

# ADJUSTMENT OF ADOLESCENTS RESIDING IN URBAN, SUB URBAN AND RURAL AREAS– A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Dr. Mohua Chatterjee  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
Bethune College, Kolkata, India

**Abstract:** The present study intends to compare the adolescent inhabitants of urban, sub urban and rural areas of West Bengal in respect of their adjustment capacity. A total number of 191 adolescent boys and girls have been selected as the subjects from urban, sub urban and rural areas following certain a priori criteria. General Information Schedule and Life Environment Integration Inventory have been administered on the subjects. The findings indicate significant differences between rural and urban adolescent inhabitants in terms of all the dimensions and the total adjustment capacity. Significant differences are noted between rural and sub urban adolescents as well but urban and sub urban adolescents have not differed significantly in respect of their capacities of adjustment. It is noteworthy that the rural inhabitants have displayed the highest levels of adjustment capacity whereas the urban respondents are found to be the worst in terms of adjustment as compared to their sub urban and rural counterparts.

**Keywords – Urban, sub urban, rural, adjustment**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of rapid physical and mental changes in the individual. During this period the individuals start learning new habits and behaviours and giving up the old ones. They start to recognize their roles in the society and find themselves in a constant struggle between dream and reality, thought and action, prediction and practicality, conjecture and experience, and expectation and commitment. During this period, therefore, one has to make adjustment with his own self, the family and the society at large. People who do not negotiate these challenges positively suffer from personal and social problems leading towards maladjustment. Adjustment is a process wherein one makes variations in the behaviour to achieve concord with oneself, others or the environment with an aim to maintain the state of equipoise between the individual and the environment. There are two aspects of adjustment, that is, individual and social. The individual aspect of adjustment encompasses how an individual makes himself free from internal conflicts, tensions and inconsistencies and becomes skillful to adapt to new situations. The social aspect of adjustment reveals how an individual establishes a satisfactory relationship between himself and his environment, and between his needs and desires and those of other people. Adolescence is one of the most important and critical periods in an individual's life.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies have been made to compare the urban and rural inhabitants in terms of their capacities of adjustment. Bhagia (1966) studied the problems of school adjustment and observed that girls exceeded boys significantly in their adjustment to general environments and organizational aspects of the school. Rural school pupils exceeded urban school pupils significantly in adjustment to their teachers, classmates and self. Pandey (1979) found that rural students secured better points in emotional, health and school adjustment areas whereas the urban students secured comparatively better marks in the aesthetic adjustment area. Urban students were facing difficulty in adjustment in school, health and emotional areas. Veereswar (1979) found significant differences in the areas of family adjustment between urban and rural college going girls. The rural girls showed higher dissatisfactory adjustment in educational and social areas than the urban girls whereas the emotional adjustment of the rural girls was better than their urban counterparts. Kurvilla (2006) and Chamyal and Manral (2017) reported that urban students were better adjusted than rural students in all areas of adjustment. Kaur (2012) studied the adjustment among college students in relation to gender and locale and found that rural and urban college students differed significantly in terms of their adjustment capacities. No significant difference, however, was observed in adjustment of college boys and girls. In another study on urban and rural high school students Kaur (2012) reported that the rural high school girls were better adjusted than the rural boys. Saima (2015) noted significant difference in adjustment of males and females and also in terms of area of living i.e. urban and rural. Kalita et al. (2018) reported that there was a significant difference between the emotional adjustment scores of adolescent female students of rural and urban areas.

A few researches, however, reported insignificant differences between urban and rural inhabitants in terms of adjustment. Velmurugan and Balakrishnan (2011) found social adjustment to be independent of locality and gender. Insignificant difference in adjustment between urban and rural inhabitants was also observed by Paramanik et al. (2014) while studying the secondary

school students residing at urban and rural areas of Purulia district of west Bengal. However, the girls were found to be better adjusted as compared to the boys. Deka (2017) too revealed that there existed no significant difference between adolescent girl students from urban and rural areas in relation to their educational adjustment problems but a significant difference was found between urban and rural adolescent girls in relation to the social and emotional adjustment problems.

