

# Adolescents' Perception of Adjustment Problems and School Counseling Services

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**Abstract:** *The present study was designed to investigate adolescent's perception of their adjustment problems and school counselling services. The study was conducted on 100 students of VIII standard randomly selected from 10 schools of Chandigarh. Student problem checklist, prepared by Department of Educational Psychology and Foundation of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, and a self-prepared questionnaire was used. The results revealed that school going adolescent's perceived low adjustment in the domains of studies, occupation and health. They perceived high adjustment in domains related to economic status, family, anxiety, religion and social areas. The girls showed higher level of maladjustment for health domain in comparison to the boys. The boys showed a higher level of maladjustment in the occupation and school domains. All the respondents emphasized on the need of counselling, however, very few had actually approached any professional for counselling and were not very clear about the role of counsellors in schools. The study revealed that adolescents approached teachers for counselling in the absence of professional counsellors in the school set up. This study highlights the need for orienting and educating the adolescents on the need and importance of seeking professional counselling at the time of any problem and for making good adjustment in life.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents, adjustment problems, counselling need, gender differences, School counselling services,

## 1. Introduction

When a developmental stage of adolescence is described as a stage of turbulence, a 'period of storm and stress', of emotional instability, and a problem age, exploring the truth behind such statements generates interest. The complex and dynamic nature of current social context poses even greater challenges for adolescents than before, and this further justifies the need to understand the manner in which they perceive these challenges and related problems and the way they make adjustments. Adolescents are often faced with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, friends as well as themselves (Gupta, 2003). Striking a balance between them can be stressful especially if they are not sufficiently equipped to cope with them. (Walker, 2002).

## 2. Causes and Correlates of Stress Among Adolescents

### The changing body and appearance

The effects of the pubertal transition and appearance, both immediate and transient, make adolescent adaptation particularly difficult. Several concerns about appearance and self-image have been reported to be significantly associated with elevated stressful mental health symptoms and adjustment problems (Kim et al. 2003).

### The challenges within the family

Family environment, Parenting style, rules, and expectations regarding behavior and autonomy and related factors also cause tremendous stress for adolescents as dealing and adapting to these is often a challenging job for them. The quality of the parental relationship, whether the parents are together, separated, or divorced is of major importance to the adolescent, and may create numerous problems (Muzi, 2000). Other issues like parental alcoholism, domestic

violence or financial problems also have a significant impact on adolescent development and are potential sources of raised stress among adolescents. Differences in family cultural background and that of the environment also lead to conflicts due to discrepancy in social and moral values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Bhattacharya, 1985).

### Beyond the family: Peers, school and others

Problems related to school failure, study habits, academic stress, pupil-teacher relationship, and the like are stressful and thus cause of serious adjustment problems for adolescents. (Verma & Saraswati 2002). Scholastic achievement has been consistently related to mental health problems of school going adolescents. Studies on Chinese and Japanese adolescents though have found no relation between stress and academic achievements, but in contrast, U.S. students have reported greater feelings of stress.

Peer group assumes greater importance during adolescence and has also been related to adjustment and various other problems such as bullying and isolation. Making friends and seeking their acceptance is a normal phenomenon during the turbulent years of adolescence (Verma, 1995). Adolescents who do not find a minimal degree of acceptance are likely to suffer lasting consequences of isolation, low self-esteem and stress. Most adolescents tend to devote a great deal of time in developing characteristics which gets them some status in the peer group (Bhattacharya, 1985). In domains such as trends in physical appearance, leisure time activities, and heterosexual communication the peers are followed. However, sometimes the price of admission to a 'cool' peer society for many adolescents may lead to involvement with smoking, alcohol and drugs. (Needleman, 2001).

Religion, class and caste, are some other factors related to social relationships and adjustment of the adolescents. The expectations, moral and religious beliefs, conduct in public, ideas about education and marriage and occupational

aspirations are all governed by these factors. Changes in relationships as the adolescents mature for example ones with parents, siblings, peers and those in position of authority also are a cause of adjustment problems and stress.

