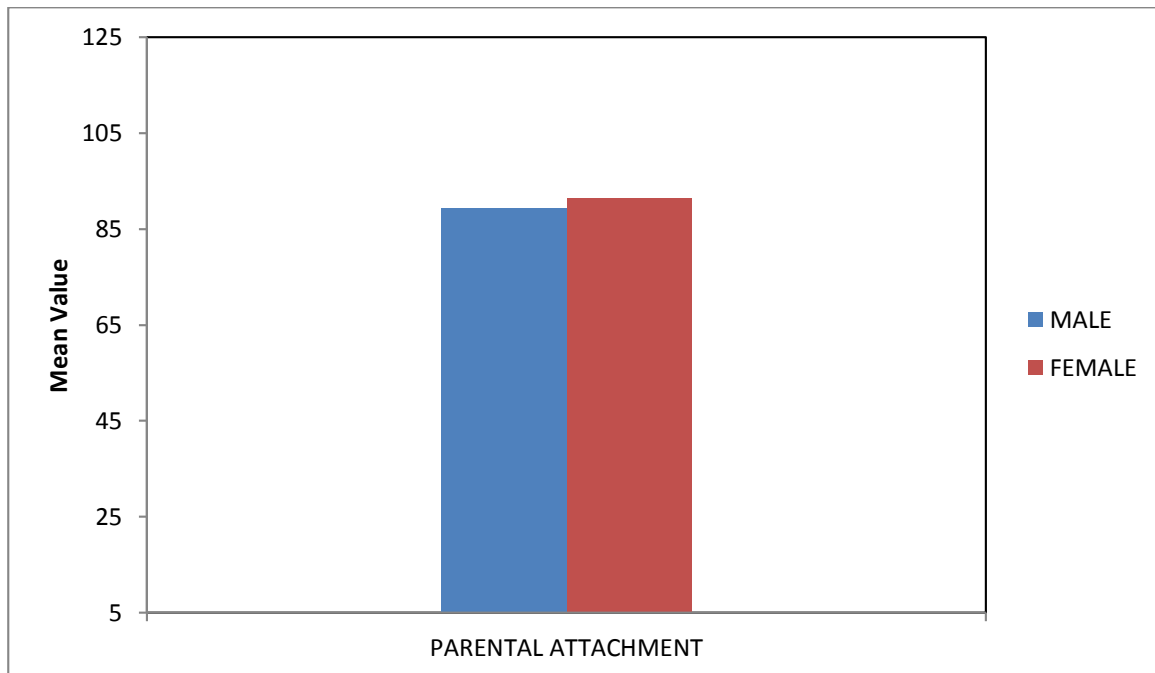
\*Significant at .05 level

\*\*Significant at .01 level

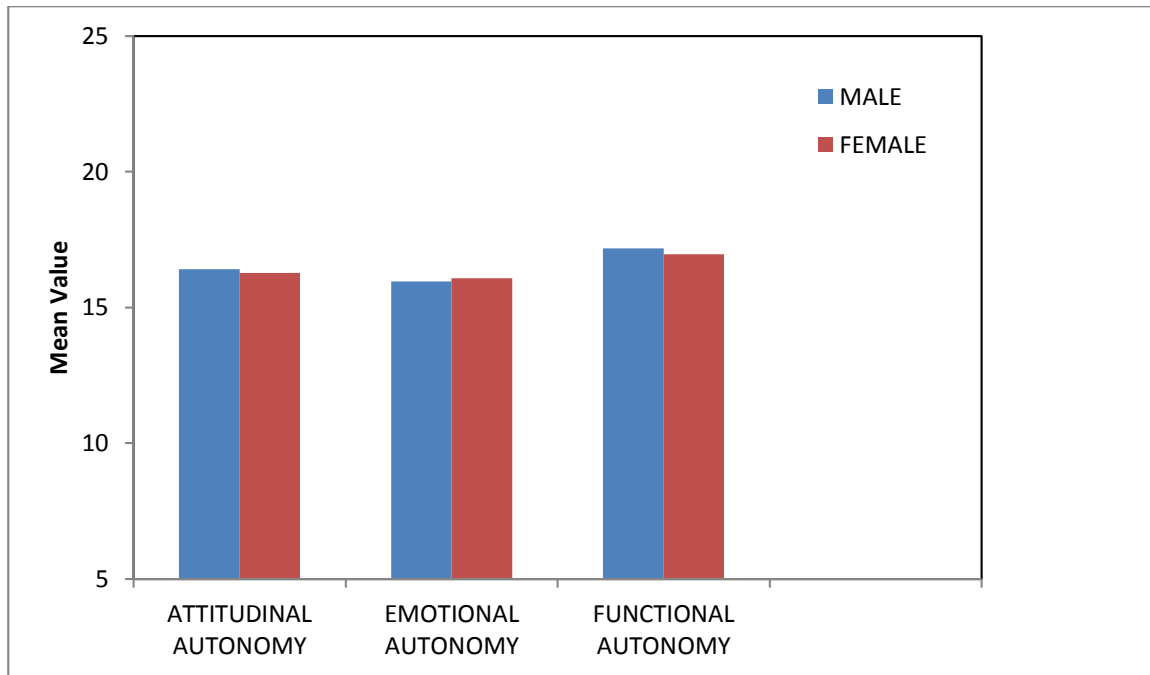
**Fig-4.1 Showing the mean score of males and females on psychosocial adjustment.**



