

---

# UNIT 13 PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY

---

## Structure

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Objectives
- 13.3 Adjustment
- 13.4 Maladjustment
  - 13.4.1 Characteristics of a Maladjusted Person
  - 13.4.2 Causes of Maladjustment
- 13.5 Frustration
  - 13.5.1 Concept of Conflict
  - 13.5.2 Types of Conflicts
  - 13.5.3 Measures for Resolving Conflicts
  - 13.5.4 Defence Mechanism
- 13.6 Sentiment
  - 13.6.1 Self-regarding Sentiments
  - 13.6.2 Formation of Character
  - 13.6.3 Types of Character
- 13.7 Educational Implications
- 13.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.9 Unit-end Exercises
- 13.10 Suggested Readings
- 13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

---

## 13.1 INTRODUCTION

---

In Unit 12 of Block 3, you have studied the various factors which influence the student in specific learning situations. However, effective learning depends not only on the learning situations, but also on how well the student gets adjusted to different contexts such as home and school. In this unit you will learn the meaning of healthy adjustment, definition of and causes for maladjusted behaviour and measures that can be adopted to resolve conflicts and frustration. Further, you will also learn about sentiments, formation of character, role of self-regarding sentiments in character formation and its educational implications.

---

## 13.2 OBJECTIVES

---

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of being a well-adjusted person,
- identify the characteristics of a healthy/well-adjusted person,
- explain the elements involved in adjustment,
- explain/discuss the causes of maladjustment,
- list the measures of resolving conflicts, and
- discuss the implications of conflicts among students in the classroom situation.

---

## 13.3 ADJUSTMENT

---

You are aware that a person passes through various stages of growth and development before he reaches adulthood. Invariably, at every stage of one's life, the person tries hard to fulfil his/her biological, psychological and social needs and gears himself/herself effectively to meet the existing demands of the society. Biogenic needs such as hunger, thirst, temperature, rest and

sleep are conditioned in the organism of an individual right from infancy as appropriate to the culture and geographical conditions in which he lives. To cite an example, people from the North of India are conditioned to eat wheat, but people from the South prefer rice as their staple food. Generally, there is no difficulty in fulfilling these needs. A need which is satisfied with little effort doesn't affect adjustment. For example, availability of sufficient air and water seldom leads to maladjustment. At times, these needs may be thwarted by natural calamities like floods, droughts, earthquakes, epidemic diseases, only then does it become difficult for individual to adjust.

The concept of adjustment is originated 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. For one, adjustment as an achievement and for another, adjustment as a process. The first point of view emphasizes the quality or efficiency of adjustment and the second lays emphasis on the process by which an individual adjusts to his external environment.

**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. No universal criteria can be set for all times to come because criteria involve value judgements which differ from culture to culture and from generation to generation within the same culture. Four criteria have been evolved by psychologists to judge the adequacy of adjustment. They are

- Physical health
- Psychological comfort
- Work efficiency, and
- Social acceptance.

**Adjustment as process :** Adjustment as a process is important for teachers. 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. He 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.

The problem arises when socio-psychological needs are not fulfilled and it often results in maladjusted behaviour. However, when these needs are completely satisfied, a temporary state of equilibrium is established in the organism and the activity towards that goal ceases.

Thus, healthy adjustment is a process whereby an individual meets his biological, psychological and social needs successfully and establishes a balance between his inner needs and external demands of the society through appropriate behavioural responses.

**Characteristics of a well adjusted person :** A healthy and well-adjusted person should possess/display some observable behavioural patterns. These behavioural 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 fulfilment of needs necessary for healthy adjustment of a person. They are as follows:

- Satisfaction of needs
- No obstacle in achieving needs
- Strong motives in realising needs
- Feasible geographical atmosphere to fulfil needs

Before we proceed, let us recall what you have studied in the previous section.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Notes :** a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

List any four characteristics of a well-adjusted person.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 13.4 MALADJUSTMENT

By now we hope you have got a clearcut idea about the characteristics of a well-adjusted person in the society. Now let us understand the meaning of 'maladjustment'. It is exemplified in the following situation. Nasreen is a 16 year old girl belonging to a middle class family. She has an average I.Q., but the family members have very high expectation of her scholastic achievement and expected her to get the first rank in the final examination. Since then, her anxiety level has increased. She takes longer time to complete school work, repeatedly cleaning and washing things, taking baths for long hours, pouring more water on her body and relating it to securing high marks in the examination. If she does not do these activities, she starts sweating excessively and becomes anxious. Nasreen is maladjusted.

In the above example, you find that low I.Q. but high societal expectation led to maladjustment. Hence, Nasreen suffered from both psycho and socio-genic needs of drawing recognition and securing social status respectively.

Thus, 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.

