CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

By and large the world is always undergoing tremendous changes and therefore, people are forced to face several problems in relation to adjustment. In a fast changing society adjustment becomes an important factor of serious investigation. Adjustment requires the process of adaptation people have to keep on making. It refers to one’s behaviour, psychological condition, etc., in relation to environmental conditions. More or less, complete satisfaction is the essence of adjustment. There are several factors which may affect individual’s effectiveness in the efforts to satisfy needs and adopt to the environment. Individual’s adjustment is impacted by the experience of deprivation and stress one has gone through.

Deprivation means certain deficiencies in the environment that are felt by individuals. It cannot be caused by any one factor like caste, class, social, cultural, economic conditions, life styles, living standards, etc. There are many people in every society who are deprived of one or the other of these factors. The deprived are found everywhere including the rural and urban setup. The effects of deprivation interfere with the smooth and rapid development of psychological processes and limit the behavioral efficiency of the individuals resulting in poor adjustment with environment. Environmental and socio-cultural deprivations are found to hamper the cognitive development and affect adversely the personality development and adjustment. Poverty can be considered as the major component of deprivation.
Sinha (1975) elaborated the various psychological dimensions of poverty and has found that it generally has retarding influence on certain perceptual skills. It also adversely affects motivation and personality traits. Venkat Reddy (1997), Venkatesh Reddy (1995), Shobha Salagar (1997) studied the impact of deprivation on personality factor, self concept and locus of control, adjustment, self confidence etc.

Venkat Reddy (1997) notes that personality make up of the people of society is shaped by, and dependent upon the socio-structural and cultural setting. Krishnamurthy and Venkat Reddy, 1995 opine that poor and subjected to exclusion, oppression, economic exploitation, lack of opportunities for betterment and suffer from disease both of mental and physical kind.

Mishra and Tripathi (1978) developed a multidimensional scale of prolonged deprivation, conceptualized in terms of a deficit model, wherein deprivation has been regarded as a ‘deficient’ environment. Sinha (1980) while also conceptualizing “Social disadvantage” has used an additive social index in which besides caste, family income and tribal status, rural-urban background is taken as an important element.

Stress in children and teenagers is as prevalent as in adults. Stressed out and negligent parents, high expectations in academic or other performances, abused or deprived childhood, growing up tensions and demand for familial responsibility are the main causes of childhood and teen stress. Parents, who are not emotionally
available for their children or lack of positive coping mechanisms themselves, often spur stress in their offspring.

Stressed children show signs of emotional disabilities, aggressive behavior, shyness and social phobia and often lack interest in otherwise enjoyable activities. Research tells us that children, who are forced to live on prematurely adult levels, sometimes, become oppositional to follow the parents’ rules (or those of society) and such children tend to respond to stressors with aggression.

Many teenagers tend to become nonconformists and fall prey to teenage depression in response to a variety of growing up anxieties. However, stress-induced fear and anxiety in children adversely affect children’s performance at various levels.

Growing up can be a difficult experience for both males and females. During this period, rapid physical transitions necessitate changes in a child’s mental make-up, its attitude towards people and circumstances. Children are often ill equipped to cope with stress during these transitions from a child to pre-adolescence and from pre-adolescence to adolescence phases.

Pre-adolescents and teens, go through identity crisis, the perils of peer interaction, acceptance and rejection of situations. Persons and ideas are a constant source of teen stress and teenage depression. “Where do I stand?” how do I compare with others?” are key concerns for this age group. Choices about thinking, smoking, drugs and sex, along with fears about violence, are common stressors.
STRESS IN STUDENT LIFE:

Student life coincides with adolescence, and stress can manifest in children as a reaction to the changes in life in addition to academic pressures. Children become more self-aware and self-conscious, and their thinking becomes more critical often lack in academic motivation and performance, as their attention is divided among a lot many things, especially creating an identity for themselves.

Stress is created by parental pressure to perform and to stand out among other children. When they can’t rise up to that expectation, or during the processes of meeting it, children may suffer from frustration, physical stress, aggression, undesirable complexes and depression.

