CHAPTER 4

A PILOT STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE ADJUSTMENT INVENTORY.
4.1. Preliminary considerations: method and investigation

Test construction in personality, specially the Adjustment Inventories have been subjected to several critical reviews (Ellis, '46, pp. 385-440, Ellis and Conrad, '48, pp. 385-426, Vernon, '69, Chap. 12, pp. 201-212) since the days of R.S. Woodworth. Yet the frequency with which they are employed in personality researches and guidance and counselling works has by no means diminished. But it is an accepted fact that construction of personality inventories are beset with special difficulties besides the common problems encountered in all psychological testing (Anastasi, '68, pp. 461). Therefore, in constructing the Adjustment Inventory for adolescent girls, different steps of test construction were carefully followed in order to make it a valid and reliable measure.

In the preliminary exploration for developing the Adjustment Inventory, a study of related literature on student problems and Adolescent Psychology was made for a rough location of the problem areas of the adolescent girls. After that in order to make the study more scientifically based, it was thought that inventory items should represent the problems and concerns of the adolescent girls as experienced by themselves rather than as adults see them. Therefore, girls studying in two high schools
and one higher secondary school of Gauhati were approached in order to collect informations about their adjustment problems. All these schools were centrally located and students represented almost all sections of the Assamese community, living in different parts of Gauhati. In this study girls studying in class VIII, IX and X were included. The method applied in the pilot study was mainly autobiographical in the sense that the girls were asked to state their problems themselves in the form of a short essay and also by writing their five major problems in preferential order.

In the first instance a sample of 66 adolescent girls were asked to write at home essays on their personal problems. The topic of the essay was given as "your personal problems." They were specifically asked to state their problems mainly in nine areas namely—home and family, economic, school, study, social, emotional and mental, religion and moral, health, and sexual. Because during the study, it was felt by the investigator that the adolescent girls were not aware of any particular problem because of their lack of proper understanding and insight into their own mental and environmental states and processes. Therefore, after giving the topic some preliminary discussions were held with the respondents in order to clarify the things and the name of the specific areas were mentioned. The girls were asked not to mention
their names in the essays and was assured that these papers would be treated as confidential. They were further asked to be free and frank about stating their problems as their identity would not be made known.

After that in an ordinary school period, a subsequent larger sample of 368 adolescent girls were approached to state individually five major problems which bother them most in preferential order. The students were provided with a sheet of paper containing a line written as "please write down your five major personal problems that disturb you most in preferential order." No time limit was imposed and the girls were encouraged to write freely about their adjustment problems in every sphere of life. This time also all the girls were frankly assured that their identity would not be disclosed.

In addition to this, a few experienced teachers were also consulted together further information about the problems experienced by the adolescent girls. On the basis of the information collected from different sources, as noted above, the preliminary draft of the inventory was carefully prepared.

4.2. Analysis of data—

After collecting the essays and problem-papers, every essay and paper were checked carefully and the problems mentioned by the girls in different areas were
noted down. After that a tabulation of all stated problems was made and percentages of girls indicating different problems in different areas were determined. The responses of the essays and problem-papers give a list of 147 and 164 problems respectively. The total number of problems stated by the adolescent girls in different areas are shown in the Table No. 4.1.

**Table No. 4.1.** Total number of problems stated in essays and problem-papers in each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Problem area</th>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Problem-paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Emotional and mental</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Religion &amp; moral</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>147</strong></td>
<td><strong>164</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. **Construction of items**—

An item is the basic element in test construction because the items as a whole deal with the central thought (Wood, '60, pp. 45) and the effectiveness of the test also depends upon the characteristics of the item which compose it. It is also often defined as a scoring unit (Ebel, '66; pp. 185). If the problem itself is not clearly presented through the items, the ultimate aim of the test constructor will be of little value. Therefore, special care and precaution was taken in constructing the inventory items. Although the items of the inventory were mainly derived from the analysis of data obtained during pilot study, several other points were also given due importance. These are discussed below.

As a first step toward constructing the test items several text books on psychological testing and some available inventories and questionnaires in this direction were consulted.

Secondly, keeping in view the purpose for which the inventory was intended, it was thought that the direct type of questions would not be very helpful. Therefore, construction of indirect or statement type of item was decided and the items were constructed accordingly.

Thirdly, in order to make the items easily understandable, all the problems were worded as far as possible in the same language as used by the students. Such as—
I face difficulty because of our large-sized family.

I can't do anything attentively.

