

# Social and Emotional Adjustment among Adolescents of Middle Class and Lower Class Socio-Economic Status: A comparative study

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**Abstract:** Adjustment is a process of adapting to one's environment. The social and emotional adjustment determines the personality of a person to a greater extent. Similarly, socio-economic status has a marking impact on the lives of individuals, especially adolescents. This research paper focused on studying the difference between adolescents belonging to Middle class and Lower class socio-economic status in relation to their social and emotional adjustment. 200 adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status (100 each) were administered with the Bell's Adjustment Inventory, Indian adaptation by Ojha and were screened for socio-economic status using Kuppuswamy's socio-economic status scale, Revised(2012). The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in social and emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status.

**Key Words:** Social adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Socio-economic status, Middle class, Lower class.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Adjustment is the behavioural process wherein an individual balances his/her conflicting needs in the environment. Adjustment is a crucial aspect to have a balanced life. The word 'Adjustment' is derived from the Latin word 'ad jure' which means 'to bring or make right'. Adjustment is defined as coping with the problems of normal, everyday life (Halonon & Santrock, 1997; Weiten, Dunn, & Yost Hammer, 2015).

Adjustment is an achievement as well as a process. It is a process because adjustment begins since the time we are born and runs through all the stages of our life. It is an achievement because not everyone are well adjusted individuals. Many of them are maladjusted due to inability to cope up with challenges and critical situations that they face in life.

Social Adjustment is the way in which an individual tries to adjust oneself to his/her societal values and norms. In this process, a person satisfies his/her social needs and desires within the social framework. Emotional Adjustment is the process of managing one's emotions and balancing emotional responses in varied situations of life. Social and emotional maturity, social intelligence and emotional intelligence are the concepts intertwined with adjustment which determines the success of any individual in different aspects of life.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A study done by Aicea J. Davis (2012) in Philadelphia on 'Examining gender and socio-economic status on the emotional intelligence of early adolescents' revealed that higher socio-economic status group reported increased adaptability.

A study done by Nidhi and Muntazir Maqbool Kermene(2015) in Srinagar, India on 'Adjustment problems of College students in relation to gender, socio-economic status and academic achievement' revealed that students from lower socio-economic status had more adjustment problems compared to students from higher socio-economic status.

A study done by Bethany Devenish etal (2017) on 'The pathways between socio-economic status and adolescent outcomes: A systematic review' found that socio-economic status is one among the significant risk factors for negative adolescent development outcomes.

Meera Rani etal (2019) in Haryana, India, conducted a study on 'Social intelligence of adolescents in relation to their socio-economic status'. The findings revealed that family type and annual income were significantly related with social intelligence and adjustment.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

**Aim:** To verify the difference in social and emotional adjustment among adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status.

**Objective:** To study the significance of difference between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status in relation to their social and emotional adjustment.

**3.1 Hypotheses:**

- There is no significant difference in social adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status.
- There is no significant difference in emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status.

**3.2 Operational Definitions:**

- Social Adjustment: An individual’s way of dealing with oneself and others in the society through his/her interactions and maintaining harmonious relationship with others.
- Emotional Adjustment: It refers to managing one’s emotions to adapt to situations and people in everyday life.
- Socio-Economic status: It refers to the class of an individual which is a measure of a combination of his/her education, income and occupation.

**4. Need for the present study:** In the changing scenario of the socio-economic fluctuations in our country, socio-economic status of an individual plays a crucial role in determining his/her adjustment with the society. Hence, this study was conducted.

**4.1 Variables:**

- Independent Variable: Middle class and Lower class (socio-economic status).
- Dependent Variable: Social and Emotional Adjustment.
- Intervening Variable: Nature of the family- Nuclear / Joint family.

**4.2 Inclusion Criteria:** Adolescents living with their family and who belong to nuclear family and middleclass and lower class socio-economic status.

**4.3 Exclusion Criteria:** Adolescents who stay in hostels, paying guest accommodation or relative’s residence; who belong to joint family and upper class socio-economic status.

**4.4 Design:** Between groups design was used for the study.

Sample: Adolescents belonging to the Middle class and Lower class socio-economic status aged between 18-21 years were chosen as the sample. The sample size was 200 comprising of 100 adolescents from middle class and 100 adolescents from lower class socio-economic status.

**4.5 Tools used:**

- Bell’s Adjustment Inventory, Indian Adaptation by OJHA (1968) to assess the social and emotional adjustment of the sample.
- Kuppuswamy’s Socio-Economic Status Scale Revised (2012) to determine the socio-economic status of the sample.

**5. Analysis of Data:** Independent Samples ‘t’ test was computed.

**6. Discussion:** The aim of the study was to verify the difference in social and emotional adjustment among adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status. It was hypothesized that there is no significant difference in social adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status and there is no significant difference in emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status.

Table-1 showing the statistical analysis of social adjustment among middle and lower class socio-economic status.

	Group	N	Mean	S.D	‘t’ value
Social Adjustment	Middle class	100	16.61	4.87	0.21 NS
	Lower class	100	16.47	4.42	

Note: NS – Not significant.

Table-1 shows the result of adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status in relation to their social adjustment. The obtained ‘t’ value is 0.21 which is statistically not significant. This indicates that there is no significant difference in social adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status thereby accepting the null hypothesis.

Table-2 showing the statistical analysis of emotional adjustment among middle and lower class socio-economic status.

	Group	N	Mean	S.D	‘t’ value
Emotional Adjustment	Middle class	100	14.52	5.47	0.07 NS
	Lower class	100	14.46	5.62	

Note: NS – Not significant.

Table-2 shows the result of adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status in relation to their emotional adjustment. The obtained ‘t’ value is 0.07 which is statistically not significant. This indicates that there is no significant difference in emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status thereby accepting the null hypothesis.

### 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The objective of the study was to study the significance of difference between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status in relation to their social and emotional adjustment. It was hypothesized that there is no significant difference in social adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status and there is no significant difference in emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle class and lower class socio-economic status. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in social and emotional adjustment between adolescents belonging to middle and lower class socio-economic status.

**8. IMPLICATIONS:** Adjustment is an essential component of life. The socio-economic status of a person has an impact on varied aspects of his/her personality. In this direction, the findings of the present study may help in adding to the existing knowledge of effect of socio-economic status on adjustment.

**9. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY:** Sample was limited to Bangalore City.

**10. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:** The study could be repeated using sample from rural areas.

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