### 13.4.1 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 behaviour. There are numerous reasons in and out of the school which create frustration, that lead to maladjustment. Let us analyse the symptoms one by one. If a student is:

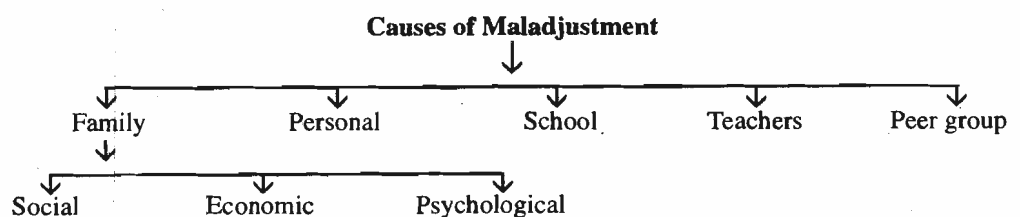
- **Withdrawn and timid :** Frequent withdrawals from difficult situations may make individual timid and weak in facing real life situations.
- **Shy and self-conscious :** Shyness is usually associated with the self-consciousness, concern with the impression one gives to other people, and concern with their negative evalu-

ation. 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 inevitable 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 behaviour 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 incompleteness 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 the 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 are 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-tempered 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.

### 13.4.2 Causes of Maladjustment

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



Let us explain each of the above causes in brief:

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

Let us be very clear that this distinction is only for a better understanding of the concept. In fact, it is very difficult to separate out social, economic and psychological causes of maladjustment. There is a high degree of relatedness among these factors.

- a) **Social causes** : Gibbian says that 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 behaviour. 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. Another common factor that one can easily observe in the Indian situation is the large size of the family. With the tremendous growth in population, it is extremely difficult for parents to provide even the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter, to their children. It invariably results in greater degree of frustration and hostility amongst them. A research study indicates that anti-social adolescents come from large families.
- b) **Economic causes** : The occupational status of parents, problems of unemployment, poverty and low-economic status breed maladjustment amongst children. Under such circumstances, parents are unable to satisfy the needs of their children which eventually leads to frustration, aggression and hostile behaviour in growing children.
- c) **Psychological causes**: It is significant to note that the psychological instability of parents is directly responsible for maladjusted behaviour 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 behaviour. You might have observed that such children try to seek the attention of other people through other means.

The birth order of children in the family and their relationship with siblings also influence the mental instability of children. Case studies show that psychoneurotic adolescents are from families where there is large a number of siblings.

- ii) **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.
- iii) **School-related causes** : Children spend roughly seven hours a day in the school. When growing children do not find ways and means to channelise their energy in a purposeful manner in the school, they exhibit in maladjusted behaviour. The school authorities, including teachers should organise various curricular and co-curricular activities to suit the needs of the growing children.
- iv) **Teacher-related causes** : An imbalanced personality in the teacher has its impact on the behaviour 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.
- v) **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 amongst his/her peer group and gets frustrated and maladjusted.

Before we move on to the next section, you should check your progress.

### Check Your Progress 2

- Notes:** a) Write your answer in the space given below.  
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

Read the case-study presented below and identify the causes of maladjusted behaviour of Kapoor.

Kapoor is an eleven year old boy. He has parents and two siblings. They belong to a family of middle socio-economic status. The father is just the nominal leader of the home and does not take responsibility of either the home or the needs of the children. The mother is very ambitious and expects high academic achievement from her children. She is over-protective and highly ambitious. Often she vents her anger on Kapoor for his stubborn behaviour. The parents pamper the youngest child very much. Kapoor beats his sister and hates her very much. In the school, Kapoor disturbs the other children and pinches them. When the teacher questions such behaviour, he tells lies and blames others. The teacher too punishes him severely for his misconduct. He seems to be disinterested even in studies.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 13.5 FRUSTRATION

The various possible reasons for the maladjusted behaviour of students have been discussed in the preceding section.

One major element of maladjustment that was consistently repeated in almost all the causes of maladjusted behaviour, was frustration. Frustration may be due to familial conditions, school atmosphere, personal inadequacy or peer group relationship.

In this section, we shall discuss the meaning and types of conflict which leads to frustration. Before proceeding further, let us quickly understand the meaning of frustration. Frustration is the hollow state of mind which occurs, when a goal response is blocked. In other words, it occurs when satisfaction of needs is interfered with or blocked.

Frustration could take place under two circumstances:

- When the biological, psychological and social needs of the students are not fulfilled or satisfied, or
- When the individual faces conflicting situations or moral dilemmas.

### 13.5.1 Concept of Conflict

There is a difference between conflict and frustration. The latter is the product or the consequence of the dissatisfaction of needs, whereas, the former is the process, or one of the factors responsible for causing frustration.

Conflict is the operation of two incompatible action systems, it may be drives, needs, values, tendencies and impulses. The individual finds it difficult to make a choice between two conflicting situations.

