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School adjustment of rural and urban adolescents in new normal post-COVID period

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Abstract

The present study aimed to know the school adjustment of rural and urban adolescents in the new normal post-COVID period. Adjustment Inventory for school students (AISS) by Sinha and Singh (1984) was used. Coverage includes three primary dimensions, these were emotional, social, and educational. 200 adolescents made up the sample, out of which 100 adolescents were from rural areas (50 girls and 50 boys) and 100 from urban areas (50 girls and 50 boys), between the ages of 14 to 16 years enrolled in government senior secondary schools in urban and rural parts of the Udaipur District. In light of the objectives set forth for the current investigation, the acquired data were analyzed. The study's main findings showed no significant difference between boys and girls in terms of their emotional, social, or overall school adjustment. There is a considerable difference between adolescents from rural and urban locations in terms of their emotional, social, academic, and overall adjustment.

Keywords: Adjustment, rural and urban adolescents, new normal post-COVID period

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a time when a person experiences quick physical and mental changes. Individuals begin acquiring new routines and behaviors during this time, while also letting go of their old ones. They begin to understand their social duties and discover that there is a perpetual fight between expectation and commitment, expectation and reality, thought and action, prediction and reality, conjecture and experience. Therefore, adjustment is required during this time. Adolescence is a stage of development during which transformation and growth are continual processes (Adams, 2005) [7]. Schools are frequently seen as platforms for cultural change in urban areas. However, they can act as a vital link between communities and education in rural locations. Children's emotional, social and academic adaptations are particularly noticeable during the school adjustment period. After China, India has the second-largest educational system in the world. There was a tonne of unknowns during COVID-19 regarding the COVID virus's spread, its possible ramifications, and its potentially fatal impact on civilization. In India, a nationwide lockdown was implemented in response to this, leading to the closure of schools for nearly a year. Adolescents around the world have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In rural places, children could not attend school. If individuals were unable to take online classes, it damaged both their academic performance and self-confidence. Since many children had access to online learning, resources, and teacher support, distance learning was entirely remote for them. This did not occur in the city. Hence the present investigation is planned to assess the problems of rural and urban adolescents' adjustment in emotional, social and educational areas of the school.

2. Objectives

To compare the school adjustment of adolescents on the basis of gender and location.

3. Methodology

The list of government senior secondary schools running in Girwa Panchayat Samiti and Udaipur City was obtained from the Education Department. A preliminary survey was conducted to identify the boys and girls enrolled in government senior secondary schools between the ages of 14 and 16 years. The random sample of 200 respondents was selected from different schools rural and urban areas. The investigator employed a standardized Adjustment inventory which covers the three major dimensions as follows: (1) Emotional (2) Social and (3) Educational. Each dimension of school adjustment and overall school adjustment was coded separately for rural and urban adolescents.

The responses were taken in Yes and No. Thus each item had a maximum score of 2 and a minimum of 1. As a result higher the score, higher the school adjustment and lower the score, lower the overall school adjustment and its dimensions. The mean scores and paired t-test were used separately for

comparing the location and gender-wise school adjustment of adolescents.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Comparison of school adjustment level of adolescents on the basis of location

n=200

Dimensions	Location	Total	Rural and Urban adolescents	
			Mean ± SD	Paired t-value
Emotional adjustment	Rural	100	-1.09±5.58	-1.950*S
	Urban	100		
Social adjustment	Rural	100	-.270±4.68	-.576*S
	Urban	100		
Educational adjustment	Rural	100	-550 ±5.87	-.936*S
	Urban	100		
Overall adjustment	Rural	100	-1.91±12.82	-1.489*S
	Urban	100		

*S- Significant at 0.05%

According to Table 1, there were substantial disparities between adolescent respondents from rural and urban locations in terms of emotional, social, educational and overall adjustment. These differences were determined to be significantly connected at the 0.05 level of significance. The results of the present study can be supported by similar studies which revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on adolescents' emotional, social and academic adjustment,

demonstrated that many adolescents, especially those who were already at risk prior to the pandemic, reported higher levels of depressive symptoms, negative affect, loneliness and poorer academic adjustment during the epidemic. In addition, a lot of adolescents had access to resources from their families, communities and themselves that helped them remain strong and effective in spite of the challenging circumstances (Branje and Morris, 2021) [1].

