CHAPTER VI

CONSTRAINTS

Constraints are of two types:

(a) MICRO CONSTRAINTS
(b) MACRO CONSTRAINTS

(a) MICRO CONSTRAINTS:

An adolescent's effort to develop skills and competency to deal with various life situations, numerous worries, anxieties and concerns stand on the way and interfere in the process of adjustment.

Probably at no age period are individual differences so marked as they are in early adolescence. Many of the problems of adolescents have come from individual differences in growth and development. All men, in physical, intellectual, emotional and social capacity, are not born equal. Difficulty is likely to arise whenever the individual differs markedly in these spheres from the rest of his group or when there are wide discrepancies between the above mentioned four main fields of development. Moreover, the impact of differing cultural influences or differing biologically inherited potentialities is extremely strong during these years.

Physical conditions are a source of anxiety because they represent either real or fancied social handicaps. From the point of view of adjustment it is of little importance whether the handicap is real or imagined. So long as it exists, it will influence the adolescent's behaviour (Kuhlen, 1952)\textsuperscript{166}. 
Studies of boys and girls have revealed that rapid pubescent development or sex inappropriate development, as in the early part of adolescence, likely to result in extreme reactions which hamper his development and the individual cannot make adequate adjustments to them and as a result is confused and insecure. These changes are for most part unfavourable and the individual becomes constrained by criticisms and disapprovals of the group and lead to poor social adjustments.

The more important studies of sources of concern in adolescence have shown that the adolescent is generally disturbed by one physical characteristic which he feels does not come up to social standards or disproportionate or of a personal dislike for the trait or from the belief that the trait is not sexually appropriate, like crooked teeth, perspiration, height etc. Sexually inappropriate development causes constraints of distress for both boys and girls (Hurlock E. 1955)\textsuperscript{167}.

Disturbances to physical or psychological well-being result in a state of stress, from the mild personality difficulties to mental breakdown. Everyone finds frustrations and conflicts difficult. Sometimes stressful situations push the individual beyond their ability to manage.

Studies of puberty change in adolescence have showed that those who had little or no preparation for this constraint reported emotional reactions to it and those who have been prepared for it react more favourably.
Furthermore, being ignorant that secondary sex characteristics is the normal pattern of growth the pubescent child becomes disturbed. When the development of pigmented hair on the body and face is delayed or scanty the boy is disturbed; again when it becomes thick enough for him to have a shave he is embarrassed. In him there is change in tonal quality of his voice and the boy's lack of control over it causes much embarrassment. The young girl too becomes embarrassed about her changing body when her breasts and hips develop. These cause anxiety that add to the difficulty in adjustment.

Working of the endocrine system shows that premature sexual development is followed by premature cessation of bodily growth. On the other hand, in cases where sexual development is too long delayed, the growth of the limbs continues to a disproportionate extent. If the pituitary gland and the gonads do not function in a reciprocal manner, with properly timed action on the part of both, growth will be 'unnormal'. If there is hypofunction or hyperfunction of the pituitary gland and gonads, there will be delayed puberty or puberty precox respectively (Rush et al, 1937 168; Bergman 1977)169.

Such sexual precocity may have unfortunate social consequences through the self-consciousness which results from the child's awareness of the difference between herself and her contemporaries or from the shame-faced attitude of the parents at the appearance not only of primary but of secondary sexual characteristics.
There are marked individual differences in the patterns of adolescent growth and development. In the process of physical development, some adolescents deviate unfavourably from the social norm, there are others again whose growth and development have been very favourable leading to inadequate and adequate self-concept respectively. The trouble comes from this discrepancy between his physique and the cultural pattern of manhood that he has accepted. Among girls a face or figure that does not conform to their ideal of womanliness constrain them greatly.

Body builds very according to age of maturing. The disproportions of features are well marked in the early part of adolescence. Developmental rate is also not uniform in all bodily organs. The tall adolescents of fourteen may be immature in other aspects and many feel themselves at a disadvantage as compared with their friends whose organic balances are better than their own and adults may expect from them a degree of maturity which they are unable to display.

Weight increase is closely associated with sexual maturing, the greatest increase in weight comes early in adolescence, discomforting the child and affect personality development unfavourably and social adjustment likewise suffer.