Some of the studies focused specifically on other correlates of adjustment apart from the locale and gender. Reddy (1978) investigated the problems of concern for the school going adolescents in city, semiurban and rustic places. The findings indicated that the adolescents irrespective of their locale found it problematic to adjust in the area of academics shadowed by their individual lives. Singh (2006) examined the effects of socio emotional climate of the school and sex on the adjustment of students along with their interactions effects. Boys were significantly better than girls in their health adjustment at different levels of socio-emotional climate of the school. Patel (2013) too studied the adjustment problems of students in relation to gender, socio economic status and academic achievement. The students exhibited satisfactory level of adjustment. A significant relationship was noted between their academic achievement and levels of adjustment. Significant differences in adjustment were also found in relation to the subjects' gender and socio economic status. Vaghela (2015) observed that the adolescent girl students from nuclear and joint families differed significantly in terms of social and emotional adjustment but no significant difference was noted between the two groups in terms of educational adjustment.

The above overview of studies reveals that many of the researches in the area of adjustment have been conducted to explore the correlates of adjustment. Investigation has been made to compare the adolescents residing at urban and rural areas in terms of personal, emotional, social and educational dimensions of adjustment. However, inconsistencies are noted in the findings of these researches. Moreover, there is a definite dearth of studies on adjustment of adolescents living in sub urban areas. Hence no attempt has been made to compare the adjustment capacities of the adolescent inhabitants of urban, sub urban and rural areas. The present study is an attempt to fill this void.

### III.METHOD

#### 3.1 Objective of the Study

The present study intends to compare the three groups of adolescent subjects residing at urban, sub urban and rural areas of west Bengal across the psychological variable of life environment integration, that is, in terms of nature of adjustment with special reference to family, community and society at large.

#### 3.2 Concepts and Operationalization

##### 3.2.1Urban

The term 'Urban' is derived from the Latin word 'Urbanus' meaning "belonging to a city. An urban area is a human settlement with high population density and infrastructure of built environment. The urban area is man-made and mechanical; is well equipped with technologies; and is comprised of various facilities, such as, shopping malls, big complexes, amusement parks, commercial sectors and better transportation system. Urban area acts as a social, political, cultural and economic pivot.

##### 3.2.2 Sub urban

Sub urbanization is closely relevant to over urbanization of a city. Overcrowding of cities by population may result in sub urbanization. Sub urbanization means urbanization of rural areas around the cities based on certain basic features such as, a rapid increase in the 'urban uses' of land resulting in inclusion of surrounding areas of towns within its municipal limits, and intensive communication of all types between town and its surrounding areas. Sub urban is generally a residential area, dependent on urban structure.

##### 3.2.3 Rural

A rural area, also known as village or countryside in India is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. Rural areas characterized by farms, vegetation, and open spaces have low population density as compared to the urban or sub urban areas.

##### 3.2.4Adjustment

Adjustment refers to the behavioural process of balancing conflicting needs, or needs challenged by hindrance in the environment. Social and cultural adjustments are akin to physiological adjustments. People struggle to be comfortable in their surroundings and want their psychological needs to be satisfied through the social networks they inhabit. When needs arise, they propel interpersonal activity meant to satisfy those needs. In this way, people increase their familiarity and comfort with their environments, and come to expect that their needs will be met in future through their social networks.

#### 3.3 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The adolescents residing in urban and sub urban areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern.

Hypothesis 2: The adolescents residing in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern.

Hypothesis 3: The adolescents residing in rural and sub urban areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern.

#### 3.4 Tools

To verify the hypotheses the following tools were used:

3.4.1) General Information Scheduled developed by the present investigator

3.4.2) Life Environment Integration Inventory (Dasgupta and Bose, 1984)

### 3.4.1 General Information Schedule

The General Information Schedule developed by the present investigator comprises items like age, sex, number of members in the family, location of the residence, location of the school, approximate monthly family income of the participants and the duration of their stay in the present locations to obtain some general information about them.

