CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

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There are several stages in the lives of human beings, viz. childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. Each phase has some unique problems of adjustment. Adolescence is one of the important phases of life. The problems of adjustment experienced during this period also vary in kind and intensity. The problems of adolescence are of considerable interest and concern not only to adolescents themselves, to their parents and teachers but also to society in general. It is a period of stress and strain. It is a stage of all round development - hence a wide variety of problems differing in kind and intensity. Thus, the importance of adolescence period is apparent and does not need any undue stress at this place.

However, adolescent period of life is not fully understood and its significance not fully realised by adults who can be straightway helpful to adolescents to become responsible and mature physically and psychologically. The age of adolescence has been regarded as of profound significance for development of personality. Sherif and Sherif rightly describe it as a period that epitomises the lifelong interplay between the development of a human being, with this strivings and emotions, the face to face social process of living
The word 'adolescence' is derived from the Latin verb 'adolescere', which means 'to grow' or 'to grow to maturity'. Different psychologists and writers have defined adolescence in different ways. It is not feasible to mention all these definitions here. However, to cite a few definitions: Malm and Jamison define - "The period of psychological growing up we call 'adolescence'." Garrison defines adolescence thus: "Stage of adolescence lies somewhere between childhood and adulthood. Adolescence is a period of changes: physical, emotional and social." Adolescence extends from sexual maturity until the age when independence from adult authority is legally assured. The legal maturity is attained at twenty-one and adolescence ends at twenty-one. Elizabeth Hurlock holds that adolescence extends from 13 to 21 years for girls, and for boys from 14 to 21. Cruze points out that - "Adolescence as a period of development extending for approximately eight to ten years is a relatively recent phenomenon."  

Leulla Cole divides the period of adolescence in four divisions. Pre-adolescence 12 to 13 years, early adolescence 14 to 15 years, middle adolescence 16 to 18 years and late adolescence 19 to 20 years. Each period has its own problems which must be attended if the individual is to enter the next stage without any handicap.
The present investigator has studied the problems of adolescents who are in the transition period from high school to college level and as such the age group taken for the study, in the light of above described life span of adolescent, is 13 to 20 years.

Further, adolescence is variously treated as a specific span of years, a stage in development, a subculture, a state of mind or some combination of these. Thus, any teenager may be called an adolescent.(5) While discussing the nature of adolescence, Horrocks states "Adolescence is a descriptive term for the period during which an emotionally immature individual in his teens approaches the culmination of his physical and mental growth."(9) Society and school have to help him make the transition from boyhood to maturity as early and smooth as possible.

Kuhlen characterizes the concept of adolescence which could be summarized with three generalizations. In the first place, adolescence was considered to be a period when marked and rapid changes occurred in all aspects of personality. Rather suddenly the child becomes a new being and develops a totally new outlook. In the second place, these developments were thought to be biologically generated; they were presumably prompted by the maturation of certain instincts which resulted in the flowering of new and curiously wonderful behaviour patterns ... And third, it was thought that the period of adolescence -
this period of 'new birth' was essentially erratic, vacillating, unpredictable and stressful. Adolescence was accompanied by 'storm and stress' occasioned by the speed of the change and the pervasive nature of adjustments of the period. Further, it can be understood by three important facts about growing children by which one can know what is happening psychologically during the teen age. In the first place, children are getting bigger and stronger and thus get around more freely in their environment and shift in their relationships to adults. Secondly, they are maturing intellectually and thus have greater capacity to think, to comprehend and to sense the problems that before were beyond their ken. Thirdly, they are accumulating a background of experience, a set of attitudes and habits which may aid or handicap them in their adjustment to adult life. Hurlock states: "The more rapidly changes come, the harder it is to adjust to them."(10)

Elizabeth Hurlock quotes Sorenson R. and shows - an adolescent is a traveller who has left one place and not reached next. It is an intermission between earlier freedoms ... and subsequent responsibilities and commitments.(10) Transition not only means change but also it expresses a need for adjustment to change.

In this regard, it may, therefore, be thought of "as a transition period between childhood and adulthood.
The adolescents are neither children nor adults. They are on the threshold of maturity and are making adjustments and facing decisions which will have far-reaching implications for their futures. *(14)*

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENCE:**

The question of the characteristics of adolescence has been discussed by psychologists in various ways. The investigator considers the following lines as important.

