

# Adjustment of Youth in Context of Familial Factors and Social Support

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## *ABSTRACT*

*The study investigates the effect of type of family (single, joint), size of family (small, medium and large) and social support on adjustment level of college youth. For the purpose 200 respondents were selected from the colleges of Patna town. Adjustment was measured by Mohsin-Shamshad Hindi Adaptation of Bell Adjustment Inventory. The findings confirmed the hypotheses. A significant difference in the adjustment level of the respondents of single and joint family was found. The family size was found having significant impact on the adjustment level of the respondents. Social support played an important role in shaping the adjustment level of the respondents. Respondents having high social support was better adjusted than those having low social support. Thus, It was concluded that adjustment of youth is the function of familial factors and social support.*

## **Introduction:**

Human beings have developed subtle language forms, a refined level of thinking, superior problem solving skills, intricate social relationships, and complex communication process all of which affect behaviour and its interpretation. Individuals' feelings of failure may damage their social relationships, and the human gene pool might be significantly affected by the failure of such people to marry and have children. On the other hand, many individuals with certain types of inadequacies, who would probably be unable to hold their own in a subsistence economy, can survive and reproduce in the modern world because of social institutions, such as welfare programmes, social security, and health insurance. Biological factors aside, how we live and how we feel about the way we live are important factors in human adaptation. According to Hussain (1996) adaptation refers to people's ability to modify their behaviour in response to changing environmental requirements. In other words, adaptation involves the balance between what people do and want to do, on the

one hand, and what the environment (the community) requires on the other.

Adaptation is a dynamic process. Each of us responds to our environment and to the changes that occur within it. How well we adapt depends on two factors. One is our personal characteristics (skills, attitudes and physical condition) and other is the nature of the situations that confront us (e.g., family conflict or natural disaster). These two factors jointly determine whether we survive and prosper or whether we fall by the wayside. The extremely rapid rate of change in the modern world puts a particular strain on our ability to adapt. Moreover, successful adaptation to one set of conditions is not a guarantee of successful adaptation to others.

Smith (1961) suggests that a good adjustment/adaptation leads to general satisfaction of the whole person rather than the satisfaction of an intense drive the expense of others. Besides this, a well adjusted person always considers his/her long interest and not simply the satisfaction of

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one intense drive. This type of adjustment is both realistic and satisfying (Bell, 1934; Lazarus, 1961).

Indian society even now, with all its claims for industrial and scientific advancement, is highly traditional and rural oriented and is far away from being called modern and progressive. However, two main institutions seem to be changing fast, one is family and the other is school and it is preposterous to say that the change in these two is for the better. The traditional joint family system, even in our villages, has mostly cracked up, giving rise to nuclear families for reasons of individualism, private living, migration to a new place in search of employment and economic viability. With the result, the old familial values like one feeding many consideration for the old adherence to religious practices, striving for family prestige etc. have undergone a change yielding place to new values like individualism, agnostic and atheistic beliefs, defiance family traditions etc. The institution of the school, in recent times, has brought into its fold millions of the first generation students from the rich and the poor and from the high and the low castes, thus breaking the monopoly of a few chosen castes whose value predominance was to confine it to a few upper castes in the name of religion (Hussain, 1996).

#### **Objectives:**

- (i) The study intends to compare respondents of nuclear and joint family in respect of adjustment.
- (ii) The second objective was to compare youth of small and large family in terms of their adjustment.
- (iii) The study intends to compare youth of high and low social support in terms of adjustment.

#### **Hypothesis :**

- (i) Respondents of nuclear family would have better adjustment than those who are coming from joint family.
- (ii) Respondents of smaller family would have better adjustment than those who are coming

from medium and large sized family.

- (iii) Respondents having high social support would have better adjustment than those having low social support.

#### **Method of Study:**

**Sample :** 200 undergraduate male students of Arts (100 from single family and 100 from joint family) were selected through stratified random sampling technique from the colleges of Patna town. Out of 200 respondents, 120 were from smaller size family, 54 were from medium size family and 26 were from large size family. All respondents were from middle class family residing in urban areas.

