

A Study of the Adjustment of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level

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ABSTRACT

Education plays an important role in the development of an individual's knowledge, personality, behaviour, emotions, and social relationships, and the school teaches students to establish harmony with various family, educational, social, and emotional situations. The higher secondary level is an important stage of adolescence, during which students undergo physical, mental, emotional, and social changes and face many situations related to studies, examinations, competition, higher education, future careers, and family and social expectations. Proper adjustment in these situations is essential for the balanced personality and educational life of students. There may be some differences in the social, economic, family, and educational conditions of students belonging to rural and urban areas. Rural students may face situations such as limited educational resources, digital facilities, transportation, and family educational background, whereas urban students may have greater educational facilities but may also face greater competition, social pressure, excessive use of technological resources, and future-related expectations. Therefore, it is not appropriate to consider any group as more or less adjusted merely on the basis of residential area. The study of related literature makes it clear that adjustment is a multidimensional process that includes home, social, emotional, educational, and school adjustment. In the present study, a total of 300 students were selected from 20 higher secondary schools located in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh, including 10 aided and 10 self-financed schools. The sample consisted of 150 male and 150 female students and 150 students each from rural and urban areas. For the collection of data, the Adjustment Scale developed by A.K.P. Sinha and Prof. R.P. Singh was used, and the obtained data were analysed using the 't' test. The findings of the study presented the results related to differences in the adjustment of rural and urban students, and no significant difference was found between rural and urban groups in the case of female students. Therefore, the related null hypothesis was accepted. The study indicates that students' adjustment does not depend only on rural or urban residence; rather, it is also influenced by individual characteristics, family environment, school conditions, social relationships, self-confidence, emotional balance, and available educational opportunities. The study is important for teachers, parents, school administrators, counsellors, and educational planners because, by understanding students' adjustment-related difficulties, appropriate guidance, counselling, cooperative activities, and a favourable school environment can be provided. Thus, the present study makes it clear that understanding the adjustment of students at the higher secondary level is essential for their personality development, educational progress, social relationships, and emotional balance, and equal and effective educational support should be provided by considering the actual circumstances of rural and urban students...

Keywords: Higher Secondary Schools, Rural and Urban Students, Adjustment

INTRODUCTION:

Education is an important process that gives direction to a person's life. Through education, a child does not only acquire knowledge from books but also develops ideas, behaviour, emotions, personality, social relationships, and a broader understanding of life. School is an important centre of this development where students learn through different experiences and understand how to behave with the people around them. During school life, a student has to adjust with family members, teachers, classmates, school rules, academic requirements, and social expectations. The ability to maintain a proper balance with these different situations is known as adjustment. A student with good adjustment is generally able to face different school situations more comfortably. On the other hand, when a student is unable to adjust properly with family, school, peers, or academic situations, it may affect behaviour, emotions, studies, and social relationships. Adjustment is a continuous process in human life. From early childhood, a person tries to establish a suitable relationship with the surrounding environment. During childhood, the family is the main source of adjustment, while during adolescence, the influence of school, peer groups, and the wider social environment becomes stronger. Students studying at the higher secondary school level generally pass through an important stage of adolescence. During this period, several physical, mental,