Table 2: Comparison of school adjustment on the basis of gender

n=200

Dimensions	Category	Total	Adolescents	
			Mean ± SD	Paired t-value
Emotional adjustment	Girls	100	.190±5.34	.355 NS
	Boys	100		
Social adjustment	Girls	100	.410±4.56	7.898 NS
	Boys	100		
Educational adjustment	Girls	100	1.31±5.84	2.24*S
	Boys	100		
Overall adjustment	Girls	100	1.91±12.51	1.52 NS
	Boys	100		

*S- Significant at 0.05% level, NS- Non-Significant

Table 2 shows the outcomes for the mean score, standard deviation and paired t-value in total school adjustment and its dimensions for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16 years. The table showed that there were no significant differences in emotional, social and overall school adjustment between boys and girls, but there was a significant difference in educational dimensions at the 0.05 percent level of significance.

In the present study, it was found that there were no significant differences in emotional, social, or overall school adjustment between boys and girls because they were resilient and

adaptable enough to get through the pandemic's negative effects and get back to their normal lives. Their ability to adjust has been greatly helped by elements like solid support networks, successful coping mechanisms, availability of resources and unique personality traits. Although the exact situations and difficulties that adolescents face in rural and urban regions may be different. This suggests that adolescents from both backgrounds have demonstrated comparable abilities in navigating the emotional, social and general changes required during these difficult times.

Table 3: Comparison of school adjustment of rural adolescents on the basis of gender

n=100

Dimensions	Category	Total	Rural girls and Rural boys	
			Mean ± SD	Paired t-value
Emotional adjustment	Girls	50	.180±4.73	.269 NS
	Boys	50		
Social adjustment	Girls	50	1.24±3.92	2.23*S
	Boys	50		
Educational adjustment	Girls	50	1.72±5.36	2.26*S
	Boys	50		
Overall adjustment	Girls	50	3.14±10.59	2.09*S
	Boys	50		

*S- Significant at 0.05% level, NS- Non-Significant

Results for the mean score, standard deviation and paired t-value on the basis of gender, rural boys and rural girls school adjustment and its dimensions, were shown in Table 3. The Table shows that there were no significant variations in emotional adjustment between rural boys and girls, but there were significant differences in social and educational aspects as well as overall adjustment at the 0.05 per cent level of significance.

In the new normal post-pandemic period, rural girls and boys

may experience significant differences in social adjustment, educational adjustment, and overall school adjustment. Several factors contribute to these disparities, rural areas in India often face infrastructural challenges, including limited access to technology and internet connectivity. Girls may encounter more difficulties in accessing online education compared to boys due to societal norms, cultural barriers, or limited financial resources for digital devices.

Table 4: Comparison of school adjustment of urban adolescents on the basis of gender

n=100

Dimensions	Category	Total	Urban girls and Urban boys	
			Mean ± SD	Paired t-value
Emotional adjustment	Girls	50	.20 ± 5.94	.238 NS
	Boys	50		
Social adjustment	Girls	50	-.420 ± 5.02	-.591 NS
	Boys	50		
Educational adjustment	Girls	50	.90 ± 6.30	1.00 NS
	Boys	50		
Overall adjustment	Girls	50	.68 ± 14.18	.339 NS
	Boys	50		

NS- Non-Significant

Results for the mean score, standard deviation, paired t-value and school adjustment dimensions for urban boys and urban girls were shown in Table 4. In the current study, it was discovered that there were no significant differences in the emotional, social, educational and overall adjustment of the respondents residing in urban area.

The study's results suggest that contrary to expectations, the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a differential impact on emotional adjustment, social adjustment and educational adjustment between urban girls and urban boys. This implies that both genders exhibited similar levels of resilience and adaptability to face the pandemic's challenges. The results show that despite the pandemic's disruptions in new normal situations, urban boys and girls managed their social interactions, maintained their academic achievement and preserved their emotional well-being. It implies that the coping strategies and support networks in place for these people were successful in minimizing the negative effects of the epidemic on their overall adjustment.

5. Conclusion

Boys and girls did not significantly differ in their emotional, social, or overall school adjustment, according to the study's findings, because most adolescents were resilient and adaptable enough to overcome the pandemic's negative effects and return to their regular lives. This clearly shows that COVID-19 had less of an impact on students' school adjustment to the new normal situation. When comparing adolescents from rural and urban locations, a significant gap was found in terms of emotional, social, educational, and general adjustment. This gap is due to a number of factors, including the fact that rural areas in India frequently face infrastructure challenges and have more difficulty gaining access to online education than urban areas due to societal norms, cultural barriers, or a lack of financial resources for digital devices.

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