#### **Relationship with the opposite sex**

Although, it is natural for adolescents to be attracted to peers of the opposite sex, it may also be stressful especially if significant others do not approve of the same. In India, heterosexual interactions are generally discouraged, (Saraswati 1999) There is tremendous amount of stress encountered by adolescents to achieve satisfactory relationships with the opposite sex. Realizing the dilemma of many adolescents regarding sex information, educators have shown much concern about the inadequate and incorrect information about human sexuality and many schools have incorporated family life education into the curriculum to give youth accurate and more complete information on sexuality issues. However, school curriculum related to sex education shows that much information is provided on menstruation, reproductive system and venereal diseases (Bhattacharya, 1985). There are other related issues on sexuality on which the adolescents remain poorly informed. It has been seen that adolescents often have difficulty in choosing the correct source of information, which in turn adds to and raises their anxiety.

#### **The issue of identity and looking towards future**

A major psychological challenge for adolescents involves identity formation. On one end, there is striving toward integration of inner and outer directions, and on the opposite end there is identity diffusion leading to a sense of instability in the midst of many confusing inner and outer demands. An adolescent must master certain developmental tasks during this stage, in order to resolve the identity conflict. Failure to resolve the tasks adequately leads to identity confusion that is likely to be accompanied by considerable stress, inner tensions, and increased anxiety and adjustment problems.

The combined expectations of the society, parents and peers, together with newly acquired physiological, psychological and cognitive changes, are further stressful and challenge the adolescents to make changes in social behavior.

Academic decisions at school related to later selection of a vocation is another big dilemma (Sharma, 1999). Lack of knowledge of their own abilities and paucity of information concerning the requirements and opportunities of different vocations makes this stress almost inevitable. Since decisions made during these years can have far reaching consequences, it does cause anxiety in the adolescents.

Gender difference in perceived stress and problems results from the interaction of individual factors with challenges encountered by the adolescents. It is reported that girls are more vulnerable to depression than boys even before adolescence and are more susceptible to anxiety due to the more challenging situations that they face and less positive responses that they make (Ge, Conger, & Elder, 2001; Verma, 1995). However cross-cultural studies by Schlegel & Barry (1991) found that the transition from childhood to adulthood is more continuous for girls than for boys. There is lesser social disjuncture between girlhood and womanhood than between boyhood and manhood, which

makes social relations of adolescent girls easier, thus suggesting that adolescence may often be less stressful for girls than for boys.

#### **Dealing with the stressors: How do adolescents cope?**

Adolescents react to stress in much the same way as the adults do. Common reactions may be excitement, fear, anxiety, sadness, and anger. Some adolescents withdraw from others, some lash out at others, and some actively seek the comfort of others. There are two major ways to cope with stress. One of the ways is problem solving that involves trying to deal with the problem by changing the situation or getting rid of the problem. Another way of handling stress is based on handling emotions, thoughts and feelings caused by the problem (Ebata, 1996). Adolescents use both methods, and both can be effective depending on what the problem is and when it started. Studies show that people who deal with their problems, see the positive side of difficult situations, and take part in activities they enjoy are more likely to be well adjusted. Managing emotions can be very helpful in the early stages of coping with a problem. Studies of adolescents in the western countries show that the most common ways young adolescents cope with stress are listening to music and watching television (Arnett, cited in, Brown, Larson, & Saraswati, 2002; Dacey & Kenny, 1997). Media can help them to ponder and subdue the strong emotions that are often part of adolescence.

There are remarkable differences in the abilities of adolescents to cope with. Adolescents, who are not able to cope with the problems in an adaptive manner, may develop problem behaviors and are at risk of developing mental health problems (Frydenberg, 1999). Geldard & Geldard (1999) found that adolescents who emerged from stressful encounters showed increased abilities and resources for dealing with stressful situations, greater personal growth which helped them in developmental path towards adulthood.

The adolescent's temperament and personality characteristics apart from beliefs about self, and the world determine their coping style. It may be influenced by cultural factors, gender, socio-economic status, and current environmental factors. Solving the problem, seeking social support, focusing on finding a solution, seeking a relaxing diversion, investing in close friends, seeking to belong, working hard to achieve, and being positive are some strategies adopted by adolescents. Reference to others, such as peers or professionals for social and spiritual support is another important coping style. Lastly, adolescents may sometimes resort to non-productive coping behaviors such as worrying, seeking to belong, wishful thinking, not coping, ignoring the problem, keeping things to oneself, and self-blame.