emotional, and social changes take place. Students become more aware of their personality, interests, future plans, and social identity. As a result, they face several personal, academic, and social challenges along with their studies. In such a situation, proper adjustment becomes an important basis for their overall development. The higher secondary level is a very important stage of education. At this level, students start thinking seriously about subject choices, examinations, competition, higher education, and future careers. Expectations from parents, teachers, and society also become greater. Some students are able to manage these expectations according to their abilities, while others may experience pressure because of fear of failure, lack of confidence, academic difficulties, or other personal reasons. Difficult subjects, examination pressure, competition among classmates, relationships with teachers, family conditions, and uncertainty about the future may influence the adjustment of students. Therefore, the study of adjustment among higher secondary school students has considerable importance in the field of education. Adjustment does not simply mean tolerating difficult situations. It refers to establishing a suitable balance between the individual and the environment. A well-adjusted student tries to understand personal problems, make appropriate decisions, cooperate with others, and change behaviour when required. Such a student gradually develops the ability to control emotions and learn from failures. In the school context, a well-adjusted student generally follows the instructions of teachers, develops healthy relationships with classmates, takes interest in studies, and tries to behave according to the requirements of the school environment. Thus, adjustment can be considered an important aspect of the personality and educational life of a student. The environment of urban students differs from that of rural students in several ways. In urban areas, students may have comparatively better access to educational institutions, libraries, the internet, technological facilities, coaching centres, and different learning activities. Urban students may also come into contact with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. Such experiences can broaden their understanding and may help them develop the ability to deal with different situations. However, urban life also has its own challenges. Greater competition, lack of time, academic pressure, excessive use of technology, social comparison, and busy family life may create difficulties for students. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to assume that urban students are always better adjusted than rural students. The adjustment of both groups needs to be understood in relation to their individual, family, school, and social experiences. Social adjustment is another important aspect of the life of adolescent students. At the higher secondary level, the influence of friends and peer groups becomes stronger. Students share ideas with classmates, participate in group activities, develop friendships, and learn different forms of social behaviour. Acceptance by friends may increase a student's confidence, while continuous rejection, isolation, or neglect may negatively affect behaviour and emotional well-being. The nature of friendship and opportunities for social interaction may differ between rural and urban areas. At present, mobile phones, the internet, and social media have expanded students' social interactions beyond the boundaries of school and local communities. These changes have provided students with wider opportunities for communication and learning, but they have also created new social and personal challenges. Emotional adjustment is related to the ability of students to understand and manage their emotions. During adolescence, emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, anxiety, excitement, and disappointment may be experienced strongly. Poor examination results, disagreements with friends, family problems, or worries about the future may influence the emotional condition of students. A student who understands emotions and expresses them in an appropriate way may be better able to face difficult situations. Rural and urban students may experience different social and family conditions, which can influence their emotional adjustment. Therefore, studying emotional adjustment among students from both backgrounds can provide useful information about their overall development. Educational adjustment refers to the ability of students to manage the demands of academic life. At the higher secondary level, the curriculum becomes more demanding and examination results may have an important influence on future educational opportunities. Students have to manage regular study, homework, examinations, subject difficulties, time management, and other academic responsibilities. When a student is able to organise daily activities according to academic requirements, it becomes easier to manage educational responsibilities. In contrast, lack of interest in studies, poor time management, limited learning resources, or excessive examination pressure may create difficulties in educational adjustment. The comparison of rural and urban students is important because, despite efforts to provide equal educational opportunities, the conditions in both areas are not always the same. Rural students may face challenges related to access to schools, teaching resources, digital facilities, transportation, and the educational background of parents. Urban students, on the other hand, may experience greater academic competition, social pressure, changing lifestyles, and increased expectations. Therefore, it is important to understand students' adjustment on the basis of their actual experiences rather than only on the basis of the facilities available to them. The study of adjustment is also useful for teachers. If teachers understand the adjustment difficulties faced by rural and urban students, they can make suitable changes in their teaching practices and classroom behaviour. Schools can provide counselling, group activities, co-curricular programmes, and cooperative learning opportunities according to students' needs. Such activities may help students develop confidence, cooperation, responsibility, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities. A supportive classroom environment can also help students feel secure and accepted, which may make their adjustment to school life easier. The present study, entitled "A

Study of the Adjustment of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level,” focuses on understanding the adjustment of students studying at the higher secondary level in rural and urban areas. The study attempts to examine whether there is any significant difference in the adjustment of students belonging to rural and urban backgrounds. It may also help in understanding different aspects of their educational, social, and emotional adjustment. Such a study can provide useful information to teachers, parents, school administrators, counsellors, and educational planners for understanding the actual needs of students. The findings may help in developing suitable educational and supportive practices for students from different backgrounds. Ultimately, the purpose of education is not limited to academic success or examination performance. Education should also help students develop the ability to face changing situations, maintain emotional balance, build healthy relationships, and participate positively in family, school, and social life. Proper adjustment is therefore an important part of the overall development of higher secondary school students, whether they come from rural or urban backgrounds.

