The present study entitled "A Cross-Sectional Study of Ego-Identity of Adolescents in Relation to Self-Concept, Adjustment and Socio-Economic Status" involved the comparative, correlational and differential approaches to the study of Ego-Identity amongst the adolescents in school classes IX-XII at age levels 14-19 years. The development of Ego-Identity was studied in relation to the independent variables of Self-Concept, Adjustment-overall and its four sub-areas i.e. Home, Health, Social and Emotional Adjustment. The investigation was also extended to ascertain variations due to sex and types of schools attended, besides of course, the four school classes from which the sample was derived.

The study was pivoted around the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses:

1. There is a development of Ego-Identity amongst the adolescent students from class IX & XII.

2. Significant relationship exists between Ego-Identity and Socio-Economic status.

3. Ego-Identity is significantly related to Adjustment and its sub-areas.
4. There is significant relationship between Ego-Identity and Self-Concept.

5. Socio-Economic Status, Adjustment and Self-Concept conjointly contribute significantly to the development of Ego-Identity amongst Adolescents.

6. There are significant differences in the Ego-Identity of adolescent students in classes IX to XII.

7. Significant differences exist in classes IX - XII students in Socio-Economic Status, Adjustment and Self-Concept.

8. Government and public school students differ significantly on Ego-Identity.

9. Students of government and public schools differ significantly on Socio-Economic Status, Adjustment and Self-Concept.

10. These exists significant difference amongst boys and girls on Ego-Identity.

11. There are significant differences in Socio-Economic status, Adjustment and Self-Concept of adolescent boys and girls in classes IX-XII.
Method and Procedure:

To test the above stated hypotheses, the study was designed in advance. The total sample was 460, and for its selection the purposive sampling technique was used. Equal number of boys and girl students were selected from the government and public school classes IX-XII.

In all, four tools were employed to obtain the raw-data. These were:


(ii) Personality Word List (PWL, Revised) by Deo (1977).

(iii) Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1934).

(iv) Socio-Economic Status scale (1972) by Deo and Mohan.

The statistical techniques employed included descriptive statistics to study the distribution of scores on the variables investigated. To study the relationship of Ego-Identity with the independent variables, Pearson's coefficient of correlations, Multiple Regression and Multiple correlations were computed. In addition differential analysis was carried out to study the differences among different class levels, sexes and two broad categories of schools (govt. and public).
The results obtained, their analysis, interpretation and discussion suggest the following conclusions:

1. Ego-Identity foundation seems to be almost complete at class IX i.e. at age level 15+ and no significant increase at the higher class levels except for a slightly more development at class XI is witnessed. Further, students in senior classes compared to junior classes do not have a more developed Ego-Identity.

This conclusion of the study shows that the first and the sixth hypotheses are partially tenable.

2. Socio-Economic Status is a significant differential of students of class IX in comparison to all other classes. This is suggestive of the conclusion that children from mediocre Socio-Economic Status pursue education up to the secondary level and there may be a dropout even at the secondary terminal and further at senior secondary stages.

3. Adjustment (overall) of the adolescent students does not essentially improve from lower to higher classes since there is no progressive increase evidenced in the four classes studied. Nonetheless, significant differences in inter-comparisons amongst them show that students in higher classes in nearly 50% of the comparisons made are better adjusted.
4. Self-concept formation amongst the adolescent students also does not show a consistent and progressive improvement from class IX-XII. In fact, maximum positiveness of it is seen in classes IX and X, i.e., at age level 14-16 years. This result suggests the conclusion that Self-Concept just like Ego-Identity is well formed during mid-adolescence only and no improvement may occur during the late adolescence years.

The above three conclusions (2-4) show that the seventh hypothesis is only partially tenable.

5. On Home Adjustment, there is a slightly better standing of the students in the higher classes. In most of the inter-class comparisons also, results are in favour of the senior classes. This means that with maturity, better Adjustment with the family is possible. This conclusion supports hypothesis no. 7.