Few adolescents are fortunate enough to escape awkwardness. Especially during early adolescence every adolescent has certain bodily features that are proportionally too large and this sudden rapid and uneven growth of bones and muscles at puberty
result in an upset in the built in motor achievement acquired during childhood. This dislocation of previous coordination or pattern of behaviour necessitates readjustment and the learning of new controls and new coordination to overcome such constraints.

EARLY AND LATE MATURING

The psychological significance of early or late sexual maturing is very great. The faster maturing individuals have a greater spurt of rapid growth; their periods of acceleration and of stopping come abruptly; and they attain adult proportions very quickly and have, therefore, a longer period in which to make the social adjustment which are expected from them before entry upon adult responsibilities. On the other hand, they may need to pass through a period of considerable loneliness until their contemporaries develop to their level. Physical superiority, therefore, in early adolescence is associated with early maturing. This gives the individual a temporary advantage over the late-maturing child, who is not only smaller but who frequently develops unfavourable attitudes toward self, such as shyness and self-consciousness. The initial advantage that comes from early maturing is strengthened by the more favourable attitudes toward self resulting from being physically superior, from the development of habits of social domination, which generally persist into later years. They have the social prestige within their group of looking grown up. But because they are too big for their group they no longer fit into their former play groups nor are acceptable members in an older group, where
their necessary intellectual, muscular and social skills and experiences are inadequate.

In direct contrast to early maturing slow maturing individuals have less intense periods of acceleration; their growth is more even and gradual and it continues for a longer time. Late maturing cuts down the adjustment period and limits the individual to a shorter period than his peers have for preparing themselves for adult life.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN MATURATION:

Those adolescents who do not measure up to the social male and female ideal are worried to the point where they have adjustment problems of greater or lesser severity.

As girls develop more rapidly, their physical superiority over boys proves to be a blow to boy's masculine eyes at a time when they have convinced themselves that they are the superior sex.

THE EARLY AND LATE MATURING GIRLS:

Even within the same sex there are variations in the inceptions of sexual competence. The early maturing girl has special problems of adjusting to her age mates, who are psychologically less developed. Nor can she join in with older girls who are in puberty; and her relation to boys and to her family also may be difficult. In contrast the late maturing girls do not seem to have such troubles but have another drawback. The slow maturing feel constrained about their immature bodies as compared with their friends.
THE EARLY AND LATE MATURING BOYS:

On the other hand the situation with the early maturing boy is quite different. Jones has reported that the early maturing lad enters adolescence at a time when girls in his age group are appreciative of male acquaintances who no longer insist on being children.

The late maturing boy is likely to be rejected by both boys and girls of his own age and by his parents, who may expect him to behave in a manner for which he is not yet prepared.

Girls as a whole are more affected, partly because girls mature earlier and partly because girls find more social restrictions.

Perhaps the most serious point of concern for the adolescent is the age of maturing. Individual differences result in the time when the traits of puberty development make their appearances. This happens when the children are ahead or behind their classmates or age mates in developing these traits or if traits developed are not sexually appropriate or has a personal disliking for it. They are certain to feel conspicuous because they are different.

When deviation is great the self-concepts developed tend to be saturated with feelings of inadequacy and may have a negative influence on emotional health and personality development and the adolescent experience a sense of difference to other adolescents.
Thus emotional reaction to erratic physical, emotional and intellectual development, increasing variability in growth at adolescence, temporary disharmonies, anomalies of functioning in the endocrine or ductless gland, precocious physical or physiological changes, variations of growth, make adolescents anxious and insecure.

According to Staton F. Thomas 171 8 inhibiting factors that get in the way of emotional maturation are,

i) confusion of roles,
ii) early traumas,
iii) early deprivation of affection,
iv) biological defects,
v) escapist use of defense mechanisms,
vi) restricted experience,
vii) lack of training,
viii) unresolved internal conflicts.