#### **Importance of counselling for adolescents**

Problems in the lives of adolescents may interfere and block the natural developmental process. Adolescents generally draw on strategies and resources within themselves or seek the aid of peers, parents, or significant others to deal with their problems. Sometimes however, problems may be more severe or extremely private and adolescents may be unable

to deal effectively with the stressful events themselves. Help from counsellors at this juncture is most effective, especially if offered at the earliest. Research studies clearly indicate that counselling interventions immediately after stressful events promote positive coping behaviors. All students face problems from time to time. Failures to resolve these problems leads to emotional and social maladjustments, conflict with the school authorities, interference with learning, resulting in underachievement, failure, truancy, dropping out or consequent unrealized potentials. In recent years there has been a focus on the importance of safeguarding the mental health of adolescents. Realizing this, many public schools are appointing counsellors. It has been suggested that easy accessibility to a well-qualified counselor is a must to enable relatively minor problems to be addressed before deterioration begins.

Considering the rapidly changing social context, the present study was undertaken to study the adolescent's self-perception of their adjustment problems in various domains related to their development. An effort was made to even examine their views related to various aspects of counselling so as to provide inputs for effective implementation of school counselling services.

### 3. Objectives of the study

- 1) To gain an insight into adolescents' perception of adjustment problems in various domains of their development.
- 2) To study the views of adolescents regarding need and importance of counselling services in schools.
- 3) To examine the views of adolescents about various aspects of school counselling services.

The study was conducted on 100 students of VIII standard randomly selected from 10 schools of Chandigarh. Student problem checklist, prepared by Department of Educational Psychology and Foundation of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, and a self-prepared questionnaire was used. This checklist comprised of questions pertaining to ten domains of adjustment namely Health, Economic, social, Family, self-perception, Anxiety, Religion, Vocation, School, and Education.

An effort was also made to understand Counselling needs of school going adolescents and extent of willingness of adolescents for seeking counselling. Problems faced by the adolescents while seeking counselling were also examined

### 4. Results and Discussion

To get an insight into the adjustment problems of adolescents, mean scores and standard deviations were computed for the 10 problem areas of adjustment. 't'-test was used to examine gender difference in self-perception of problems. Table-1 shows the means of total scores obtained on the Student problem checklist.

**Table 1:** Adolescents' perception of problems in the ten domains of adjustment

Domains	M	SD
Economic status	16.35	9.51
Family	20.74	7.28
Anxiety	21.77	9.12
Religion	21.79	9.41
Social	22.38	10.33
School	33.27	13.97
Self perception	38.31	9.49
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>43.78</b>	<b>3.54</b>
<b>Health</b>	<b>45.29</b>	<b>4.17</b>
<b>Studies</b>	<b>45.66</b>	<b>3.43</b>

**Note:** M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

0- 31 indicates high adjustment 31- 40 indicates average adjustment

41- 50 indicates low adjustment 51- 60 indicates maladjustment

As depicted in Table-1, the results indicated that the students perceived high adjustment in domains related to economic status, family, anxiety, religion and social. Perception of average adjustment was seen in relation to school and self. Low adjustment, was perceived by adolescents in the areas of occupation, health and studies. Levels of adjustment in terms of percentages are further depicted in Table-2 to get a clearer picture of the data.

**Table 2:** Percentage distribution of the adolescents in perceived level of their adjustment, (N = 100)

Domains	High adjustment (%)	Average adjustment (%)	Low adjustment (%)	Mal adjustment (%)
Economic status	94	3	3	-
Family	91	8	1	-
Social	86	8	6	-
Religion	85	8	7	-
Anxiety	79	17	4	-
School	40	12	46	2
Self-perception	12	42	43	3
Studies	.7	6	87	7
Occupation	-	19	79	2
Health	-	11	78	11

94% of students perceived high adjustment in the economic domain. This could be perhaps attributed to an increase in the dual earning families. Another reason for high economic adjustment could be sufficient pocket money which helps the adolescents' to fulfill their needs and instill a sense of responsibility, independence and money management skills in them.

#### Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Family

91% of students perceived high adjustment in the family domain. One of the most important reasons for perception of good family adjustment could be supportive and harmonious family environment, which helps the adolescent to attain higher satisfaction from life (Rueter & Conger, 1995). Another reason for perception of positive adjustment with the family could be cohesion in the family environment, which leads to positive relationships (Brody et al., 1992), and enhances the ability to take advantage of the resources available at home (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999). According

to Young et al. (1995), parental support is positively related to adolescents' perception of family adjustment. Authoritative parenting style (Galambos&Maggs, 1990; Keith et al., 1990). Baumrind (1971) leads to positive child outcomes in the middle income group. Good disciplining patterns and friendly communication with adolescents has also been linked to higher level of satisfaction with the family (Jefferys&Leitzel, 1997). This result could also be linked to the increase in the maternal employment, which has changed the fathers' role in the family. They tend to engage more in child care and household activities with beneficial consequences for adolescents' development and adjustment (Hoffman & Youngable, 1995). When mothers are well adjusted in their occupation, they show greater sharing and more attachment to their children and are more aware of physical, psychological and intellectual needs of their children. They try to spend quality time with their children (Mathur&Misra, 1997; Richard & Duckett, 1994). High adjustment in the family domain could also be attributed to the shift from joint to nuclear families where there is less interference from a number of adults. (Saraswathi&Pai, 1997; Mathur&Misra, 1997)

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Social relations**

86% adolescents perceived high adjustment in social domain. Good social skills could perhaps be related to effective parenting style. Since parents are one of the primary agents of socialization, their parenting style could be responsible for them being more socially competent, leading to their positive social adjustment. (Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993; Baumrind, 1991). Perception of good social adjustment could also be attributed to cohesion in the family environment, which boosts sociability, self-esteem, self-confidence and autonomy. Even maternal employment could be related to adolescents' better adjustment in the social domain. Congruence of the family's cultural background, morals, values and attitudes with those of the society also helps the adolescents to adjust better in their social environment (Bhattacharya, 1985).

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Religion**

Majority of the adolescents perceived good adjustment in the domain of religion. Religion is an essential part of the socialization process which begins within the realms of the immediate family. Religious identity is mainly characterized as identifying with the religion of the parents. Thus, the religious beliefs of adolescents are shaped by their parents. In Indian families prayers are a routine and religious ceremonies important activity of any important family event. Most of the rituals are followed without any questions and prayers lend support in times of distress and anxiety. Adolescents therefore seem to perceive good adjustment to religion and its practices which they and their family follow.

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Anxiety**

Researches show that some of the major causes of adolescent anxiety could be disturbed parent-child relationships, concerns of demands of growing up, or fear or guilt over increased sexual or aggressive impulses. However, the scores revealed that 79% adolescents perceived high adjustment in the anxiety domain. One of the most important reasons could be the supportive and

harmonious family environment which helped the adolescents to deal with anxiety and depression. Faith in prayers and religion also seems to play a part. Secure adjustment to social environment could also be responsible for good adjustment to anxiety in life of adolescents.

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Studies**

87% of the adolescents perceived low adjustment to School studies. Assessment and examinations could be one of the reasons for low adjustment. Examinations usually are an integral part of school education and major cause of adolescent stress. Parental pressure and unrealistic expectations could enhance academic stress. High achievement gets parental approval and is praised while children are shamed on not performing well and made to feel guilty. The school environment and peer pressure also adds to academic stress. In Indian context, most adolescents experience high degree of academic stress, more so in public and private schools. Board examinations further increase the stress, as their marks are important criterion for securing a seat in a reputed college.

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Occupation**

Most of the adolescents (79%) perceived low adjustment in the occupation domain. Previous researches have reported that adolescents begin to feel the pressure of selecting a vocational stream by the time they reach X standard. In fact they have to make academic decisions at school level that, more or less, seal their future course of education and career. The scores in X standard decide the vocational stream the students can opt for.

Indian adolescents generally do not have the independence of choosing their own career. The family and the social network play a very crucial role in making decisions regarding future orientation of adolescents. From the very beginning the parents and other significant members of the family emphasize on what they expect their sons and daughters to be. Besides, they put academic stress and expect children to excel in exams so as to ensure a secure future. Perception of low adjustment in the occupation domain could also be due to the uncertainty about the future. In India, unemployment of the educated youth, under-employment of qualified personnel and unfair practices in the professional world are common experiences of youth. This puts the adolescents in a dilemma whether their efforts would be rewarded in the future or not (Sharma, 2003). Cut throat competition among the peers could also be one of the possible reasons for stress related to occupational adjustment.

#### **Adolescents' perception of adjustment to Health**

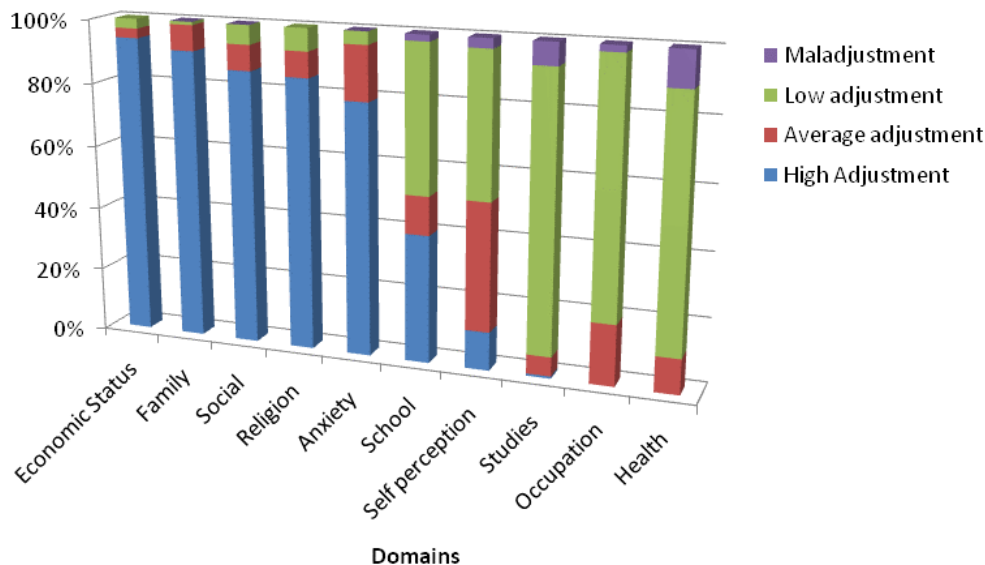
78% of the adolescents perceived low adjustment in the health domain. As reported in earlier studies, this may be attributed to lack of accurate knowledge about the pubertal changes and other health conditions. Gerald (1999) also considers early and late maturation to be associated with psychological problems leading to poor perception of health, as maturation tends to create stress for adolescents and make adaptation difficult (Kim et. al. 2003; Valsiner, 2000). Some studies have related poor perception of health adjustment to adolescents' beliefs and knowledge about health and their feelings of invulnerability to adverse health outcomes. The



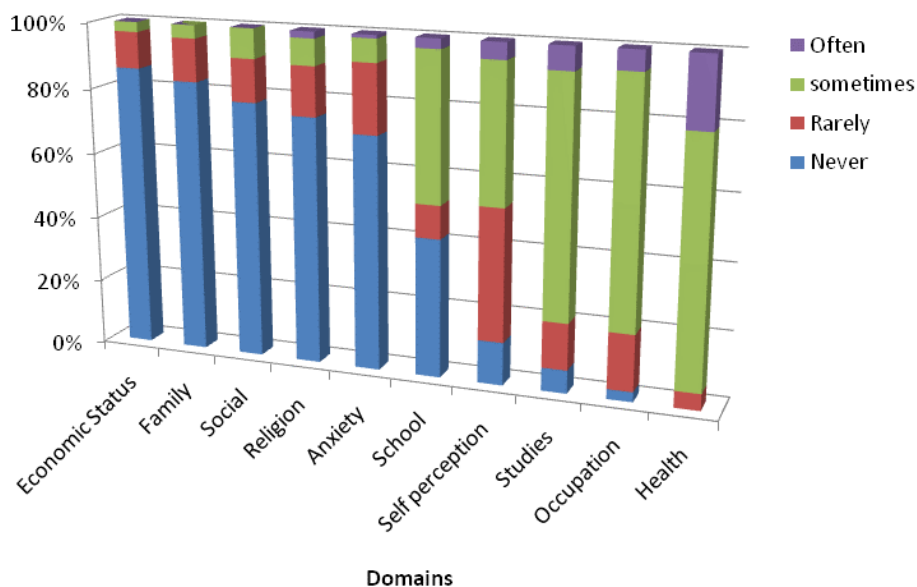
myths and misconceptions about health aspects have probably been responsible for increased prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and diseases and hence poorer health adjustment ( Clark, 2004). Some studies relate poor health adjustment to substance abuse, alcohol and smoking. Adolescents resort to drugs for having a good

time, showing off, acting grown up, peer pressure and conformity, escape from pressures of life, rebellion, and parental indifference.