6. Adjustment in the area of Health doesn't seem to improve with age. In fact the results indicate poorer Health Adjustment at higher classes. This is suggestive of more of concern with physical health and may be appearance also as the adolescent grows older.
7. Social Adjustment doesn't show a consistent pattern of improvement from junior to senior classes. But in the inter-class comparisons better Social Adjustment has been found mostly amongst the higher classes.

8. Similar results as those in the case of Social Adjustment have been found in Emotional Adjustment. Though students at higher class/age levels are emotionally more stable, a slight divergence at class XII suggests the conclusion that emotional stability doesn't essentially come with maturing in other aspects of growth and development.

9. Public school students have been found significantly higher on all the variables studied as compared to the government school students. It may be concluded that the kind of school attended is a significant differential of all the positive aspects of growth and development process i.e. formation of a stable identity, positive Self-Concept and Adjustment in its varied aspects. Socio-Economic Status seems to be an important determinant of the kind of school to which the children are sent.

It is clear from this conclusion that hypotheses nos. eight and nine stand supported.
10. Sex is a significant differential of some of the variables investigated. The result obtained suggest the conclusion that girls are significantly higher on Overall Adjustment and its four sub areas i.e. Home, Health, Social and Emotional. This is indicative of more of maturity in them during the age period 15-19 years. This is also a known psychological fact that girls mature earlier than boys. However, on the dependent variable Ego-Identity, the girls' mean score is higher, though not significantly, than that of the boys. This also shows slightly more of maturity of girls. Boys' mean score on Self-Concept is higher than that of girls which shows their being more confident and self-assured.

The above conclusion show the rejection of hypothesis no. 10 and partial substantiation of hypothesis no. 11.

11. In the case of the total sample, Ego-Identity has been found to be significantly related to all the variables. Socio-Economic Status, Adjustment and all its sub-areas and Self-Concept are thus meaningful correlates of Ego-Identity of the adolescent students, as a group irrespective of their age, class and sex.

This conclusion substantiates the second, third and the fourth hypotheses.
An important finding for the total sample is significant relationship of Socio-Economic Status with all other variables. This shows greater relevance of this variable for Ego-Identity formation, Adjustment and its sub-areas and Self-Concept.

12. No consistent pattern of relationship of Ego-Identity with the other variables is witnessed for the four classes studied i.e. IX-XII.

(i) Socio-Economic Status is a meaningful associate of Ego-Identity in the case of higher classes which suggests the conclusion that there are drop outs at higher levels of study and those who continue have a better Socio-Economic Status.

(ii) Further, Adjustment also seems to be a significant correlate of Ego-Identity for different class levels. Students of higher classes are expected to have a more developed sense of Identity.

(iii) Ego-Identity and Self-Concept are significantly related at the two terminal stages only i.e. classes X and XII. These two stages seem to be crucial, both for Ego-Identity formation and development of positive Self-Concept.
(iv) Home, Adjustment, Health and Social Adjustment are also significant associates of Ego-Identity at the higher level only i.e. for class XII students.

These findings further support hypothesis no. 7.

13. Ego-Identity is significantly related to Socio-Economic Status and Self-Concept, both for Government as well as Public school students. This may be interpreted to mean concomitant that Ego-Identity formation is to the development of Self-Concept and interestingly both of them are meaningfully associated with the Socio-Economic Status in both the groups of students i.e. in government as well as public schools.

14. Ego-Identity amongst the public school students is significantly related to the other variables also i.e. Adjustment and its sub-areas. This suggest the conclusion that the kind of school attended determine the relationship of Identity Formation to the adaptive process in its various aspects.

15. Ego-Identity being a meaningful correlate of only Socio-Economic Status amongst the group boys suggests a greater relevance of the latter for the formation of a positive identity in the adolescent boys.
16. Significant relationship of Ego-Identity with all the other variables except Home Adjustment amongst girls is suggestive of the conclusion that Socio-Economic Status, Self-Concept, Adjustment and its three sub-areas are significantly contributory to the development of Ego-Identity in them. There is a conspicuous difference in boys and girls in this respect since in the former, only Socio-Economic Status is a significant associate of Ego-Identity.