Students who are under – performers, develop negative traits such as shyness, unfriendliness, jealousy and may retreat into their own world to become loners.

Over scheduling a student’s life can put them under stress, a child’s in school and after school activities should be carefully arranged to give them some breathing space. Parents may want him to learn music, painting, or be outstanding in a particular sport. So, many things are crammed in to their schedule, unmindful (often) of the children’s choices and capabilities that it puts a lot of mental pressure on them in an effort to fulfill their parents whishes.
School systems cram students with a tremendous amount of homework, which they usually have to complete spending their evenings, weekends and most of the vacations. Unable to find enough time students often lose interest in studies and under perform. They often feel stress by being asked to do too much in too little a time.

Teenage depression or growing up tensions add to the academic pressure. If unable to adapt to the transition and change, students often carry enormous amount of anxiety, negative personal traits and can suffer from massive attention problems. When ‘effortless’ learning does not take place, these students lose confidence, motivation and interest and this creates more stress.

Another major student’s stressor is perhaps the middle school malaise, which refers to the physio-psychological transition of students from elementary to junior high school.

Researchers have studied this transition from elementary to middle school and have found that:

1) On average, children’s grades drop dramatically during the first year of middle school compared to their grades in elementary school.

2) After moving to junior high school, children become less interested in school and less self-assured about their abilities.
3) Compared to elementary schools, middle schools are more controlling, less cognitively challenging and focus more on competition and comparing student’s abilities.

**ADOLESCENCE STRESS:**

No doubt, adolescence is a time of high stress for teenagers and parents alike. Stress is the usual result of any rapid change and rapid change is what adolescence is all about. Parent’s watch children cope with the stress and grow stronger from the experience.

Of course, watching these struggles without being able to do much to help can be a stressful experience in its own right! Although it may not be possible to completely erase the sources of adolescent stress – by the parents, they can be more supportive parents by understanding where the stress is coming from.

Adolescent stress comes from within-that is, they can have a biological cause-as well as from the various social spheres in which adolescents operate; the family, school, peer group and the society at large.

Biological stress – in general, physical changes of adolescence occur most rapidly from age 12 to 14 for girls and between 13 and 15 for boys. In addition to, or perhaps because of, their bodily changes, adolescents tend to be
extremely self-conscious and typically assume that everyone is always staring at them. Every unwanted curve or lack of curves, pimple, hair, can be a source of misery and stress, particularly for those who do not fit our culture’s narrow ideal of beauty.

Family Stress – even the most well adjusted adolescent faces major source of stress in relationships with parents. That is because every adolescent must work through the age – old struggle between the need to belong and to be taken care of and the need for independence and freedom.

Psychologists have pointed out that adolescents are driven by a need to come to grips with their own individual identities and part of this process involves understanding their origins. Part of this task involves simply knowing their family history: where their parents grew up, the difficult part of the task involves in understanding their parents as human beings, who grew up in a particular place and time and who were shaped by complex emotions and relationships. This sort of understanding is difficult to come by. It is hard enough for an average teenage from a family with both parents living together, but when parents live far apart, or when one or both are unknown (due to abandonment or death), the task becomes even more stressful.

School or college stress-academic pressures mount during high school or college particularly the last two years. And although many parents recognize that
academic struggles to avoid failing an important course, for example – can be quite stressful, it may be the most academically capable students who feel the greatest pressure, as they find themselves competing for scarce, high prestige college admissions.

Peer stress – peer group stress tends to be highest during the middle school years, but adolescents who do not find at least a minimal degree of acceptance at that time in their lives are likely to suffer lasting consequences: isolation, low self-esteem and stress. The price of admission to cool peer society for many adolescents is involvement with cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. However, in the long run the physical and psychological ups and downs end up increasing not decreasing, the level of stress they feel.

Societal stress – adolescents don’t yet belong to the wider adult society. For example, they cannot vote or buy alcohol legally and they are kept out of most well – paying jobs.