#### **Tools used:**

1. **Personal Data Blank :** This was developed to obtain the information about the subjects' particulars and home background like age, type of family, size of family, residence, and socio-economic status. Family with 4 members or less is called small size family, family having 5 members is called medium size family and family having 6 or more members is called large size family.
2. **The Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ):** This scale has been developed by Sarason and Sarason (1985) to measure the availability and satisfaction with social support. Our social network includes people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us. Some one who believes that he/she belongs to a social network experiences social supports. SSQ consists of 27 items. After answering each item, the test taker is asked to indicate his/her level of satisfaction with the support available by making a 6-point rating scale that ranges from 'very satisfied' to 'very unsatisfied'. The SSQ yields scores relating to availability of and satisfaction with social support. On the basis of median split subjects may be divided into high and low social support groups.

### 3. Bell Adjustment Inventory :

This inventory has been adapted by Mohsin-Shamshad (1985) in Hindi. It measures adjustment level of youth in four areas – home, health, social and emotional. It also measures overall adjustment of respondents. High scores on the inventory indicate poor adjustment and low scores better adjustment in different specific areas and adjustment taken as a whole.

### Procedure & Data Collection

Both the tools were applied in a group of 50 students in the class room situation. They were allowed 45 minutes time or as taken to fill in the tools. Rapport was established in a good manner. For analysing the data, respondents were divided into two groups, i.e. high adjusted and low adjusted groups on the basis of median split of the adjustment scores.

### Results and Interpretations

**Table -01**

**Comparison of the respondents of single and joint families in respect of their level of adjustment.**

Type of family	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 198)	p
Single	100	45.10	18.62	3.17	<.01
Joint	100	51.11	19.68		

**Type of Family and Adjustment :** It is evident from table I that the respondents of single family have better adjustment than those of joint family. The difference between the two groups is significant ( $t = 3.17$ ,  $df = 198$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table - 2**

**Comparison of subjects with high and low adjustment in terms of size of the family.**

Group	Smaller Size	Frequencies Medium Size	Large Size	$\chi^2$ (df = 2)	p-value
High adjustment	4	16	80	6.10	.05
Low adjusted	2	6	92		

**Size of family and adjustment :**

An examination of table-02 reveals that the size of family significantly affect the adjustment level of respondents. The obtained chi-square value is significant ( $\chi^2 = 6.10$ ,  $df = 2$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Hence, it may be said that there is a significant association between adjustment and size of family.

**Table - 3**

**Comparison of high and low social support groups in terms of their levels of adjustment.**

Availability and satisfaction social support	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 98)	p-value
High Group	100	41.15	10.66	2.43	.05
Low Group	100	45.18	11.72		

### **Social support and adjustment :**

Table-3 shows that respondents having high social support have better adjustment than those having low social support. The difference between the two groups is significant ( $t = 2.42$ ;  $df = 198$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

### **Discussion:**

The findings of study corroborated to the findings of earlier researchers (Smith, 1961; Sarason & Sarason 1985; Hussain, 1999). Respondents of single family have better adjustment than those of joint family. The respondents of joint family always perceive crisis and crowding. Their basic needs and wants are not fulfilled in time due to greater number of cases in the family. Similarly, the respondents of large family size and medium family size are found always in a stressful situation than those of small size family. Respondents having high social support have high adjustment than those having low social support. Social support is usually defined as the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us. The availability of childhood social support is related to personality development and adult behaviour patterns (Sarason et al. 1990). Researchers have concluded that the availability of social support bolsters the capacity to withstand and overcome frustrations and problem solving challenges (Hussain, 1999; Sarason & Sarason, 1998). Maladaptive ways of thinking and behaving are more common among people who have few social supports, particularly within their families. Strong family ties seem to encourage self-reliance. Self-reliance and reliance on others are not only completable but complementary. Social support facilitates coping with crisis and adapting to change. People who are low in social support tend to be perceived by others as being less interesting, dependable, friendly, and considerate than people who are high in social support. They are also less wanted as friends and co-workers and report feeling more lonely. When engaging in a conversation with a stranger, people who are high

in social support feel more competent, comfortable, and assured than people who report having few social supports.

### **Conclusions :**

In general, people who have had many recent undesirable experiences are more likely to get sick than those who have been more fortunate. In the light of the obtained results it can be suggested that further study is warranted with life stress, coping mechanisms and on migrated people within the country and outside of the country. Adjustment of youth is the function of type and size of the family and social support.

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