The above two conclusions substantiate hypothesis no. 11.

17. The independent variables of Socio-Economic Status, Adjustment and Self-Concept independently as well as conjointly contribute significantly to the development of Ego-Identity amongst adolescents. Their conjoint contribution as step-wise regression analysis has shown, is higher than that of each of them take separately. Together they are more meaningful in accounting for the prediction of Ego-Identity amongst the total sample of students i.e. from classes IX-XII, derived from government and public schools and comprising of equal number of boys and girls.

It is evident from this conclusion that the fifth hypothesis is tenable.
18. The total percentage contribution of the independent variables to the criterion variable Ego-Identity though highly significant, is small. This points to the relevance of more of factors that may be contributory to the development of positive Ego-Identity.

Educational Implications of the Study:

1. Due consideration need to be given to the issue of Ego-Identity formation, building up of a positive Self-Concept and facilitating the process of Adjustment amongst the adolescent students. Identity crisis and the problems incidental to the stage of life at which the adolescent students are, are very much likely to affect their adjustment to physical growth, mental development, emotionality, home, friends and society in general. The above processes need therefore, to be facilitated amongst the adolescent.

2. For enabling the adolescent students to attain desired level of Ego-Identity they need to feel accepted and recognized. This would develop in them a sense of personal worth and belongingness and these would be further conducive to Ego-Identity formation as well as gaining of a positive Self-Concept in them.
3. Ego-Identity formation in the present study has been studied across different class levels which in other words also means adolescent students at age levels between 15-18 years. Since no significant differences in them have been found, it means all these years i.e. classes IX-XII, are crucial for Identity formation. This in fact is the period when the process of attainment of Identity is already in motion and during the mid years of adolescence, it is expected to gain maturity and stability. In case of a particular student or a group of students found lacking in this raises points to the need for finding out reasons for the same and some amount of intervention. Positive and stable Identity formation and positive Self-Concept are essential for healthy growth of the personality of the adolescent children. To avoid Identity Diffusion desirable exposures, positive experiences and realistic orientations need to be provided to them.

4. Socio-Economic Status affecting development of a positive and stable Identity, positive Self-Concept and Adjustment to various life situations is an important finding of the study. Steps could be taken to somehow provide compensation, substitute satisfactions and some morale boosting experiences to the adolescent children to make up for the disadvantage and the deficit that they
may find associated with the average or below average Socio-Economic Status.

5. Parents, teachers and administrators need to present healthy models of themselves so as to avoid young students having to face uncertainty, lack of trust, lack of autonomy and inferiority which can eventually lead to Identity Diffusion instead of formation of a positive stable and consistent Identity.

Suggestions for Further Study:

1. The present study is cross sectional taking four school classes as the basis of classification. Ego-Identity formation and development of Self-Concept could also be studied making age as the basis of grouping.

2. Further, the three periods of adolescence - early, mid and late could be another classification wherein formation of Ego-Identity could be fruitfully explored.

3. Identity formation of the students at the total adolescence period as one unit could be compared to that of students at the early and mid youth periods to see whether it is more stable and consistent at the later stages.
4. Some other variables affecting Identity Formation and development of Self-Concept can be taken up for investigation. Some of them can be personal variables like intelligence, academic achievement, achievement motivation and secure mental health and family background variables besides Socio-Economic Status like home environment, family ideology and personal aspirations etc.

5. Students in general academic stream and pursuing the study of vocational areas at the level of senior secondary school could be another area of study to see whether these channels of education could be significant differentials of Ego-Identity and Self-Concept.

The foregoing discussion shows that evidence in regard to the relationship of Ego-Identity with the variables under study is not conclusive. The present study has therefore been undertaken to probe the issue further on the basis of the hypotheses formulated and stated in chapter 1.