**Fig-4.2 Showing the mean score of males and females on Parental attachment.**



**Fig-4.3 Showing the mean score of males and females on dimensions of autonomy.**



## **CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed at finding the relationship and gender difference among psychosocial adjustment, parental attachment and autonomy. In the present study, we found that both boys and girls have significant positive correlations between psychosocial adjustment and parental attachment, attitudinal autonomy, functional autonomy and emotional autonomy (in case of girls only). So, our hypothesis 1 stated as there will be a significant relationship between autonomy of young adults and their psychosocial adjustment, is partially accepted & hypothesis 2 stated as there will be a significant relationship between parental attachment and psychosocial adjustment of young adults.

Moreover, further results reveals that there were significant gender difference on psychosocial adjustment. Boys have better adaptive capacities than do girls. Hence. Our hypothesis 3 which states that there will be a significant gender differences on psychosocial adjustment, parental attachment & autonomy is also partially accepted.

## **FUTURE SCOPE**

As it has been seen that today many youngsters face the problems related to adjustment and developing autonomy. Many adolescents and adults indulge in maladaptive behavior like drug addiction, interpersonal problems, suicides and other crimes. This study was attempt to study the relationship of autonomy and parental attachment with psychosocial adjustment. The results revealed that the autonomy and parental attachment has a positive relationship with psychosocial adjustment. So, these findings will help the parents, teachers and youth to know the effect of autonomy and parental attachment on psychosocial adjustment.

Young adults should be helped to become autonomous while maintaining attachment to parents in order to attain good psychosocial adjustment.

## **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

As every research has some limitations, there are also some limitations in my research. The following are the some limitations of this study:

1. In this research, the sample size was small, so the results of the present study cannot be generalized. In future, the large sample size should be taken.
2. In present research, incidental sampling technique was used but in future probability sampling technique should be used.
3. In present study, psychosocial adjustment is studied in context of autonomy and parental attachment. In future, psychosocial adjustment should be study with others variables like self-esteem, peer pressure etc.



**CHAPTER-V**



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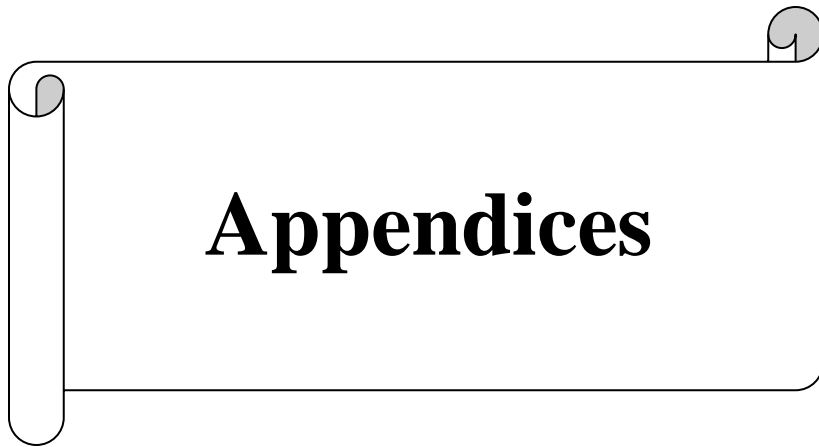
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A graphic of a scroll with the word "Appendices" written on it. The scroll is horizontal and has a vertical strip on the left side, suggesting it is unrolled. The word "Appendices" is centered on the scroll in a bold, black, serif font.