It is not altogether surprising that test anxiety is a pervasive problem among secondary school and university students. Indeed, the anxiety that some students experience during examinations is so disturbing that they are compelled to seek professional assistance to help them cope with its effects” (Spielberger et al., 1979). In fact, stress of formal examinations, results in such high degrees of anxiety in
many students, that they are unable to perform at the usual level they have shown in less stressful situations.

Examination stress, which has been characterized as “evaluative apprehension” (Rosenberg, 1965), or “evaluative stress” (Wine, 1980) also produces debilitating behavioral, cognitive and physiological effects no different from those produced by any other stressor. Like most of the other stresses, it follows a pattern of “hierarchy”. As is the case with the stress of everyday life, when adrenaline level – an index of stress – is low during night rest, double during daily routine activities and three to five times above the resting level under conditions of ‘mild’ to ‘moderate’ stress (Frankenshaeser and Johonson, 1976), so similar is the pattern with examination stress before, after and at the actual time of examination (Raina, 1983).

Mandler and Sarason (1952) found that college students who were “high test – anxious”, did more poorly on intelligence tests, than did “low test-anxious” students especially when those tests were administered under stressful, ego-involving conditions. They attributed this worsening of performance among test – anxious students to the arousal of feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, heightened somatic reactions, anticipation of punishment or loss of status and esteem and implicit attempts at leaving the test situation. High test anxious subjects apparently respond to examination stress, with intense emotional reactions and negative self-centered though that impair performance, while those low in test anxiety, react with increased motivation and concentration. Text anxiety which is a situation – specific
form of trait anxiety (Spielberger et al., 1978) consists of two major components – worry and emotionality, both of which reduce the achievement of test – anxious students in intelligence tests and learning tasks: worrying thoughts distract the individual’s attention from the task, and intense emotional reactions lead to mistakes and cause repression that blocks memory.

Sarason (1972) describes that behavior of test – anxious people in evaluative situations thus: “Whereas the less test anxious person plunges into a task when he thinks he is being evaluatived, the high test – anxious person plunges inward. He either neglects or misinterprets informational cues that may be readily available to him, or experiences attentional blocks”.

However, many people respond to tests with increased emotionality but relatively little worry. Less often, a person may worry a great deal on a test, but yet score relatively low in emotionality. By contrast, students who experience moderate increase in emotionality seem to do best in most test situations.

Although a minimum of academic anxiety or stress appears to be desirable as a spur to learning, most teaching problems stem from a super abundance of anxiety rather than a lack of it. Anxiety in pupils has mixed performance results. In some cases anxiety leads to greater effort, but in most students anxiety tends to inhibit learning to a greater extent than does limited ability (Hill and Eaton, 1977). However, the differential effect of anxiety on performance as mediated by defensive
reactions may vary systematically depending on the intelligence level, type of task and instructions (Ruebush, 1960).

It is obvious that adolescent students experience different types of stress and anxiety. Although, the adolescence period generates such stress and anxiety among the children of that stage, it is reported that certain factors either neutralize or aggravate the amount of stress and anxiety in adolescents and the stress in turn affects the academic achievement of the students.

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:**

Academic achievement has been defined as level of proficiency attained in academic work or as formally acquired knowledge in school subjects which is often represented by percentage of marks obtained by students in examinations.

Academic achievement is the accomplishment or acquired proficiency in the performance of an individual in a given skill or body of knowledge. Academic achievement means “knowledge attained and skill developed in the school subjects usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both”. Achievement can be measured with the help of test, it is a study of ‘progress’ of the students in their scholastic career. They should be able to score the minimum required percentage of marks prescribed for promotion to the next higher class. Since, academic achievement is the criterion for selection, promotion or recognition in various walks of life, the importance of academic achievement cannot be overemphasized. There are several factors that influence the academic achievement
of an individual, such as personality, intellectual ability, stress, demographic, cultural and environmental factors, socio-economic aspects including deprivation etc.

Therefore, an attempt is made in this study to assess the effect of deprivation and stress on the adjustment and academic achievement of the students selected from various colleges of Gulbarga - a backward region.