Conflicts arise in the ambiguity in adolescent's treatment by adults. At one time adolescents are urged by their parents and society to be grown up and self-sufficient, and at other times they are not fully allowed the privilege and responsibilities of self determination, as being guided, pushed, and controlled in every step of their life. Adolescent's unsure status (neither a child nor an adult), inadequate self concept, new role revision of old habits of thought and action, new experiences gained in contact with persons and situations, rapid succession of new demands, new status,
constant repetition of strong, or conflicting emotion all these emotionally disturb the adolescent and affect his behaviour, attitudes and general physical well being. Sometimes emotions are sources of motivation of constructive efforts to achieve goals and endurance to the body; on the contrary they may defeat their purpose and produce anxiety and stress constraints that lead to conflict of adjustment.

When adults specially the parents take the child as the potential fulfiller of their own frustrated ambitions adolescents become anxious.

In selection of friends child-parent conflicts often ensue. The adolescents insist upon choosing his own friends and refuse to permit adult interference. This conflict is symbolic of freedom from parental controls. In communities where status striving is prevalent there would always be a pull between friendship belonging and pressure to keep a high status.

Another conflict in adolescence comes when the contradictory values are built into the culture. The cultural standards urge the individual toward a certain type of value and behaviour pattern and at the same time they place value on other incompatible ones.

There are again anxiety-prone individuals who have the belief that the environment is hostile and dangerous and that they will be victimized by it and develop negative feeling of coping it. Those without such chronic anxiety tend to assume a benign environment.
Moreover, there are powerful forces, like competing inner tendencies, conflicting pressures in the culture, adult confusion that the adolescent must contend against if he is to adjust well. In many respects competing inner tendencies, i.e. pressure on the adolescent imposed from within himself are even stronger than outer restraints. How much does an adolescent not desire or strive to become independent, he cannot make himself free of old habits of doing, thinking and feeling which have a strong hold over him. He must struggle to win the freedom to enjoy what life offers. There often is a conflict between still needed security and dependence for lack of confidence, and a growing attitude of independence.

Adolescent's perceptions and responses are affected by all these micro constraints that often generate within the individuals.
As an adolescent is the product of his society, his maturity in some respects must be thought of in social, structural and functional context in which he lives. The cultural tradition and civilization convey to the new generation ideas, ideals held by the old and an abstract of all successful past adaptations. Cultural pattern, however, concedes social and economic maturity only by degrees, impose restraints without at the same time offering adequate sublimations. There is the powerful social pressure - the rules he must follow, the conditions he must conform to are obvious and strong, sometimes even his own good healthy interests are to be sacrificed in order to be with the interests of the crowd. Many of the mental phenomena of adolescence are precipitated by rigid conditions of modern society which deprive the growing child of a measure of independence, put restraints upon sexual activity, and offers frustrations and thwartings. The kind of thoughts, memories, and impulses which must be repressed will be dependent upon the social environment. The adolescent develops through social conditioning a frame of reference which determines for him different degrees of acceptability of ideas. This complicates the adolescent's effort to achieve his potentialities.

The American social anthropologist Margaret Mead in her two major books "Coming of Age in Samoa" (1928) and "Growing up in New Guinea" (1931) emphasized that it is cultural differences rather than innate individual characteristics which cause social
strain and stress. In many primitive tribes the transition from children to adult status is abrupt. It is the creation of an advanced civilization which progressively prolong the period of the child's dependence and sets between the world of childhood and that of adult privilege, power and responsibility a long period of preparation.

There are many more different subcultures that transmit diverse value-systems to children; religious groups, racial groups, urban and rural groups, national groups, and so forth. The necessarily complex interaction between child and various subgroups with their heterogenous personal values must place a tremendous burden of decision on the adolescent.

Chaotic world conditions and social conflicts are unsettling the emotional stability among adolescents. Clear thinking frequently evades them. The increased complexity of social order has made the period of learning and preparation to get entry into the adult society more difficult and prolonged. Its needs are more complex and variable and there are no general pattern of response sanctioned by experience and custom.

Peter Blos pointed out that those adolescents who resisted social pressure showed considerable anxiety in making their judgement. They are to live or respond to social expectations and today they are in a considerable state of dilemma from the many sidedness of social demands of advanced society.