# Appendices

**APPENDIX-I: Proforma for Informed Consent**  
**LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**Rajandeep Kaur**  
M.A. Applied Psychology

**Dr. Radhika Gupta**  
Asst. Professor & Supervisor

Dear Friends!

Greetings. I am doing my dissertation on “**Psychosocial Adjustment of Young Adults in the Context of Autonomy and Parental Attachment**”. I would be grateful if you could kindly fill in these questionnaires. I assure that the information provided will be used purely for research purpose and kept strictly confidential.

Expecting your kind co-operation in this regard.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

**(RAJANDEEP KAUR)**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- |                    |   |               |
|--------------------|---|---------------|
| 1. Name (Optional) | : |               |
| 2. Gender          | : | Male / Female |
| 3. Age             | : |               |
| 4. Course & Year   | : |               |

## APPENDIX-II: Questionnaires

### Questionnaire - I

The following statements ask about your feelings about your **parents** or the person who has acted as your parents. Please read each statement and tick the option that tells how true the statement is for you now. Please be sure to rate each statement.

Sr. no.	Statements	Almost Never or never true	Not very often true	Some-times true	Often true	Almost Always or Always true
1.	My parents respect my feelings.					
2.	I feel my parents does a good job as a parents.					
3.	I wish I had a different parents.					
4.	My parents accepts me as I am.					
5.	I like to get my parent's point of view on things I am concerned about.					
6.	I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my parents.					
7.	My parents can tell when I am upset about something.					
8.	Talking over my problems with my parents makes me feel ashamed or foolish.					
9.	My parents expect too much from me.					
10.	I get upset easily around my parents.					
11.	I get upset a lot more than my parents knows about.					
12.	When we discuss things, my parents cares about my point of view.					
13.	My parents trust my judgment.					
14.	My parents has their own problems, so I don't bother them with mine.					
15.	My parents help me to understand myself better.					
16.	I tell my parents about my problems and troubles.					
17.	I feel angry with my parents.					
18.	I don't get much attention from my parents.					
19.	My parents helps me to talk about my difficulties.					
20.	My parents understands me.					
21.	When I am angry about something, my parents tries to be understanding					
22.	I trust my parents.					
23.	My parents doesn't understand what I am going through these days.					
24.	I can rely on my parents when I want to disclose something.					
25.	If my parents know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.					



### Questionnaire - II

Sr. no.	Statements	Very bad description of me	Bad description of me	Average description of me	Good description of me	Very good description of me
1.	I find it difficult to decide what I want.					
2.	I can make a choice easily.					
3.	I often don't know what to think.					
4.	When people ask me what I want, I immediately know the answer.					
5.	I often hesitate about what to do.					
6.	When I act against the will of others, I usually get nervous.					
7.	I have a strong tendency to comply with the wishes of others.					
8.	When I disagree with others, I tell them.					
9.	I often agree with others, even if I'm not sure.					
10.	I often change my mind after listening to others					
11.	I go straight for my goal.					
12.	I find it difficult to start a new activity on my own.					
13.	I can easily begin with new undertakings on my own.					
14.	I am an adventurous person.					
15.	I quickly feel at ease in a new situation.					

### Questionnaire - III

Sr.no.	Statements	Yes	No	Sometimes
1.	I have lot of ups and downs in my mood without any clear cause.			
2.	I often get help and support from my family members.			
3.	I m occasionally troubled by skin disease or skin eruption such as boils, rashes etc.			
4.	I often get badly confused or panicky in my school/college.			
5.	I feel self-conscious when I have to ask somebody for some work.			
6.	I am extremely afraid of certain objects which I know can do no harm to me.			

