CHAPTER III

INPUTS:

Careful studies of mental and physical growth and development at adolescence reveal numerous constraints and inputs that aid or act as barrier in reaching maturity.

Whether adolescents make a constructive response or avoidance escape response to solving the problems of living will be determined by many factors like favourable or unfavourable early experiences, possession of fortunate or unfortunate self-concepts, learning of anxiety or confidence and security, personality patterns, temperaments, heredity, environment so on and so forth. Now what matters most is not these factors of influence but variations in competence of the particular individual in dealing with a situation. This variation most probably leads to experiencing different impact by different adolescents of the same social event. Research has shown that there are wide variations in ability among individuals.

The individual variations in differences in need, in growth of intelligence, imagination, personality, skills, wisdom, knowledge as such are related factors that interweave to determine the adolescent pattern of adjustment. These variations in competence result from:

1. inherited characteristics i.e., their inborn potentialities,
2. environmental influences or their individual patterns
of development,

3. their psychological and social interactions.

Moreover, the patterns of experiences like,

1. individual's social history,
2. the way the individual has been reared,
3. the influence to which person was subjected in growing up, and
4. special experiences that have shaped psychological development, especially in early life; and the like also contribute to one's relative vulnerability or invulnerability to adjustment failure under the stresses of life and perhaps even to particular forms of maladjustment.

(1) INFLUENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD:

The adolescent inherits what has gone before. He is inclined to act on the basis of his own past. Many habits and attitudes persist from earlier childhood. Previous experiences affect the individual's response in any situation and determine in many ways his attitudes and reactions to future experiences.

The research findings of different writers indicated that a significantly high positive relationship exists between the variables family climate and level of adjustment. The effects of home relationships on the adolescent and the pattern of home training is reflected in his social relationships outside the home. Parents and home cast the effective influences in determining the
fundamental organizations of adolescent's behaviour. The character of each family situation leaves the growing child with a distinctive residue of patterned feeling response which conditions the adolescent's behaviour in novel situations. Widely different internal residue to experiences make individuals to respond in different ways to similar stimuli. It is said that reactions (rebellen or submission) in adolescence reflect patterns laid down earlier. Parent's interaction with children are mingled with combinations of tradition, personal prejudice, emotional regards, and rule of thumb procedures. These determine children's behaviour tendencies, their personality characteristics and their general orientation towards life.

The constellation of uncongenial conditions in childhood such as disagreeable atmosphere of the home created by quarreling, defective uncertain home discipline, marked physical, social or economic difference from companions will bring trouble at adolescence. Lewin (1955) reported that parents with unsatisfactory family climate were found to be causative in children's psychological disorders. Way and Adler (1956) found that the variation in adjustment in different aspects of life shown by a child will contribute much by the type of family. Better adjustment in all the levels of life is possible, if the child's family climate is satisfactory (Oliver, 1974; Syeda, 1978). Coughill (1941) pointed out that an emotionally disturbed parent almost always produces an emotionally disturbed child. Supporting this statement Phillips (1951) stated that
if the parents are not well adjusted, they give the child a poor model to imitate and this is likely to lead to maladjustment similar to that of his parents.

The deterioration in family relationships are observed around the time of sexual maturing of the child. There is further development of parent-adolescent friction mainly over matters of heterosexual relationships and his spending of money. The internal conflicts, emotional instability, irrational anxiety like neuroses, problems of misbehaviour and poor personality adjustment are caused by mistreatment, neglect in childhood and poor relationship between siblings. Lack of adequate parental guidance, care and love owing to the effects of the broken home likely to produce emotional tensions leading to delinquency. Some parents try to make up for their unsuccess by making unrealistic expectations of their children disregarding the child's abilities or vocational selection. This brings anxiety to the adolescents.

The disparity in chronological age between parents and adolescents increases the gap between 'more' of the two generations. Some of the unrealistic social, economic and emotional demands made by the adolescents put pressures on the parents. In turn, parents demand that adolescents conform to proper standards of behaviour and expect them to shoulder some of the burdens of the home and contribute to its support. This results in less emotional warmth in the family.
Size of the family too influences the adolescent's adjustment. Large family helps the adolescents to gain social poise and cooperation and it may also bring conflicts and tensions. Whereas small families do not face sibling rivalry, tension and frictions and make better emotional adjustment.

Good affectional family relationships, idealizing both parents, and congenial environment on the other hand are essential to good emotional stability and high self confidence. It fosters leadership quality.

The socio-economic status of the family is influential in determining the adolescent's social status in the peer group when adolescents find that their lack of social acceptance by his peers is due to lack of money it frequently brings strong resentment towards his parents. The sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt (1956) spoke of family insufficiency for developing full identity that pushed adolescents to coalesce in youth groups.