Problems of adolescents as revealed by the self-prepared questionnaire for students



**Figure 1:** Perception of their adjustment problems



**Figure 2:** Problems perceived by adolescents in various domains of adjustment

Table-3 depicts the frequency of adjustment problems perceived by the adolescents in the ten domains of adjustment. The results of the self-prepared questionnaire when compared with those of the Student problem checklist, revealed a similar pattern, thereby endorsing the findings on the checklist. The results of the questionnaire showed that a large percentage of adolescents perceived that they never had problems in domains related to economic (86%), family (83%), social (78%), religion (75%) and anxiety (71%). Adolescents perceived that they sometimes had problems in domains related to studies (72%), occupation (74%) and Health (74%).

**Table 3:** Frequency of problems perceived by adolescents in various domains of adjustment

Domains	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
Economic Status	86	11	3	0
Family	83	13	4	0
Social	78	13	9	0
Religion	75	15	8	2
Anxiety	71	21	7	1
School	42	10	45	3
Self-perception	13	40	42	5
Studies	7	14	72	7
Occupation	3	17	74	6
Health	0	5	74	21

**Table 4:** Gender differences in perception of adjustment

Variable	Male (n=50)		Female (n=50)		t-value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Health	44.15	4.20	46.57	3.78	4.01**
Economic status	18.04	10.30	14.45	8.24	1.90
Social	20.66	11.99	24.32	7.746	1.78
Family	20.49	7.61	21.02	5.98	0.36
Self-perception	39.06	10.58	37.47	8.12	0.83
Anxiety	20.43	10.59	23.28	5.94	1.56
Religion	21.36	10.51	22.28	8.08	0.48
Occupation	44.62	3.24	42.83	3.65	2.60*
School	44.66	3.45	20.43	9.43	17.43**
Studies	45.15	3.65	46.23	3.10	1.58

0- 31 indicates high adjustment \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$  level

31- 40 indicates average adjustment \* Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

41- 50 indicates low adjustment

51- 60 indicates maladjustment

#### Gender differences in perception of adjustment in various domains

Data analysis using 't'-test was done to examine the difference among boys and girls on all of the ten domains mentioned above. The respondents reported low adjustment in health, studies and occupation domains. Significant group differences for gender emerged in domains related to health, occupation and school (Table-4). The girls showed higher level of maladjustment for health domain in comparison to the boys. The boys showed a higher level of maladjustment in the occupation and school domains.

#### Gender differences in perception of adjustment to Health

The girls perceived significantly poorer adjustment in the domain related to health as compared to the boys. This could be because of lack of knowledge about pubertal changes and other health conditions. The rate of emergence of pubertal changes and growth spurt varies for different individuals. The early maturers in absence of any information are likely to have negative experiences which are more so in case of girls as compared to boys (Brooks-Gunn, Ruble, 1998; Brooks-Gunn, 2001). Satisfaction with the body shape and size are related to feelings about one's body and this may vary from individual to individual. Generally girls are less happy with their bodies than boys throughout the period of pubertal changes (Patterson et.al., 1987., Patterson et.al. 2000). Similarly, according to Gross (1984), Girls' dissatisfaction increases with pubertal development as body fat increases, while boys' discontent decreases as muscle mass increases. Girls are more likely to have poor body images, to diet and binge and to exhibit frank eating disorders than are boys. Socially also, in India, the girls tend to become more conscious as they are abstained or restricted from playing and interacting with boys (Anandalakshmy, 1994). All these factors perhaps contribute to girls' poorer perception of health as compared to the boys.

#### Gender differences in perception of adjustment to Occupation

Significantly higher level of maladjustment was seen in boys (Table-4) in the occupation domain as compared to girls. Earlier studies indicate that the expectations from the boys

are generally higher than that of the girls (Anandalakshmy, 1994). The family and the social network play a very important role in building the adolescents' future orientation. From the very beginning the parents and the other significant members of the family talk about what they would expect their sons and daughters to grow up to be. Thus, parental expectations could be one of the major reasons for the boys' greater maladjustment in the occupation domain. Another significant reason as reported by earlier studies could be peer pressure and competition among boys.

