Aims
and
Relevance
Obesity prevalence among children and adolescents is being termed as an epidemic today by healthcare professionals.

The impact of obesity on individuals and societies is tremendous. Obesity is a chronic disorder and a serious public health problem. The literature has presented well documented connection between obesity and increased mortality and morbidity due to hypertension, dyspepsia, diabetes mellitus, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, gall stones, osteo-arthritis, sleep aponea certain types of cancers, menstrual abnormalities, impaired fertility, and increase pregnancy risk. Overall mortality has modestly increased for overweight individuals (BMI of 25 to 29.9 kg/m²) and markedly increased for those with BMI over 30 kg/m², (Glass et al., 1999).

The adverse effects of obesity are not only medical. Negative attitude towards obesity is prevalent in society at large and among health care professionals, also. These attitudes translate into tangible disadvantages in several common endeavors including getting into college, renting a residence and getting married. The economic impact of obesity is also considerable.

Obesity during adolescence may also be related to psychosocial problems with social isolation and embarrassment. Dr. Sibal (Ref. Ind. Exp. 2002), senior consultant, paediatrics at Apollo hospital states: In India urban children run the risk of obesity from age of 5; the condition becomes more pronounced in teens. Sedentary life style, no exercise, irregular meals and snacking on junk food – all contribute to obesity.

Dr. Veen Kalra (Ref. Ind. Exp. 2002), Professor Paediatrics, AIIMS suggests the condition can be reversed with the help of healthy food habits and life style changes. Diet should be in
accordance with physical activity and should contain compatible calories. A balanced diet not low in fats, or carbohydrates but meals with lots of minerals and vitamins should be consumed for proper weight maintenance.

The lack of success in treating obesity is not due to an unawareness of the implications of obesity. The association between adolescent obesity, adult obesity and adverse health outcomes is well documented. **What needs to be understood is that obesity is a multifactorial problem and psychological factors play an important role.** If motivation to lose weight has to be initiated, factors associated with obesity should be investigated in a broader perspective. This will enable in organising weight loss programs for the overweight and obese. The main aim of the present study was also to compare obese and normal weight adolescents on different Personality dimensions, Stress & Strain measures, Perceived Family Environment and its dimensions, Parental Acceptance Rejection and its dimensions, Indices of Negative Affect, (viz; Irritability and Depression), Optimism, Psychological Well-Being and Eating habits. The findings may throw light on factors associated with weight status and help in planning interventions for weight loss based upon empirical findings.