7.	I don't enjoy life at home with my family.			
8.	Have you ever had trouble with your heart, kidneys, or lungs?			
9.	I think I made wrong selection of my school/college.			
10.	I like to participate in parties and social gatherings.			
11.	I worry too long over humiliating (insulting) experiences.			
12.	I feel that my present family environment does not allow enough opportunities develop my personality.			
13.	I catch cold rather easily as compared to others.			
14.	My school/college does not allow enough time for extra-curricular activities.			
15.	I find it difficult to start a conversation with a stranger.			
16.	Some useless thoughts never come into my mind and bother me.			
17.	I often disagree with my parents about the type of occupation I will choose.			
18.	I find it necessary to watch my health carefully.			
19.	I have to do a lot of unwilling tasks to get appreciation from my teachers in college.			
20.	I get upset when someone asks me to speak in public, without any preparation.			
21.	I don't get upset very easily.			
22.	There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.			
23.	I frequently have shooting pains in the head.			
24.	I feel I am always treated fairly by others in my school/college.			
25.	I prefer to keep myself in the background on social occasions			
26.	I am often in a state of excitement.			
27.	I often have unpleasant disagreements over such matters as religion, politics, or sex with my family members.			
28.	I suffer from sinusitis and some obstruction in breathing.			
29.	My school/college requires very long hours of study.			
30.	I feel embarrassed if I have to ask for permission to leave a group of people.			
31.	I don't get disturbed by criticism.			
32.	I rarely volunteer myself when something has to be done in the family.			
33.	I often find it difficult to get rid of a cold.			
34.	At present I am willing to change my school/college and go to a better one.			
35.	I tend to have a few close friends rather than many casual acquaintances(known's).			
36.	I get troubled with the idea that people are watching me on the street.			
37.	I am quite happy and satisfied in my present family environment.			
38.	I am often troubled much with constipation.			
39.	In my school/college I have to study with certain classmates whom I dislike.			

40.	I am often a centre of attention at parties.			
41.	I get bothered by the feeling that people are reading my thoughts.			
42.	I feel lack of love and affection in my family.			
43.	I have frequently been absent from school/college due to illness.			
44.	My performance in school/college is good enough to get appreciation from my parents and teachers.			
45.	I make friends very easily.			
46.	I day-dream quite frequently.			
47.	I feel that my friends have happier family environments than mine.			
48.	I frequently experience nausea or vomiting or stomach upset.			
49.	I like almost all the students with whom I study in my school/college.			
50.	I hesitate to enter a room by myself when a group of people are sitting around talking to each other.			
51.	A lot of ideas run through my head that I cannot sleep.			
52.	Others in my family get angry at me quite often.			
53.	I am quite prone to tonsillitis or other throat ailments.			
54.	Have you frequently changed your school/college during the last three years?			
55.	I often hesitate to speak out in a group unless I am compelled to do so.			
56.	I don't worry much over possible misfortunes.			
57.	I feel that my family members are friendly and well suited to each other.			
58.	I am subject to attacks of indigestion.			
59.	I feel I get adequate opportunities to express my ideas in my school/college.			
60.	If I am late to join a function, I would rather stand or leave than take a front seat.			
61.	I blush very easily.			
62.	I dislike certain family members quite intensely.			
63.	I feel tired and lethargic most of the time.			
64.	My school/college forces me to do things in a hurry most of the times.			
65.	I like to appear before public gatherings.			
66.	I often feel self conscious because of my personal appearance.			
67.	I occasionally have conflicting moods of love and hate for members of my immediate family.			
68.	It has been necessary for me to have frequent medical attention.			
69.	In school/college others take all the credit for tasks which I have done myself.			
70.	I am frequently chosen as a leader at social affairs.			
71.	I don't consider myself as a nervous person.			

72.	There is plenty of time and attention for each other in our family.			
73.	I frequently have spells of dizziness.			
74.	I get lot of praise from others when I do well in my school/college.			
75.	It is difficult for me to start a conversation with a person with whom I have been just introduced.			
76.	I feel frightened when I am alone in the dark.			
77.	I get irritated by certain personal habits of my family member(s).			
78.	I have never been seriously injured in any kind of an accident.			
79.	I took admission in this school/college because I really wanted to study here.			
80.	I may cross the street to avoid meeting some people.			
81.	On a very high place I feel afraid that I may jump off.			
82.	I tend to get along well with the family member(s).			
83.	I tend to get along well with the family member(s).			
84.	I get discouraged quite frequently in my present school/college.			
85.	I like to take the responsibility of introducing people at social gathering.			
86.	I often feel depressed because of the unkind things others say about me.			
87.	I have frequent disagreements with the family member(s) concerning the way things are to be done.			
88.	I frequently feel very tired towards the end of the day.			
89.	My present school/college is quite boring.			
90.	I find it very difficult to ask help from others.			
91.	I am not easily moved to tears.			
92.	Some members of my family get irritated very easily.			
93.	I sometimes find it difficult to sleep even when there is nothing to disturb me.			
94.	I feel that I have very low real interest in my present school/college.			
95.	In group conversation, I have to think a lot before making an appropriate remark.			
96.	I often feel lonely even when I am with people.			
97.	I would like to move away from my family so that I may have more personal independence.			
98.	Are you subject to attacks of influenza (bad cold & fever; flu) quite often?			
99.	I have fear of failures in my present school/college.			
100.	I find it easy to make friendly contacts with the opposite sex.			