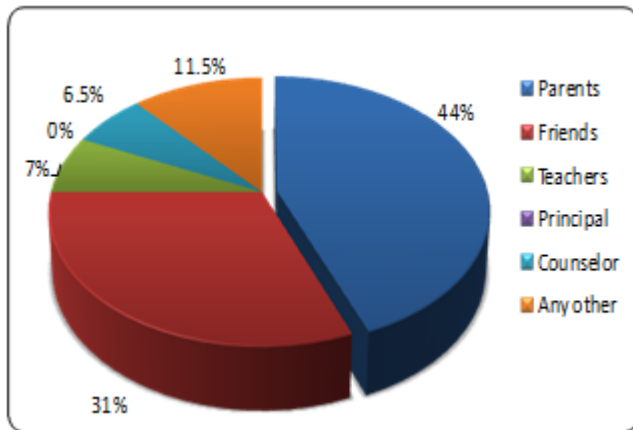
#### Gender differences in perception of adjustment to School

Results reveal that boys perceived a higher level of maladjustment in school domain as compared to girls. Results of earlier studies have indicated that the families generally lay more stress on the boys' school achievement, which could be one of the major causes of stress and maladjustment. Achievement in school is equated to the future success in life, especially in homes where formal education is highly valued. Researches reveal that the girls fare better in both school and board examinations (C.B.S.C. Report, 2006), thus maybe are better adjusted in the school domain.

#### Views of adolescents regarding school counselling

The views of adolescents regarding counselling were studied by administering detailed questionnaires designed for them by the researcher. The percentages and frequencies were calculated, related to each aspects. The results are presented on the basis of the related analysis of the data.

As depicted in Figure-3, most of the adolescents reported that they approached their parents (44%) and friends (31%) whenever faced with problems. Only 6.5% of the adolescents had visited the counsellor to seek help or guidance. 7% of the adolescents approached the teachers, when faced with problems which generally related to academics and vocational domains. A few adolescents (11.5%) also reported, sharing their problems with their elder siblings. Adolescents confided more in their parents in the hour of need. Earlier studies show that appropriate parenting styles help adolescents to develop a close bond with their parents. Another important reason could be an increase in nuclear families, where parents are able to spend quality time with their children and there are no other elder persons to guide and assist them (Mathur & Mishra, 1997). Small family size also contributes to close and healthy relationship among the family members (Saraswathi & Pai, 1997).



**Figure 3:** Agencies approached by adolescents for seeking help

A large number of adolescents also reported sharing their problems with peers due to greater degree of acceptance by them and the amount of time spent with them. Some other studies also reported that peers also help to increase self-esteem, and reduce stress (Needleman, 2001; Verma, 1995).

A very small percentage of adolescents reported having approached professional counsellors for help. Some of the students reported that they were unaware that their school had employed a counsellor and if so who it was. This shows lack of awareness among the students which could be one of the important reasons for not approaching the counsellor. As brought out in other studies, the counsellors are unable to develop a strong professional identity (Agresta, 2004; Burnham & Jackson, 2000). This also contributes to students abstaining from seeking help from counsellors. Lieberman (2004) stresses that role confusion and ambiguity of the counsellors could also be another reason for adolescents not approaching them. Since, counsellors are often engaged by the school authorities as substitute teachers, they are unable to render their counselling services. Stigma attached to counselling in the society could also be one of the probable reasons for adolescents not approaching the counsellors (American School Counsellor association, 2003; Carter, 1993). Some students also said that they felt conscious while discussing their problems with the counsellor; they also feared that the counsellor might discuss their problems with the parents or other staff members. Thus, fear and lack of confidentiality (Sheridan & D'Amato, 2004) could also be another reason for adolescents not seeking help from the counsellor.

Adolescents wanted to meet the counsellor in the school premises. Majority of the girls preferred personal guidance over group guidance while most of the boys preferred group guidance. Most of the students however wanted a professional counsellor in the school even though they were unclear about the specific role and functions of the counsellor. The reasons for adolescents not approaching a professional counsellor were lack of awareness, lack of confidentiality, unavailability of counsellor and fear of seeking counselling.

## 5. Conclusion

The multidimensional changes of adolescence put tremendous coping stress on adolescents. Psychological and physiological changes cause greater turmoil in adolescent lives than the preceding or subsequent stages of life. Systematic and effective counselling procedures can help adolescents deal effectively with the sudden and abrupt changes in their lives. Importance needs to be given to employing qualified counsellors in schools, who understand the adolescents' problems of adjustment and render timely help to them.

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