Need and Significance

At present, education at the higher secondary level occupies a very important place in the lives of students. At this stage, students gradually move forward through adolescence and develop their personality, thinking, behaviour, and outlook towards the future. During this period, they face various situations related not only to their studies but also to their family, school, friends, and society. The ability to adjust oneself appropriately to these situations reflects the capacity for adjustment. Students living in rural and urban areas may differ considerably in their lifestyle, family environment, school facilities, social relationships, and educational opportunities. Rural students generally receive education within limited resources, a traditional social environment, and local circumstances, whereas urban students may have access to better facilities, technological resources, diverse educational opportunities, and wider social interaction. It is natural that these different circumstances may influence students' school life and their adjustment. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how rural and urban students adjust to their school, family, friends, and personal circumstances. At the higher secondary level, students face situations such as increasing difficulty of subjects, examination pressure, concerns regarding higher education or employment, and competition among peers. If a student is unable to adjust properly to these circumstances, it may adversely affect behaviour, interest in studies, self-confidence, and academic performance. In contrast, good adjustment helps students remain balanced even in difficult situations, find solutions to problems, and move towards their goals. Therefore, a comparative study of the adjustment of rural and urban students is necessary to identify the similarities and differences between the two groups and to understand the circumstances that have a greater influence on their adjustment. The educational significance of this study is also considerable. The information obtained from the study can help teachers understand the personal and social needs of students. If students from a particular area are found to experience greater difficulties related to school, family, or social adjustment, appropriate arrangements for counselling, guidance, and support can be made at the school level. Parents can also understand that problems related to students' behaviour and studies should not be viewed merely as issues of discipline or lack of interest in studies; rather, their circumstances should also be understood. School administrators can use the findings of this study to create an environment in which students from both rural and urban backgrounds feel safe, accepted, and supported. The study may also be useful for educational planners and researchers because it provides an opportunity to understand the relationship between regional circumstances and students' adjustment. Thus, the study of adjustment among rural and urban higher secondary students can provide a useful basis for the healthy development of students' personalities, better school experiences, effective guidance, and improvement in the quality of education.

Review of Related Research Literature

Prajapati (2021) conducted a study entitled **“Home Adjustment among High School Students in Relation to Their Gender and Residence Area.”** The main purpose of the study was to examine the home adjustment of high school students with reference to gender and residential background. Rural and urban students were included in the study, and an adjustment inventory was used for data collection. The findings indicated that the home environment plays an important role in the adjustment of adolescents. The study is relevant to the present research because students belonging to rural and urban areas may experience different family and social environments, which may influence their overall adjustment.

Kasundra and Singh (2022) studied **adjustment among secondary school students in relation to gender and residence area.** The study focused on different dimensions of adjustment among secondary school students. Rural and urban students were compared to determine whether their residential background influenced their adjustment. The findings suggested that differences in adjustment cannot always be explained simply on the basis of residence area. Individual characteristics, family conditions and school environment may also contribute to students' adjustment. The study provides useful support for the present research because it directly considers residence area as an important variable.

Sharma (2022) conducted a study entitled “**A Study of Adjustment among the Adolescents of Rural and Urban Areas.**” The study examined the adjustment level of adolescents belonging to rural and urban areas. The researcher used an adjustment inventory to assess students' adjustment. The findings showed that adolescents generally experienced adjustment difficulties at different levels. The study highlighted the importance of emotional, social and educational adjustment during adolescence. The research is closely related to the present study because it compares rural and urban adolescents and provides a basis for examining whether residential background influences adjustment.

Monika, Rajkumari and Poonia (2022) conducted a study entitled “**A Comparative Study on Educational Adjustment of Rural and Urban Secondary School Students in Hisar District.**” The study included rural and urban secondary school students and examined their educational adjustment. The researchers used an educational adjustment inventory and appropriate statistical techniques for analysing the data. The findings indicated that rural and urban students did not differ significantly in educational adjustment. The study suggests that residential background alone may not be sufficient to explain differences in students' educational adjustment. This finding is important for the present study because it supports the need to examine adjustment empirically rather than assuming that rural students are less adjusted than urban students.

Saini and Audichya (2023) conducted a study on “**School Adjustment of Rural and Urban Adolescents in New Normal Post-COVID Period.**” The study examined school adjustment among rural and urban adolescents after the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers used the **Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS)** to assess students' adjustment. The study is particularly relevant because the post-COVID educational environment brought significant changes in students' learning habits, social interaction and emotional experiences. The research emphasizes the importance of studying students' adjustment in changing educational circumstances and provides a contemporary basis for comparing rural and urban students.