Adolescence tends to be a time for securing status as an individual. In the beginning, an adolescent is a dependent, protected and subordinate individual in the family. His role in the family is simple, irresponsible, his status is inferior. In the end, he becomes independent and responsible, enjoys a superior status in the wider social context. His activities, interests, desires and ideals give way to new patterns to life. The adolescents constantly undergo changes, mental, emotional and social. Fleeg© rightly says that the adolescent "feels himself in no man's land between his lost status as a child and his unattained status as an adult." *(7)*

Considerable emotional and social maturity is reached during adolescence. The adolescents represent differing degrees of economic security or insecurity. The kind of guidance received during pre-adolescence and the kind of adult behaviour will reflect upon the
adolescent's successful undertaking of responsibility and good personal and social adjustment.

One of the outstanding characteristics of adolescence is that it is regarded as 'new birth' occurring in the individual's personality. During this period, rapid and marked changes take place which transform the child into a totally new personality. These changes are very rapid and hence Hall describes the period as one of 'storm and stress', a time which the individual is erratic, emotional, unstable and unpredictable.\(^{(10)}\)

Adolescence is a time of attaining physical maturity, a time when group relationships become of major importance, a period of emerging and developing vocational interests and striving towards economic independence. It is a time of emerging heterosexual interests that bring complexity and sometimes conflict to emotions and activities.

The contribution of the adolescent period in shaping emotional maturity deserves special attention. He is no longer plagued by fears and anxieties. He has learnt to eschew criticism without being hurt, developed sufficient self control.

Much of the adolescent behaviour is determined by directions he receives from teachers. Hurlock emphatically remarks: that one can never become as real as parents continue to make decisions for him. Restrictions on his
behaviour will either make him dependent upon older people or rebel openly and violently against such restrictions.

PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE:

Every period of life has many problems and the period of adolescence is no exception. Indeed, the problems of adolescence are more serious, to be sure, but the increased maturity of the individual and his broader background of experience should make it relatively easy for him to solve them. Some adolescents show greater concern about physical appearance whereas others are more bothered with health, family, school work, sexual, vocational, and religious problems. The health problems are nutrition, headache, eye troubles, indigestion, respiration troubles, physical handicap, sleep, fatigue, etc. They are also bothered with emotional problems. They get easily excited, they have difficulty in keeping the balance of mind, nervousness, daydreaming, fear, want of love and affection. Sexual urge and vocational unemployment are some of the other problems they have to face.

Since adolescent period represents the period of finding oneself as a person, there is a struggle of determining right responsibilities of relationships with adults and peer groups. The apparent thwarting of strong urges, impulses, ambitions may stimulate or arouse several emotional disturbances. Cole has classified these problems into 'emotional maturity' establishing interests in opposite
sex, social maturity, emancipation from home control, intellectual maturity, economic independence etc. (2) The characteristic of adolescent problems are achieving greater independence from parental domination and becoming more popular with members of the peer group.

**IMPORTANCE OF THE AGE OF ADOLESCENCE:**

It is to accept without demur that among all the stages of development, adolescence is a time of great possibility. It is undoubtedly a time for trial. When seen from the perspective of life span adolescence appears as the time when the surge of life reaches its highest peak. The adolescent's life is, or might be, full of opportunity to enter into new experiences, to explore new relationships, to feel new resources of inner strength and ability. Jersild writes about the importance of the period - "At adolescence, as at every stage along life's way, a person is, in a true sense, a pioneer. It is a time of great promise but much of the promised land is a wilderness that is untried, uncharted and unknown. It is necessary for the young person to find a path to build a road, to establish as it were, a settlement of his own, before he can be at home in the promised land."(12)

Malm and Jamison rightly hold that it is highly possible that the adolescent could in these years develop a code of social responsibility, get practice in making right choices... A child whose character and adjustment have not developed wholesomely in childhood has, so to
speak a last chance in adolescence. Adolescence is a time of momentous psychological changes. They are -

(1) He must become independent of his home.
(2) He must make a heterosexual adjustment and
(3) He must adopt adult viewpoints, values, morals, standards and ideals. He must be capable of making his own decisions."(16)

Good adjustment is absolutely essential for happy and effective childhood. Such good adjustment, ideally, is developed from infancy on. But if good adjustment is not present in childhood, adolescence is the next best time for achieving it. Adolescence is the last chance for adults to help youth and it is especially good last chance, too, since the adolescent is highly flexible and is strongly motivated to make the most of himself.

