The present article deals with ‘Adjustment’ and ‘Maladjustment’, characteristics of a well-adjusted person and a maladjusted person, as well as causes of maladjustment.

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| [Adjustment & Maladjustment](https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-pNuLTActq3w/WOHq-7KM-pI/AAAAAAAAEZg/WDYXq551Pw4QQl4f6AQ8vaMuis4oUzP1gCLcB/s1600/Adjustment-and-Maladjustment-edugyan.in.jpg) |
| Adjustment & Maladjustment |

**What is “Adjustment”?**

The term **“adjustment”** originates from the biological term “adaptation”. Biologists used the term “adaptation” strictly for the physical demands of the environment, but psychologists use the term “adjustment” for varying conditions of social or inter-personal relations in the society.

Adjustment means the reaction to the demands and pressures of social environment imposed upon the individual. The demand to which the individual has to react may be external or internal.

Psychologists have viewed adjustment from two important perspectives**—“adjustment as an achievement”**, and **“adjustment as a process”**.

**Adjustment as achievement:**

‘Adjustment as achievement’ means how efficiently an individual can perform his duties under different circumstances.

If we perceive adjustment as achievement, we have to set criteria to judge the quality of adjustment. Four criteria have been evolved by psychologists to judge the adequacy of adjustment. They are the following:

* Physical health
* Psychological comfort
* Work efficiency, and
* Social acceptance

**Adjustment as process:**

‘Adjustment as a process’ lays emphasis on the process by which an individual adjusts to his external environment. It is important, especially from teachers’ point of view. Students' adjustment largely depends on their interaction with the external environment in which they live. They always try to adjust to it. Piaget has studied the adjustive process from different angles.

Piaget uses the term **assimilation** and **accommodation** to represent the alternation of oneself or environment as a means of adjustment.

A person who carries his values and standards of conduct without any change and maintains these in spite of major changes in the social climate is called **assimilator**.

The person who takes his standards from his social context and changes his beliefs in accordance with the altered values of the society is called **accommodator**.

In order to adjust successfully in society a person has to resort to both the devices i.e. *assimilation* and *accommodation*.

**Characteristics of a well adjusted person:**

A healthy and well-adjusted person should possess/display some observable behavioral patterns. These behavioral patterns must be according to the social expectations of an individual. These patterns are as follows:

* Maturity in thinking
* Emotional balance
* Warm and understanding towards others
* Free from tension due to routine events
* Independent in decision making

**Elements in adjustment:**

There are certain prime elements for fulfillment of needs necessary for healthy adjustment of a person. They are as follows:

* Satisfaction of needs
* No obstacle in achieving needs
* Strong motives in realizing needs
* Feasible geographical atmosphere to fulfill needs

**What is Maladjustment?**

‘Maladjustment’ is a process whereby an individual is unable to satisfy his biological, psychological or social needs successfully and establishes an imbalance between his personal needs and expectation of the society resulting in the disturbance of psycho-equilibrium.

**Characteristics of a Maladjusted Person:**

As a school teacher, you might have noticed a few such maladjusted students in your classroom too. At times, you might have even thought of seriously the reasons for their maladjusted behavior. There are numerous reasons in and out of the school which create frustration, that lead to maladjustment. Let us analyze the symptoms one by one. If a student is:

**Withdrawn and timid:** Frequent withdrawals from difficult situations may make individual timid and weak in facing real life situations.

**Shy and self-conscious:** Shyness is usually associated with the self-consciousness, concern with the impression one gives to other people, and concern with their negative evaluation. A shy individual has low self-esteem and tends to anticipate adversities, thus often keeping silent and avoiding eye contact.

**Fearful:** Fear is a strong emotion involving perception of danger, unpleasant agitation and often a desire to hide from meeting students of higher classes, being alone in a room, and fear of dogs, strange noises, the dark, etc.

**Anxious:** Anxiety is a personality trait. It results from conflict, which is an invitable part of life. Anxiety describes the individual's level of emotionality. We see many students who are tense and worried (highly anxious) and those who are cool (hardly anxious). Since anxiety is an inferred emotional state of an individual, it cannot be directly observed. It can be measured through psychological tests/techniques.

**Delusions:** Delusion is an irrational and obstinate belief that the individual actively defends, e.g., a child does not work hard for the final examination and thinks that it is the God only who can get him through the examination and he fails. This shows the delusion in him which makes him maladjusted.

**Extremely aggressive:** Aggressive students show enterprising or energetic behavior or tendency to be dominating in the class or the school. Sometimes an individual fails to show the tendency of dominating in a social situation and hurts herself instead e.g. a child beats her doll, kicks the dog, or other objects.