Bindu Devi and Manju Sharma (2023) conducted a comparative study of adjustment among secondary school students. The study examined several dimensions of adjustment, including **home, social, emotional, educational and financial adjustment**. The findings indicated that students experienced adjustment at different levels across these dimensions. The study also reported differences in some aspects of adjustment while other dimensions did not show significant differences. The research demonstrates that adjustment is a multidimensional concept and should not be restricted only to educational adjustment. This perspective is highly relevant to the present study of rural and urban higher secondary students.

Ansary (2023) conducted a study entitled “**Study on School Adjustment and Academic Achievement of the Higher Secondary School Students.**” A large sample of higher secondary school students was included in the study. The research examined school adjustment and its relationship with academic achievement. Rural and urban students were also considered in the analysis. The findings indicated that rural and urban students did not show a statistically significant difference in school adjustment. The study is directly relevant to the present research because it focuses on the **higher secondary school level**, which is the population level proposed in the present study.

Kapoor and Prakash (2024) examined **adaptation, stress, social support and adjustment among rural students in India**. The study focused particularly on the psychological and social conditions affecting rural students. The findings highlighted the importance of social support and stress in students' adjustment. The study is relevant to the present research because rural students may experience particular social, educational and environmental circumstances that influence their ability to adjust to school and academic demands. It also indicates that adjustment should be understood in relation to the broader social environment of students.

Thakur (2025) conducted a comparative study entitled “**Adjustment Among Senior Secondary School Students Considering Their Gender: A Comparative Analysis.**” The study focused on senior secondary school students and examined their adjustment in relation to personal and educational characteristics. The study emphasized that adolescence is an important developmental period during which students experience considerable academic, emotional and social changes. The findings support the view that adjustment is an important psychological variable at the senior secondary level. The study is therefore relevant to the present research, which focuses specifically on higher secondary students.

Adhikari and Roy (2026) examined **educational adjustment of secondary-level students in relation to socio-economic status**. The study considered students from rural and urban settings and investigated the role of socio-economic conditions in educational adjustment. The findings suggest that students' adjustment is associated not only with their residential background but also with their socio-economic circumstances. The study is important for the present research because rural-urban differences should be interpreted along with factors such as family income, parental education, educational resources and social background.

Li, Xue, Wei and Liu (2026) conducted a **meta-analysis of rural students' school adjustment**. The study synthesized findings from a large number of previous studies and examined school adjustment from multiple perspectives. Four major dimensions of adjustment were identified: **academic adjustment, behavioural adjustment, psychological adjustment and social adjustment**. The study also identified several factors

associated with adjustment, including school environment, family economic conditions, family relationships, parental involvement, peer support, social-emotional support and teacher-student relationships. This meta-analysis provides strong conceptual support for the present study because it establishes that student adjustment is a multidimensional process influenced by both individual and environmental factors.

Statement of the Problem:

A Study of the Adjustment of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary School Level.

Objectives of the Study

To compare the adjustment scores of rural and urban male students studying at the higher secondary level.

To compare the adjustment scores of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level.

Hypotheses of the Research Study

There is no significant difference in the adjustment scores of rural and urban male students studying at the higher secondary level.

There is no significant difference in the adjustment scores of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level.

Data Collection Instrument

For the present study, data were collected through questionnaires by establishing personal contact with students studying in higher secondary schools located exclusively in Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample:

In the present research study, a total of 300 students from 20 higher secondary schools—10 aided schools and 10 self-financed schools—were selected as the sample. The sample comprised 150 male students and 150 female students, with 150 students from urban areas and 150 students from rural areas.

Instrument:

Adjustment Scale developed by A.K.P. Sinha and Prof. R.P. Singh.

Definition of Hypotheses

Analysis – 1: Under Study Objective No. 1, “To compare the adjustment scores of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level,” the hypothesis H01, “There is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level,” was tested on the basis of the ‘t’ test. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table No. 01.