### 3.4.2 Life Environment Integration Inventory

This scale developed by Dasgupta and Bose (1984) provides an efficient way to collect information regarding the adolescent students' adjustment pattern, personality problems, group cohesiveness and social belief pattern. The inventory consists of 119 statements which are designed to yield information about four different areas, namely, constitutional, home adjustment, personal social adjustment and personal societal adjustment respectively.

1. Constitutional factor: Consisting of 33 items, this factor encompasses the informants' views regarding their physiological and psychological dispositions – concerning health and temperament.
2. Home adjustment factor: Consisting of 25 items, this factor relates to the informants' nurturing figures, family members and home environment – expressing attitudes towards parents and family, mainly.
3. Personal-social adjustment factor : Consisting of 31 items, this factor covers informants' views regarding their actual role-playing in the social life and several important preferences in community meets and gathering in public places - indicative of social skills and personal-social preferences, mainly.
4. Personal - societal adjustment factor: Consisting of 30 items, this factor encompasses informants' views regarding education, legal and economic systems, in vogue.

Life Environment Integration Inventory is a Likert type scale with five response options. High score indicates better adjustment capacity.

Estimation of reliability of Life Environment Integration Inventory has been worked out by both split-half (odd-even) and test-retest methods. Reliability Coefficients of the four scales of the Inventory by odd-even split half and Test-Retest methods are presented below: (N=888)

Scales	Reliability Coefficients	
	Odd-even	Test-retest
Constitutional	0.85	0.78
Home Adjustment	0.86	0.81
Personal-social Adjustment	0.82	0.77
Personal-societal Adjustment	0.82	0.78

### 3.5 Study areas and subjects

In order to select the subjects, initially some sub urban areas which are not included under Kolkata Municipal area were earmarked. Kolkata city was considered as the urban region. Two villages at Midnapur District (West) were chosen as the rural areas. Then a group of schools from different parts of Kolkata city, the selected sub urban and rural regions were identified at random basis for the availability of adolescent subjects and consequent ease of data collection. Thereafter, the present investigator met the representatives of the management of those schools for getting permission to collect data from their students. Finally, 60 adolescent subjects from the urban areas, 62 adolescents from the sub urban areas and 69 adolescents from the rural areas were considered as the respondents of the present study based on the following criteria:

- i) Those aged between 13 and 16 years were considered as the subjects.
- ii) Only those belonging to the Bengali community were considered as the subjects.
- iii) It was ensured that the urban group of subjects consisted of those residing in Kolkata city and studying at the Kolkata based schools whereas the subjects belonging to the sub urban and the rural groups were the residents of the sub urban and the rural areas and were the students of the schools situated at the selected sub urban and rural areas respectively.
- iv) The respondents were considered irrespective of gender.
- v) All the subjects were the residents at their present locations at least for the last five years.
- vi) Only those who were willing to participate in the study were considered.

### 3.6 Procedure

At first consent was taken from the respondents after explaining to them the purpose of the research and its utilization in academics. After establishing rapport with the subjects, the questionnaires were distributed to them. After collection, the data sheet of each individual was carefully scrutinized by the present investigator to eliminate the possibility of omission.

After that the data were tabulated and scored accordingly. In case of General Information Schedule the frequencies for each type of responses were determined after tabulating all the responses of the subjects belonging to each category of subjects, namely, urban, sub urban and rural. In case of Life Environment Integration Inventory the standard scoring key was used to score the data. The tabulated scores were classified either in qualitative categories (for General Information Schedule data) or in quantitative categories (for Life Environment Integration Inventory data) for further statistical analysis.

### 3.7 Statistical Analysis of Data

To portray a typical picture of the general characteristic features of the subjects, descriptive statistics like mode values and percentages were calculated. In case of Life Environment Integration Inventory, in addition to arithmetic means and standard

deviations (for each category of subjects) t-test was applied to compare the data of different categories of inhabitants across different dimensions as well as the total scale.