**Tension:** When a person does not feel a kind of inner freedom, the strain which results from muscular contradiction and through which muscles, tendons, etc., are stretched under a threatening situation.

**High aspirations:** A person has high hopes and aspirations for his future life. When the hopes are not achieved, he becomes unrealistic in life.

**Feeling of inferiority:** A feeling of inferiority, arising from the sense of imperfection and incompletion in a particular sphere of life, which motivates the individual to strive for a higher level of development and as such, are the cause of all improvement in life situations. Each time a new level of achievement is reached, inferiority feelings reappear, continuing to stimulate upward movement. If inferiority feelings become exaggerated by adverse conditions at home, physical or mental disorders on inferiority complex may develop which makes an individual maladjusted.

**Emotionally disturbed:** If the internal and external adjustment of a child is not achieved, he becomes emotional e.g., weeping, quarreling, nail biting, thumb sucking, etc. and becomes maladjusted.

**Isolated:** Maladjusted children suffer from a feeling of isolation. This feeling does not allow them to mix and interact with other members of class, school, family or society. In families where parents are extremely busy and neglect their children, the children develop a feeling of isolation or dejection. This makes them maladjusted.

**Sensitivity:** Maladjusted children are very sensitive. They get hurt easily e.g., on being teased by teachers in the classroom or parents in the family, sarcastic remarks by peers, unwelcome advice by others, etc.

**Temper-tantrums:** When there is a bad-tampered out-burst, this is known as a temper tantrum e.g., if a child does not get fair treatment, sympathy, cooperation and freedom of action within reasonable limits, he feels maladjusted.

**Causes of Maladjustment:**

We can classify the causes of maladjusted behavior of adolescents under five main categories. They are as follows:

1. Family

            (a) Social

            (b) Economic

            (c) Psychological

2. Personal

3. School

4. Teachers

5. Peer Group

**1. Family:**

It is obvious that the family as an institution has various functions to perform. By discharging their duties, parents indirectly fulfill the needs of their children. There are certain significant causes: social, economic and psychological, which contribute immensely to maladjusted behavior in children.

**(a) Social causes:** According to Gibbian, the social problem of one generation is the psychological problem of the next generation. Children coming from homes that have been broken due to death, divorce, desertion, separation, etc., are often maladjusted in their behavior.

Drunkard parents, strained marital relationship of spouses, quarrels and fights between spouses are also responsible for developing frustration in children. Such children feel insecure and become maladjusted.

**(b) Economic causes:** The occupational status of parents, problems of unemployment, poverty and low-economic status breed maladjustment among children. Under such circumstances, parents are unable to satisfy the needs of their children which eventually lead to frustration, aggression and hostile behavior in growing children.

**(c) Psychological causes:** Psychological instability of parents is directly responsible for maladjusted behavior of their off-spring. If parents are over-possessive, highly authoritative, unrealistic in their expectations, incompatible, abusive and prejudiced, this will have a deleterious effect upon their children.

When the psychological needs are not met, children get frustrated and develop problems like nail biting, day-dreaming, fear of dark, lack of self-confidence, flickering of eyes, etc. Those parents who threaten, nag, punish and humiliate their children before others are directly responsible for their children's isolated and rejected behavior.

**2. Personal causes:**

It is observed that individuals who are physically, mentally and visually handicapped react abnormally to the situation. Even children with partial deficiency, such as defective eye sight, poor hearing and impaired speech may find it difficult to adjust under normal situations. When they can not score well academically compared to their peers, they develop an inferiority complex. Finally, they isolate themselves from others and indulge in day-dreaming.

**3. School-related causes:**

Children spend roughly seven hours a day in the school. When growing children do not find ways and means to channelize their energy in a purposeful manner in the school, they exhibit in maladjusted behavior. The school authorities, including teachers should organize various curricular and co-curricular activities to suit the needs of the growing children.

**4. Teacher-related causes:**

An imbalanced personality in the teacher has its impact on the behavior of the children. If the teacher is unfair, biased or not involved with the students, it certainly affects the mental health of the children in the school.

**5. Peer-group related causes:**

Another important factor that disturbs the psycho-equilibrium of students is an unhealthy relationship with their peer group. Normally, students ask earnestly for recognition from their peer group during later childhood and adolescence.

However, popularity among the peer group depends on various factors, such as good looks, athletic abilities, social class, academic performance, and special talents. If the student lacks these qualities, he may fail to get status among his/her peer group and gets frustrated and maladjusted.