Ever since creation, man has been facing problems, how to make life easy, comfortable and have a maximum degree of satisfaction. Equally true is the psychological fact that had man faced no problem and made no consequent effort to overcome it, the growth and development of man could not have been noticeable. Until the last thirty years of this century, adolescence as the period of development, with its own particular problems had been seriously neglected. During the last two decades, the psychologists, sociologists and social workers have realised the importance of systematically studying various aspects of adolescent's life and they have
felt a dire need for and extent of guidance to the youth of the modern generation. Modern psychologists and educationists firmly hold that the adolescent students have huge vitality and potentialities which should be directed to the cultivation of spirit to take up responsibility of an adult. This could be done, only if an essential aspect of understanding them i.e. their anxieties, fears, attitudes and embarrassments, needs and problems is known.

**STUDENT UNREST**:

Student unrest prevailing in almost every corner of the country is one of the salient facts of the importance of the study. Student unrest is the problem of grave concern to everybody. It directly or indirectly threatens the smooth functioning of social life, and also endangers the mental well-being of adolescent students. As remarked by Mallappa and Dharnendriah - the problem of unrest is multidimensional in nature and hence a multidisciplinary approach is necessary for a fair understanding of the cause of unrest. At a glance, the phenomenon expressed in a variety of ways like absenteeism, indiscipline, avoiding classrooms, destruction of properties, failure in examinations, disrespect to teachers, protest against legal admission policy, abolition of detention, quality of food in hostels, reduction of fees, strikes, misappropriation of student union funds, irregularity in attendance, sex and love problems, parent's complaints regarding their ward's behaviour etc...

Much is being talked about the wastage in education. This results in decline in educational standards, political
atmosphere, uncertainty of bright future, lack of guidance, lack of understanding between parents and children, and teachers and students. It is, therefore, very essential to remove student unrest in order to build up a real ideal and formidable educational world in general. It can be asserted without any hesitation that this unrest reflects not only this school life but also his home life and vocational life.

In view of the resultant severity and evils of unrest, it is essential to study the problems of adolescence analytically. Lack of proper attention and care of adolescent has created a number of problems. Cardinal Gibbons realised this when he said, "Give me the boy to train and I care not for the rest of the world, for the boy to-day will be the rest of the world to-morrow."(7)

The adolescent problems mentioned above indeed occupy their mind and hinder them from doing whatever they are expected to do or discharge their obligations effectively. Any amount of mental economic labour taken by teachers and institutions or Government to impart instructions of students prove futile, if painstaking efforts are not made in understanding and analysing their problem of life. Josselyn points out that adolescent of to-day is as as is everyone else living in a world of disorder and unpredictability. It is possible that twentieth century, when its place in history is defined, will be described as an era of increasing domestic unrest and international insecurity.(13)
Rajkot is the seat of the Saurashtra University. It is a crux of all students' activities, agitation and strikes, and hence Rajkot deserves special attention for the study of adolescence. Rajkot was formerly the city - the headquarter of the former Rajkot Agency of the British Government and after independence, the capital of the Old Saurashtra State. At present, it is the headquarter of the Rajkot District of Gujarat State. Rajkot has educational institutions of all levels - from primary schools to higher education. It is also the seat of the Saurashtra University right from its inception. There are in all 33 secondary schools, (list of Institutions is at Appendix D), imparting education from standard VIII to XI and colleges imparting higher education from pre-university to post-graduate classes. The institutions are classified into Government institutions and private institutions. Some institutions are about 70 to 80 years old and following old traditions and norms of education, whereas there are some institutions which follow modern trends. There are certain missionary schools which serve as examples of a new set of culture and religion. Rajkot has a cosmopolitan population and parents of many students are hailing from different parts of the country.

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REFERENCES


