

Adjustment Problems of Adolescents

Meaning of Adjustment:

Adjustment in simple terms means the process by which an individual tries to change his behaviour according to the needs of his surroundings to establish a harmonious relationship between himself and his environment. All through one's life i.e. from birth to death, one keeps on trying to make such adjustment. Adjustment brings peace and happiness to one's life. Adjustment helps an individual to reduce stress and tension. A well adjusted person is never frustrated over petty things. He learns how to handle situations and solve his own problems. He is aware of his limitations. To sum up, he has a very realistic approach and positive attitude towards life.

It is observed that man though tries hard is always not able to adjust to his situations. When this happens conflict arises in his mind. In such a situation he is torn between his desire and course of action. This disturbs his emotional stability.

For wellbeing of an individual these conflicts have to be resolved. Such conflicts might be mild, lasting for a short duration. But some may be intense, which may last for long time. Such a long lasting conflicts upset the entire personality make up of an individual and he experiences emotional turmoil, confusion, which often leads him to behave in an undesirable manner.

Characteristics of Adjustment

1. Through adjustment we can keep a balance between our needs and capacity to meet them.
2. It brings a change in our thinking process and way of life according to the demands of the situations.
3. It gives us the strength and ability to bring the changes in the environment as per our desires.
4. It is both physiological and psychological.
5. It is multi dimensional.
6. It makes us happy and develops a sense of contentment.

Qualities of a well adjusted Person:

- 1. Awareness of his own strength and weakness:** A well adjusted person understands his strength and weakness. He makes a very reasonable judgement of himself.

2. Respecting Himself and Others: They have a respect for their own self and also respect the feelings, opinion and sentiment of others.

3. Adequate Level of Aspiration: People who are well adjusted do not have aspirations which are either too high or too low.

4. Flexible Behaviour: They can adapt to any kind of situation.

5. Absence of Critical Attitude: Well adjusted people do not focus on the negative aspect of any situation or individual.

6. Sound Physical Health: Well adjusted individuals possess a sound physical health. It is believed that sound mind exists only in a sound body.

7. Feeling of Security: A well adjusted person always feels secured about his present and future life.

8. Cheerful and Optimistic Outlook: A well adjusted individual is not easily depressed and possesses a positive outlook towards life.

9. Emotional balance: A well adjusted person has complete control over his emotions.

10. Acceptance of Reality: A Well adjusted individual can adjust with whatever problems come his way.

Causes of Adjustment Disorder among Adolescents:

1. When an adolescent suffers from a chronic disease for a long time he/she develops such disorder.

2. If an adolescent has been physically or sexually abused during childhood or at any time he/she may develop adjustment disorder.

3. Adolescents are usually not able to take death of a loved one very easily and they develop disorder.

4. Adolescents who changes school frequently, face a lot of problem in adjusting with the new environment

5. Adolescents who do not have a good relation with peers and teachers also have adjustment problems.

6. Children who have been victims of violence and war also develop adjustment disorder during adolescence.

7. Children belonging to unhappy families, broken homes or families where parents have a divorce or stay separately, develop adjustment disorder.

Adjustment Mechanism:

An individual takes help of various means or ways to overcome his tension and frustration. He may either try to destruct the objective of his frustration, withdraw from the situation or try to satisfy his need by dreaming etc. He resorts to various mechanisms to overcome his frustration. These mechanisms are known as “defence or adjustment mechanism.” They employ these mechanisms to escape from conflicts and anxiety.

Characteristics of Adjustment Mechanism:

1. Almost every individual take help of these adjustment mechanism.
2. With the help of adjustment mechanism an individual tries to escape from anxiety that he faces in reality.
4. Adjustment mechanism help an individual to adjustment with his situation. .
5. Adjustment mechanisms are learned from the environment.
6. Because of adjustment mechanism sometimes the individual is deprived of actual knowledge on the basis of action.