(2) AUTOCRATIC AND DEMOCRATIC GUIDANCE

The Indian home, school, and community still impose many authoritarian methods of child guidance. However, they all theoretically teach the democratic philosophy, so that they can accept the democratic tradition in adult life. Autocratic parents enforce strict training and dominance, and discourage independent thinking. Where adolescents react with intensified rebellion against parental domination. Adolescent's attitude is reflected in any action or statement which seems to the adolescent to be aimed at restriction of his scope of self-determination.
Mowrer (1939) states that the autocratic controls compel the children to adopt one of two adjustment patterns. They may surrender their individuality and establish a dependency relationship with adult leaders or they may identify themselves with the personality characteristics of established autocratic leaders.

On the contrary, within limit democratic control helps development of intellectual curiosity, originality, more independence in personal matters, resourceful in group situations, and better social adjustment. Nevertheless too much indulgence is harmful and other directly or indirectly it brings conflicts of limitations.

Referring to child-rearing attitude of the parents Bakwin and Bakwin (1940) suggested that the type of infant care determined one's level of home adjustment and psychological development. The normal attitudes of affection and the abnormal attitudes of over-affection, overprotection, over-anxiety, under-affection, over-authority, identification, perfection and perfectionism and parental incompatibility, etc, play important roles in the development of adjustment quality in the areas of home, health and emotion.

Examining on consequences of physical abuse and neglect in children in 4 areas of functioning - medical-neurological status, cognitive and intellectual functioning, emotional adjustment and psychopathology, and social development, Robert, T. (1986) spoke, findings indicated that abused and neglected
children display deficit in intellectual and academic functioning, and exhibit a variety of internalizing and externalizing disorders such as depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, aggressiveness, and conduct problems.

(3) RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES:

At adolescence, with increasing knowledge and intellectual development adolescents can detect inconsistencies among beliefs. There is an awakening of religious interest and a change in religious attitudes and habits, and he is likely to reshuffle his former faith and can have mature religious concepts to meet his mature intelligence.

Left to themselves it may involve serious risks - risk of exploitation by the interested or of the kind of drifting indifference which marks many even of the most intelligent of contemporary youth while on the otherhand, alluring dogmatism - secular or religious, may provoke a catastrophic revolt or thoughtless acceptance.

If the formal instructions in religious beliefs is not fused with a particular way of life by which adolescents can understand the meaning and content of life, it brings disturbance. Furthermore, if the interpretation of human experience is taught without giving knowledge about existence of other ways of life, intolerance may result.
Religious awakening may be gradual or catastrophic. Gradual awakening is characterized by slow process of revision of former religious beliefs and ideas. Catastrophic type bring emotional disturbance. Mostly they experience doubt on religious teachings which produce guilt especially in early adolescents.

Doubting results in changes in religious beliefs. Whether religious doubt is beneficial or detrimental depend upon early training and also upon the way his religious doubts are met. These religious beliefs that are accompanied by restrictive social taboos are usually rejected. The adolescent may feel guilty or even afraid when he realizes that his religious beliefs and attitudes are changing.

There is likely to be decreased interest in religion. Major changes may force the adolescent to adopt another faith or develop agnosticism. They are disappointed at the failure of religion to solve all his moral difficulties. They are disillusioned by the behaviour of adults who profess religion but fall short of their religious ideals.

Lack of moral training in childhood, failure to punish the child when he intentionally violates the accepted codes, of the group, result in the establishment of faulty codes, which may prove to be a source of trouble later on.

(4) BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION:

The genetic factor such as body build, neuro-muscular organization, differences in endocrine balance and other organic
features are important in strength and direction of drives or needs, in learning capacity, and in aiding in determining the goals which serve to reduce the imbalance that sets up behaviour in the first place. Beside these organically founded factors, sex and age are also rooted in the constitution of the individual.

Any abnormal condition of the endocrine system also affects the body proportions of the growing individual. Deficiency of the growth hormone produces dwarfism. Too much of the growth hormone produces gigantism. The most important fact about the growth hormone is that it must be produced at the right time if the child is to grow normally.

(5) HEREDITY:

It has been suggested that there is a strong relationship between hereditary influences and adjustive failure. Genetic research has shown a significant contribution of heredity in causing inadequate coping with stress at the psychological level. Heredity can operate on behaviour usually through some physical trait or traits and some constitution elements that is passed on from one generation to another and affects psychological development and adjustment. These inherited physical characteristics, predispose the person to mental illness if the appropriate life conditions like severe stress are encountered.

(6) SOCIAL INFLUENCE:

Social influence plays some roles in adjustive behaviour. The social adjustment of the adolescent is directly related to his
early social experiences and past relationship. Socio-psychologically oriented research workers have found that social conditions and experiences, economic conditions, appropriate environmental deprivation such as inadequate social and intellectual stimulation, language, nutrition, and hope are responsible for adjustive disturbances.

With all these accumulated experiences of the past and past relationship the adolescent proceeds on toward maturity.
FIG 1.2 AN INTEGRATED SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOUR