PART-I
In this thesis entitled, "Peer Determinants of Adjustment in Early Adolescence", an attempt is being made to analyse the adolescents' adjustment process using an integrated systems approach and formulate a Peer Rating Model which will help to define a Social Index to reflect the degree of adjustment of an adolescent in a peer group.

Basically the work has been divided into two parts:

1) Unification of research studies and findings on adolescent behaviour and adjustment processes in peer groups.

2) Development of a Social Rating Model to determine the degree of sociability.

1. A UNIFIED APPROACH:

Here the adolescent is studied in his entirety by treating him or her as a "system". We can define a system, in general terms, as an ensemble of interrelated and interdependent entities which are organised and controlled by means of a feedback mechanism to achieve a specific objective/s, given certain inputs and considering the constraints acting upon them. The author believes that such an approach to studying an adolescent has never been adopted in earlier studies. The uniqueness of this approach is that it covers all aspects, namely,

inputs

outputs.
and gives a clearer picture of the individual. The findings of other researchers are also presented in this format while discussing the factors of adjustment in early adolescence.
2. DEVELOPMENT OF A RATING MODEL:

On going through the literature available the author had the feeling that most of the studies were of a general nature, discussing a few factors and how they influenced the adolescent. Why and how they chose only those factors seemed to be rather arbitrary since the papers do not mention. Furthermore, there is no rating model to describe the degree of adjustment in a peer group of early adolescents.

In this thesis the author shows the use of the DELPHI technique in the scientific selection of factors by peer group members and also how it is used in the evaluation of the importance of each of the selected factors. The DELPHI technique, comprising a series of questionnaires with feedback, is used to arrive at a group consensus on a subject of interest. It preserves anonymity and does away with the "band wagon" effect (being swayed by a crowd) and the "halo" effect (being influenced by a strong speaker).

The DELPHI technique has not been employed in any of the few studies on early adolescents. The DELPHI questionnaires were administered in five schools to start with. Due to various constraints from school authorities only in one school could it be completed. However the stress being on "approach" rather than on "numbers" it did not really matter. The author could answer scientifically:

a) What factors to choose?
b) How important are the selected factors to the peer group in so far as adjustment or sociability within a peer group is concerned?

Each group member was then asked to evaluate the other members and himself against each of these factors on a 3 point scale. The sum of the weighted scores of the factors against a member provided an index to his sociability.

Consider the situation:

6 factors to rate
48 members in the class
37 members present, others were absent when the rating model was applied.

Thus each individual was required to answer 288 (= 6 x 48) questions on a 3 point scale. This could have been the limit to boredom and an enormous problem of data collation.

The author solved the problems of questionnaire boredom and data collation by administering a computerised questionnaire. A microcomputer was taken to the school, great excitement prevailed and each student enjoyed his session of answering on the monitor screen. The author, of course, captured data on-line, hence no data entry/transcription mistakes and analysis made so much the easier. Again, the author believes that a computerised screen in such a study is first of its kind to find perceptual differences of group ratings versus self-ratings.
A SUMMARY OF OVERALL ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

1. Developing a general framework of a conceptual system model to analyse adolescent beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and personality.


3. The use of the Delphi technique in determining parameters of the rating model.

4. Computerised questionnaire administration where adolescents directly answer on the computer screen.

5. Application of a scientifically constructed model to the study of peer determinants in adolescence in a third world country (research on this subject is concentrated mostly in the U. S. R., U. K. and Japan).

6. The finer analysis on the selected factors as related to the North Eastern region of India.

PLAN OF THE REPORT:

PART I - THEORETICAL:

In chapter I, a general literature survey is presented to trace the development of this subject leading to the authors own conceptual systems model which is discussed in chapter II.

Each component of the model (like Input, Output, Processor etc.) is then discussed in detail in chapter III to VIII while chapters IX and X discuss the "purchaser" elements (society) and the objectives which are largely influenced by the purchaser.