In India, the breaking up of the joint family system, prevalence of divorce and break-up homes and preoccupation in clubs and lack of their own norms have lowered the value of the young minds.
In moral spheres too there are many conflicting pressures. As the social horizons broaden, the adolescent's moral values of childhood are no longer adequate to meet all his needs. Adolescents are faced with inconsistencies and constraints in moral and religious values. They see contradiction between adult's expressed values and basic humanitarian values of the culture. They see hypocrisy among the politicians, corruption in education systems, they face cheating, high price, adulteration, less weight and similar parasites in the market. In short, today very little of value is at hand. Thus when the adolescents find that discrepancies in values exist, doubts spring up as to which is right and which code to follow. Sometimes they even feel that they would be a miserable failure if they did not follow the rut of their elders. Instead of trying to reach their goals by honest hard work, they see short cut to success through perverse and fraudulent means. The corruption rampant in all walks of life coupled with the greater sensitivity to inconsistency that result from his higher level of intelligence cause confusion. The situation not only complicates the learning of values appropriate for his level of development but which has also marked influence on his behaviour.

Adolescent's idealism works against involvement with formal religion. The autocratic inflexibility of doctrinaire religious beliefs does not appeal to adolescents, because even organized religion cannot sufficiently deal with the relevant issues of adolescence. When religion is lacking in any broad concerns for humanity
its followers are prejudiced, narrow and authoritarian. Yet the values which they learn are the product of the kind of culture, family life, school teaching and religious belief.

Money:

'Cost' is an important constraint and one of the causes of juvenile delinquency. The importance of having money to use as one wishes is very strong to adolescents. They feel money is essential to independence. They need money for school activities and recreational needs. Many parents either do not or cannot give sufficient allowance. Some are unable to give at all. Generally adolescents feel the size of their allowance is not adequate enough to cover their needs. They may look for job to earn money and some hold part-time jobs.

Marfatia (1973) found that low family income is one of the causes responsible for maladjustment among the adolescents in various areas like home, emotional and school.

Great disparity in income between rich and the poor has its effects. A boy growing up in slum very often ends up as a criminal because he is put to that path for sheer struggle for existence.

While money is so dear to him, he finds rich neighbours wallowing in extreme luxury. This puts the germ of violence in their minds against the rich, who is looked down as exploiters - the person who seems to be the prime cause of their poverty.

Moreover, when the family income is small and the number of children is large it causes parents to neglect their children.
They cannot give their children the required training. Poverty pro-
duces undernourishment and poor physical health. It makes it impos-
sible for adolescents to have the things their peers have and this
produces tension in the home and creates envy and motivation to
get them by any means possible which mean low mental resistance to
temptations.

Adolescents especially from the lower socio-economic
background cannot afford to participate in extra-curricular activi-
ties which cost money. They forego many facilities that teach social
know-how. Lack of social skills leads to withdrawal from social si-
tuations. They cannot participate in peer social activities that
improve social acceptability which is closely associated with good
adjustment.

ADULT CONFUSION :

Adults themselves are confused about issues pertaining
to discipline, teaching and rearing of young people - the issue bet-
ween authority and freedom. Many adults have been uncertain about
what it means to be democratic or permissive. Circumstances of life
are such that it is not humanly possible for an adult to be consist-
tent in everything he does. At the present time many if not most
adolescents are exposed to more than the usual amount of confusion
and inconsistency.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCE :

Geographical differences cause a barrier among the youths. Based on geographical condition an area is subject to economic deve-


dvelopment. Hence a highly developed area naturally enjoys all the benefits than a developing or backward area. The youths of the former, therefore, are definitely gainer than the youths of the latter. The adolescents of a backward area are deprived of all the amenities and hence develop an inferiority complex.

Western materialism and consumerism are spreading all over the world. The introduction of technology no doubt offers solution but it has also created lot of consumer goods for which there are lots of aspirants. Adolescent's desire to possess the material amenities are often beyound their reach. The unemployment as a result of over populations, technology and philosophy lagging behind or remaining still in the same level cause devaluation in the society that would affect the young minds most.

The adolescent gradually moves from a simpler, familiar environment of the home and the school in which he is rarely out of supervision of adults to the wider impersonal environment where he is exposed to behaviour and ideas which home and school have ignored. This wider environment do not accept responsibility for his well-being.

The trend of industrial life is towards centralization, and to an impersonal world in which the individual does not seem to count for much. He loses a sense of worth, of power to influence his own destiny.

All these macro constraints have contributed to the warping of the present adolescent minds.
Figure 1.2: An integrated systems approach to the study of adolescent behaviour.