#### IV. RESULTS

Table 4.1: General characteristic features of urban, sub urban and rural adolescents

General characteristics	Urban adolescents (N=60)	Sub urban adolescents (N=63)	Rural adolescents (N=69)
1. Age in years (Mode value)	13	16	15
2. Sex ratio Male: Female	3:1	13:9	7:3
3. Academic Standard (in %)			
i. 9-10	86.66	79.45	80.22
ii. 11-12	13.34	20.55	19.78
4. No. of family members (Mode value)	4	4	5
5. Monthly income of the family (in %)			
i. 25,000-above	75	68.25	59.15
ii. 15,000-25,000	3.33	12.69	20.66
iii. 10,000-15,000	10	7.93	10.20
iv. 5,000-10,000	10	7.93	7.69
v. Below 5,000	1.67	3.20	2.30
5. Duration of stay in the present locality (Mode value)	10.5 years	15.4 years	15 years

##### 4.1 General characteristics of Adolescents

The general characteristics data inserted in table 4.1 illustrate the typical characteristic features of the adolescents residing in the urban, sub urban and rural areas selected in the present study. The adolescents residing in urban, sub urban and rural areas are aged around 13 years, 16 years and 15 years respectively. The adolescent subjects have been selected irrespective of their genders in the present investigation though the number of male participants is more than the females in all the groups. All the subjects are literate. Their academic standards reflect that they are matured, focused and equipped with adequate knowledge about their neighbourhood and surrounding world at large. All the subjects belong to small nuclear families and are found to reside in their present locations for a pretty long time so as to ensure that they have got adequate opportunities to be exposed to the activities of their respective localities.

Table 4.2: life environment integration scores of urban and sub urban adolescents and their comparisons

Life environment integration dimensions	Urban (N=60)		Sub urban (N=63)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Constitutional factor	70.03	17.39	72.95	18.71	0.89*
Home adjustment factor	52.75	11.28	55.84	12.71	1.43*
Personal social adjustment factor	67.48	10.72	71.19	10.45	1.95*
Personal societal adjustment factor	65.56	8.87	66.14	10.88	0.32*
Total	255.83	37.32	266.12	41.55	1.44*

\*Difference insignificant

High score indicates better adjustment

#### 4.2 Life environment integration capacities of urban and sub urban adolescents

Table 4.2 presents the comparison between the two groups of adolescent subjects residing at urban and sub urban areas regarding different dimensions of adjustment, namely, constitutional, home adjustment, personal social adjustment and personal societal adjustment respectively as well as overall life environment integration capacity. The findings indicate that in case of all the dimensions and the total thereof, the mean values of the sub urban subjects are higher as compared to those of their urban subjects, that is, the sub urban adolescents have displayed slightly better adjustment capacities in all the above referred areas in comparison to their urban counterparts in so far as the average scores are concerned. Table 4.2 further reveals that no significant differences exist between the urban and the sub urban adolescent participants in respect of all the dimensions as well as the overall life environment integration capacity. Such findings speak in favour of acceptance of Hypothesis 1, that is, 'The adolescents residing in urban and sub urban areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern'.

Table 4.3: life environment integration scores of urban and rural adolescents and their comparisons

Life environment integration dimensions	Urban (N=60)		Rural (N=69)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Constitutional factor	70.03	17.39	90.29	12.73	7.454**
Home adjustment factor	52.75	11.28	68.03	19.08	5.617**
Personal social adjustment factor	67.48	10.72	84.54	25.02	5.145**
Personal societal adjustment factor	65.56	8.87	77.61	19.55	4.604**
Total	255.83	37.32	322.65	33.34	10.656**

\*\* p<0.01

High score indicates better adjustment

#### 4.3 Life environment integration capacities of urban and rural adolescents

Table 4.3 depicts the comparison between the urban and rural adolescents in respect of their capacities of adjustment. The rural subjects have displayed better adjustment capacities as evidenced by their higher mean values in all the dimensions and also the total scale as compared to their urban counterparts. The finding corroborates with the observations of other researchers (Bhagia, 1966; Pandey, 1979; and Kaur, 2012). There are contradictory results too (Kurvilla, 2006; and Chamyal and Manral, 2017). Moreover, the two groups of respondents have differed significantly (at 0.01 level) in so far as the dimensions and the total thereof are concerned. In view of such findings Hypothesis 2 postulating 'The adolescents residing in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern' is rejected. The finding is in congruence with the research findings of Veereswar (1979), Kaur (2012), Saima (2015) and Kalita et al. (2018) but contradicts the results stated by Velmurugan and Balakrishnan (2011), Pramanik et al. (2014) and Deka (2017).