Some Common Mechanism/Techniques of Adjustment:

Simple Denial:

The easiest way to maintain the balance of personality is to deny the fact which could create conflict in the mind. When children are busy in play activities, if parents call them, the children will say they heard nothing. In adults, the percentage of denial is higher than children. Adults are not always prepared to admit frankly failures in their daily life. Denial helps to postpone facing a problem or a failure.

Compensation:

It is a tendency of every person to make up deficiency of one trait or area of development in another area. When a person feels weak and fails in one area, he compensates in another field. The students, who do poorly in school work, compensate in non academic activities. The boy who is weak in English, may compensate in Hindi. There are many interesting examples of compensation as Sandoz who was physically weak worked so hard that he became the best in physics. Lord Byron compensated his physical weakness in verbal expression and became the best speaker of his time.

Sublimation:

Sublimation is the most advanced highly developed and constructive mechanism. Here the socially unacceptable desires are sublimated by directing them into socially acceptable channels. It contributes to character and personality development and plays an important role in maintenance of emotional and mental health. Sublimation can be done through dancing, music, art and crafts.

Identification

It is a form of adjustment mechanism through which an individual identifies himself with another person. Here the individual tries to acquire some of the characteristics of the person with whom he identifies himself. Usually adolescents identify himself with some political leaders, youth leaders or actors and actresses. Identification may be a conscious process. The person seems to be aware of his attempts to make himself similar to a model who has the characteristics that are supposed to reduce his anxiety.

Projection:

It is the most common adjustment mechanism which is used by all people in daily life. It is a process of adjustment through which one may throw the blame or guilt upon others because of their own fault. By doing so they get some superficial satisfaction in mind. It may save him from any mental injury or inferiority complex in the situation. E.g. if the examinee could not do well in examination he says that questions were very stiff or the teacher has done partiality to him.

Rationalisation:

There are some persons who may consider their faulty actions and behaviour as reasonable and rational. Through this process of rationalisation the person can normalise the fault or failure as something reasonable. Through such consideration he derives superficial satisfaction in mind for his misdeeds. E.g. the child who fails in the examination blames the paper setter or lack of books etc. There are two types of rationalisation-

Repression:

It means keeping something out of consciousness. Our ideas, attitudes or feelings that are painful in our awareness may be removed from our conscious mind by way of repression. We try to forget what makes us feel inferior, ashamed, guilty and anxious.

Retreat:

Retreat is keeping oneself away from the unhappy and painful situation of life. A child for example may go early to bed in order to avoid the educational task or might run away from home only to get rid of family disturbances. In this type of adjustment mechanism, the individual does not take part in any activity as he thinks he might fail and be punished or humiliated. Due to this fear sometimes people refuse to even make an attempt at swimming, speaking, driving etc. An extremely mentally tortured person may resolve to be off from them by committing suicide.

Suggestions to Overcome Problems of Adolescents adjustment:

- Parents and teachers should explain to the children about the various aspects of growth and development during adolescent period- biological changes, emotional changes, social changes, sexual changes etc
- Sex related doubts should be clarified to them

- Adolescents should be respected and be given freedom to share their feelings and problems.
- Views of adolescents are also to be taken for decision making.
- Based on the individual needs, the curricular and co-curricular activities are to be planned so that they will all participate fully.
- Moral and religious education helps to reduce the restlessness, indiscipline, dishonesty and aimlessness among the youth.
- Guidance and counselling should be set at school to provide service to the needs and aspirations of individuals.
- In school healthy friendliness has to be encouraged between boys and girls, which may minimise the unwanted imagination about sex.
- Adolescents should be encouraged to adopt the great personalities of the world as role models.
- A regular parent-teacher meet brings down majority of problems of an individual.
- They should be encouraged in participating different social activities, recreational activities etc. through which they develop a sense of recognition and responsibility.

(Prepared with inputs from: *Advanced Educational Psychology*: Dr. S.S. Chauhan,
Developmental Psychology: Dr. Phunu Das Sarma & Dr. Sadhana Goswami, *Sikshar Mano Bijyan Bhittik Adhayan*: Jatin Barua)