Table No. 01

Details of the Adjustment Scores of Rural and Urban Students Studying at the Higher Secondary Level

Students	Number (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Degrees of Freedom (df) & Significance Level	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	Conclusion (Hypothesis)
Rural	150	34.70	2.50	df = 298, at 0.05 level	1.99	Significant (Rejected)
Urban	150	35.30	2.73			

Analysis of the Data: The above Table No. 4.03 shows that the mean adjustment scores of 150 rural and 150 urban students studying at the higher secondary level are 34.70 and 35.30, respectively. Their standard deviations (S.D.) are 2.50 and 2.73, respectively. At 0.05 level of significance and with 298 degrees of freedom, the critical ratio was found to be 1.99, which is greater than the table value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the obtained value is significant.

Interpretation of the Result: Since the obtained value is significant, the null hypothesis H03 is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level.

Discussion of the Result: The above result indicates that the social, cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds of rural and urban students are different, which leads to differences in their experiences, ways of thinking, and tendencies toward adaptation. Adjustment refers to the ability of students to establish positive harmony with the school environment, teaching methods, classmates, and teachers. Previous studies indicate that rural students tend to be ahead in discipline, family values, and hard work, whereas urban students tend to be

ahead in access to technology, communication skills, and the use of modern resources. When students from both groups study together, a tendency develops to understand, accept, and adopt each other's abilities. Such adjustment not only promotes social harmony but also encourages cooperation, leadership, and an inclusive outlook among students. In addition, this adjustment provides students with opportunities to understand different cultural and social perspectives, thereby developing tolerance and a broader outlook. Thus, the adjustment results of rural and urban students are found to be significant, which may contribute to the development of an equitable and empowered society in the future.

Analysis – 2: Under Study Objective No. 2, namely, “To make a comparative study of the adjustment scores of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level,” the hypothesized Hypothesis H_04 , “There is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level,” was tested on the basis of the t-test. The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table No. 2.

Table No. 2

Details of the Adjustment Scores of Rural and Urban Female Students Studying at the Higher Secondary Level

Female Students	Number (N)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Significance Level	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	Conclusion (Hypothesis)
Rural	150	35.34	2.65	298	0.05	1.00	Not Significant (Accepted)
Urban	150	35.62	2.36				

Analysis of the Data: The above Table No. 2 shows that the mean adjustment scores of 150 rural and 150 urban female students studying at the higher secondary level are 35.34 and 35.62, respectively. Their standard deviations (S.D.) are 2.65 and 2.36, respectively. At 298 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance, the critical ratio (C.R.) was found to be 1.00, which is lower than the tabulated value of 1.96 at 298 degrees of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference.

Interpretation of the Result: Since there is no significant difference in the C.R. value, the null hypothesis H_04 is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level.

Discussion of the Result: The above result indicates that, despite the existing differences in educational resources, social support, access to technology, and family environment in the present time, female students are equally able to adjust and establish harmony with their surroundings. The education system, particularly at the secondary level, is providing equal opportunities to female students from both rural and urban areas for adjustment. In addition, it also emerges that factors such as mental resilience, self-discipline, and emotional intelligence play an important role in students' adjustment, and these factors depend more on individual characteristics than on geographical location. This finding is also important from a socio-cultural perspective, as it highlights the increasing awareness of education in rural areas, parental participation, and the self-confidence of female students. At the same time, this finding is relevant for educational planners and policymakers because it indicates that progress is being made toward implementing equally effective educational programmes in both rural and urban areas. Overall, this finding is evidence of the developing outlook of female students and the stability of their overall mental health.

Conclusion

There is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban students studying at the higher secondary level because both groups live in similar educational and social environments. The facilities available in schools, as well as experiences with teachers and classmates, affect both groups equally. The increasing spread of education, technological tools, and the influence of media have reduced the gap between rural and urban students. As a result, the adjustment ability of both groups becomes almost similar, whether in academic activities or in social life.

There is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level, that is, there is no significant difference in the adjustment of rural and urban female students studying at the higher secondary level because both are part of a similar educational and social environment. Modern education, digital devices, and social media have had a similar impact on the lives of both groups. Through participation in academic activities, peer relationships, and social opportunities, rural and urban female students become similarly adjusted. In addition, both groups face similar challenges while developing their adjustment abilities, which reduces the possibility of any particular difference between them.

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