Table 4.4: life environment integration scores of rural and sub urban adolescents and their comparisons

Life environment integration dimensions	Rural (N=69)		Sub urban (N=63)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Constitutional factor	90.29	12.73	72.95	18.71	6.166**
Home adjustment factor	68.03	19.08	55.84	12.71	4.353**
Personal social adjustment factor	84.54	25.02	71.19	10.45	4.060**
Personal societal adjustment factor	77.61	19.55	66.14	10.88	4.212**
Total	322.65	33.34	266.12	41.55	8.571**

p<0.01

High score indicates better adjustment

#### 4.4 Life environment integration capacities of rural and sub urban adolescents

Table 4.4 shows the comparison between rural and sub urban adolescents in terms of their life environment integration capacities. It is clear from the findings that rural inhabitants have better adjustment capacities than the sub urban ones. Moreover, substantially significant differences (at 0.01 level) are found between the two groups of respondents regarding all the dimensions and the total scale. Therefore Hypothesis 3 stating 'The adolescents residing in rural and sub urban areas do not differ significantly with respect to adjustment pattern' is rejected.

#### V. DISCUSSION

A detailed discussion as to the reasons behind the above referred findings is presented below. No significant differences in the perceptions of the urban and the sub urban adolescent dwellers have been recorded relating to the dimensions of life environment integration capacity and the total thereof. The possible reason may be that the urban and the sub urban areas do not differ much in terms of infrastructure and basic amenities as the sub urban is a part of the urban area and sprouts out of it due to over-population in the urban areas. In so far as the constitutional factor is concerned, the adolescents belonging to the urban and the sub urban areas are equally aware of the healthcare benefits. Nowadays, both urban and sub urban locations are neatly packed and equipped with the gymnasiums, parks, health care centres etc. When it comes to the home adjustment factor, it appears that most of the adolescent respondents residing in both types of locations considered in the present study have grown up in nuclear families where the family size and structures, facilities, psychological climates including the amount of power and control exerted by the authority figures, the amount of autonomy allowed to the adolescents, nature of relationships amongst the family members etc are almost the same without any effect of the nature of locations. Consequently, the attitudes of the adolescent boys and girls towards their care givers and other members of the families and their inter-se family relationships are alike which create no dissimilar impacts on their home adjustment capacities. Due to the almost equal opportunities and provisions in terms of infrastructure and services rendered to the inhabitants of urban and sub urban sectors, not much difference is expected in the knowledge and understandings of these two groups of adolescents about the educational, socio-economic and judicial systems. Furthermore, owing to the exposure to similar kind of social scenario, they also develop uniform social skills and learn to play their social roles alike.

It is clearly evident from Tables 4.3 and 4.4 that the rural inhabitants have significantly differed from their urban and sub urban counterparts in respect of all the dimensions of life environment integration as well as the total thereof. Moreover, the adolescents living in rural areas are found to possess better adjustment skills as compared to those residing in urban and sub urban locations. Nowadays, people including the adolescents are generally health conscious and try to follow the health care measures like physical exercise, maintenance of proper food habits and other methods to keep themselves in good physical shapes. Moreover, the village lifestyle compels the local people to be engaged in physical activities as most of the villages in our country are not equipped with transportation facilities as good as the cities and even the suburbs. In so far as the home adjustment dimension is concerned, the village community may be conceived of as a totally inclusive group. The villagers gratify most of their needs and derive satisfaction through participating in the community activities. They generally share strong emotional bonds and attachment with the members of their families, and develop favourable attitudes towards the caregivers and the nurturing figures. This in turn may foster their relationship with the community members. Furthermore, because of the better facilities of the rural adolescents to mix and interact with other members of their communities without any prejudice or reservations and participate in various local activities in comparison to their urban and sub urban counterparts, their spheres of communications become much wider which help them to develop their social skills and to have better understandings about the demands and responsibilities related to different roles to be played in their social lives. All these may enable the rural group of adolescent respondents to play active and meaningful roles in society resulting in the development of pro attitudes in them and making them more sociable. It is interesting to note that the present group of rural adolescents have displayed better understanding and perceptions about the existing education, legal and economic systems. Analyses of the reasons behind this indicates that because of their greater interests and opportunities to communicate with a larger number of people than the other two groups of subjects the rural adolescent boys and girls acquire and develop richer knowledge about the prevailing systems. Mass media and internet services over smart phones foster and fulfil their interests and eagerness to learn even further.

#### VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study has compared the adolescents residing in urban, sub urban and rural areas of west Bengal in terms of their adjustment capacities. Significant differences in adjustment have been found between rural and urban and between rural and sub urban adolescents, with the rural inhabitants exhibiting better adjustment capacities in all the areas of adjustment as compared to the urban and the sub urban ones. Future studies may focus on assessing nature and capacity of adjustment across gender and age groups. Attempts may be made to determine the antecedent conditions causing the difference in adjustment of urban, sub urban and rural inhabitants.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Bhagia, N.M. 1966. Study of the problem of school adjustment and developing in adjustment inventory. Ph.D.Edu. (K.S.U.).
- [2] Chamyal, D.S. and Manral, B. 2017. A comparative study of the adjustment among secondary and senior secondary school students of Almora district. The International Journal of Indian Psychology, 4 (2), 85: 61-69.

- [3] Dasgupta, S.K. and Bose, S. 1984. Life-Environment Integration Inventory, Department of Applied Psychology. University of Calcutta.
- [4] Deka, S. 2017. Adjustment problems among adolescent girl students of secondary schools: A study. International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Field, 3 (8).
- [5] Kalita, P. and Kalita, N. 2018. Emotional adjustment of adolescent students of class XI of Dibrugarh District, Assam with respect to their gender and locality. Dimorian Review, 5(3).
- [6] Kaur, J. 2012. Adjustment among college students. Psycho Lingua, 42(2).
- [7] Kaur, S. 2012. A study of adjustment of high school students in relation to their achievement, sex and locality. International Journal of Research in Education, Methodology Council for Innovative Research, 1 (2):18-21.
- [8] Kurvilla, M. 2006. Sex and local difference in emotional adjustment of adolescents, Journal of Community Guidance and Research, 23 (3): 285-291.
- [9] Pandey, J. 1979. Adjustment Problems of Adolescents in Relation to their Personality Variables. Unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, Varanasi, B.H.U.
- [10] Paramanik, J., Saha, B. and Mondal, B. C. 2014. Adjustment of secondary school students with respect to gender and residence. American Journal of Educational Research, 2 (12): 1138-1143.
- [11] Patel, H.T. 2013. A study of emotional intelligence and adjustment of 9th standard students. International Journal for Research in Education, 2 (6).
- [12] Reddy, A.V.R. 1978. Parental education status and adjustment of children. Psychological Studies, 20 (1-2).
- [13] Saima, H. 2015. Adjustment of the college students among urban and rural area in Jammu district. Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing, 6 (3): 331-333.
- [14] Singh, H. 2006. Effect of socio emotional climate of the school on the adjustment of students. Psycho lingua, 36 (2): 133-143.
- [15] Vaghela, K.J. 2015. Adjustment among adolescent girl students of secondary school with respect to their type of family. International Journal of Applied Research, 1(8): 781-784.
- [16] Veereshwar, P. 1979. A study of mental health and adjustment problems of school going girls urban and rural. Dept. of Psychology, Meerut University 1979, Buch, M.B. Fourth Survey of Research in Education Vol. 1, NCERT, New Delhi (1983-84)
- [17] Velmurugan, K. and Balakrishnan, V. A. 2011. Study on Self Concept of Higher Secondary Students in relation to Social Adjustment. International Journal of Current Research, 3(11): 340-343.