Fourthly, as the test is designed for school going adolescent groups (age range approximately 12 to 16 years), emphasis was laid on clarity of expression. Items were expressed in precise language and the use of highly technical terminology was strictly avoided.

Fifthly, to reduce time and complexity, simple, straight and direct type of statement was constructed. For example—

I often quarrel with my brothers and sisters.
Family members restrict me in doing things according to my wish.

Daily routine of the school is not up to my likings.

Sixthly, attention was given that no item could overlap the other in an undesirable way and the statement of problems was arranged in such a way that it could ensure continuity of thought in the respondents on the basis of interrelatedness of each item. Such as—

My parents/guardians do not give importance to my studies.

My parents/guardians neglect me.

Again,

I can't concentrate well in my studies.
I am very irregular in my studies.

Seventhly, precaution was taken to avoid repetition of ideas, ambiguous words, ambiguous statements and also inappropriate or irrelevant statements.

Eighthly, the response set for the inventory was also determined. It was decided to provide three alternative answers, i.e., "yes", "no" and "?" for each individual item.

Finally, to facilitate in scoring, items were constructed in such a way that every "yes" answer to the question indicate a problem in adjustment.

4.4. Grouping of items and layout of the preliminary draft—

After constructing the items, all the problems are classified and grouped into previously mentioned nine areas.

The areas with some illustrative examples of items included in the preliminary draft are given below:

(1) Home—

I face difficulty because of frequent visits of guests to our house.
(Item No. 4)

Illness among family members caused inconvenience for me.

(2) Economic —

莸বব দৃব্ধতা অর্জনের প্রয়োজন পেশাইছে ।

(Item No. 41)

Poor economic condition of the family creates problem for me.

দরকার মোকামতে ধরচ ববিবেচ ধরবনা পাইয়া রাপা যায়ে আমায় 
অসুবিধা হয় । (Item No. 42)

I donot get sufficient money to meet my necessary expenses and it puts me into difficulty.

(3) School —

ফরম পাইয়ের বারোয়ান ববিবেচ উৎপল্ল সুবিধা 

বকলাট দিবনাব পাইয়ে । (Item No. 59)

Absence of proper library facilities in school puts me in trouble.

ফুলত নিজের ইমানতে বিষয় বাঁচি পোরা সুবিধা না হই ।

(Item No. 60)

There is no scope for choosing subjects according to one's own likings in school.
(4) Study —

I study excessively.

(5) Social —

I can't get along with my neighbours as they are not good.

Lack of proper understanding among my neighbours has created problems for me.

(6) Emotional and mental —

I can't mix up well with others since I think that I am inferior to others.
I can't mix up well with others since I think that I am superior to others.

(7) Religion and moral —

I do not believe in a particular religion.

I do not like to join in any ritual.

(8) Physical —

I am very fat.

I am lean and thin.

(9) Sexual —

Physical changes coming upon with my age have disturbed me.
I feel uneasy as I am not growing up physically with my age.

The sequence of the areas and the grouping of statements in each area are arranged in such a way that can ensure continuity of thought in the individual respondent. Further, importance is given to the point that while answering the questions of the inventory there should not be sudden break or transition in the thinking of the respondents. Again grouping of items in each area is done in such a way that each area can be used as separate unit to serve a specific purpose. A total number of 232 items are included in the preliminary draft which will be called henceforth Adjustment Inventory AA, and is shown in Appendix E. Table No. 4.2. shows the distribution of items in different areas and the total number of items included in the preliminary draft of the Adjustment Inventory AA.

After finishing the classification and grouping of items in different areas, a set of direction is framed for answering the questions. The general directions are plainly written in easily understandable language and adequate example of answering the questions are shown for familiarization with the method of answering. In framing the directions, to get best results, emphasis is laid on the
### Table No. 4.2: Classification of items in different areas included in the preliminary draft of the Adjustment Inventory AA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Problems areas</th>
<th>Distribution of items in different areas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Study</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Emotional and mental</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Religion and moral</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>232</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that it is to students' own advantage to give sincere and honest answers to the items. Thus the Adjustment Inventory AA stands ready for experimental tryout to get preliminary statistical evidence about the test as a whole and also about the characteristics of individual test items.
SUMMARY

Chapter 4

Chapter four describes in the first section the method followed for collecting information regarding adjustment problems of adolescent girls for constructing the preliminary draft. Then the method of analyzing the data is stated in the second section. In the third section, various steps taken for the construction of items for the preliminary draft is stated and discussed. Finally, grouping of items in different areas and framing a set of directions for answering the questions have been described in the last section.