A conflict is caused under two situations. One, it arises when there is an urge to fulfil the two equally important objectives, needs, drives, values, tendencies and impulses. This situation of conflict is exemplified in the following situation. Mr. Singh is a Police Inspector. He is quite sincere and honest in his work. He has a good reputation in the community. Like any other responsible father, he too arranges his daughter's wedding. Unfortunately, the marriage expenses exceed the budget and he finds it difficult to manage. At that moment, his wife advises him to borrow money from his friends. But Mr. Singh can not even think of borrowing money from others as he gives much importance to self-respect. So, the situation may create a conflict in his mind. In this example, you find that the psychological need of self-respect is incompatible with the social need or social status in the community.

Second, conflict arises when two different goals are set to fulfil a single need. For example, a young girl wants to establish herself as a social scientist. There are many ways through which she can get recognition. She can work hard as a committed researcher and achieve her objective, or can seek the influence of the higher authority in the department and get the academic recognition, without working on it. She is in a dilemma, whether to seriously work or achieve the goal through easy means. Often, people find easy means to come up in life, eventually gain, but this leads to tension and anxiety.

There are two ways of achieving good grades in the examination. One, you may do a detailed study of the subject or second, you just do a superficial study. A detailed study will lead to better knowledge. But time is a constraint for a detailed study. Therefore, a conflict arises in the mind of the student aiming for deep knowledge. In this example you find that the student faces conflict in order to achieve the goal.

### 13.5.2 Types of Conflicts

Conflicts are classified into three types. Read the illustrations given below to understand the different types of conflicts.

- i) **An approach - approach conflict** : An approach-approach conflict is a situation, wherein the individual is caught between two mutually exclusive goals which are desirable and also are difficult to realise simultaneously. This is exemplified in the following situation. A student prepares for his examination, is keen to secure high marks but at the same time, wishes to attend the wedding of his best friend, both due on the same day. Similarly a girl who is eager to marry her fiancé, and also wishes to complete her computer course in the same semester itself. In these illustrations, you find that the boy and girl should move towards the other goal in order to achieve one.



Fig. 13.1 : Approach-Avoidance Conflict

- ii) **An approach - avoidance conflict** : Let us consider a common example : A girl of twenty five wishes to marry a boy who is highly qualified and well placed. She hesitates to achieve her goal because the life style of the boy is totally different from the girl. He smokes and drinks. Similarly a boy wants to approach his father to obtain grace marks in two subjects. However, he hesitates to approach him, as he had assured his father that he would secure a rank in his class. This situation creates conflict in the student's mind. These examples reveal that at some point of time the person wishes to realise the goal and at the same time avoids the goal.

Thus, approach-avoidance conflict is a situation wherein the individual is motivated to achieve a goal and at the same time develops a tendency to avoid it.



Fig. 13.2 : Approach-Avoidance Conflict

- iii) **An avoidance-avoidance conflict** : An avoidance-avoidance conflict is a situation, wherein an individual is motivated to avoid both the goals. Observe yet another dilemma. Karan is forced by his friends to see a new movie, which he is reluctant to watch. At the same time, he does not want to displease his friends by saying that he would not accompany them for the movie. In this situation, he wants to avoid both the goals and finally faces a conflicting situation.

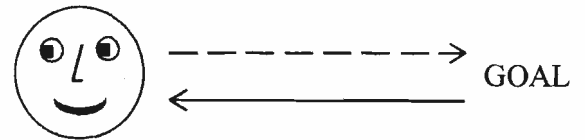


Fig. 13.3 : Approach-Avoidance Conflict

**Check Your Progress 3**

Notes : a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- i) Read carefully and identify the type of conflict involved.

A girl of 14 years from class X of your school, approaches you with a problem. She is anxious to take part in the Inter-School Badminton match but fears she may lose the game, because in the previous year she lost against the same team.

.....  
.....

- ii) List any four characteristics of a well adjusted person.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



### 13.5.3 Measures for Resolving Conflicts

Every individual faces a conflict in life sometime or the other. But it is not necessary that every time, it leads him to frustration. Whenever he meets frustration in life he develops tolerance towards that situation. Thus, every individual develops a certain degree of frustration tolerance. A person who has low frustration tolerance may live in a maladjusted manner.

If an individual is intelligent and has an insight into the problem, he will find ways and means to solve it. In such situations, he may adopt the direct method or an adaptive mechanism, to solve his problem. On the other hand, if he is timid and weak in understanding the problem, he may adopt the indirect method or a defensive mechanism to escape from the conflicting situation. You, as a teacher, have to develop in the students the skills to resolve conflicts.

Some of the adaptive mechanism of resolving conflicts are as follows:

**Accepting reality :** Most of us live in a superficial world : we tend to move far away from reality. We set our targets beyond our capacity to achieve. Instead, if we change our goals and re-set them according to reality, it may be feasible for us to achieve the goals and thus solve the conflicting situation. For example, a teen-age girl aspires to study medicine in the United States, but her financial position forces her to re-set her goal and takes up the course in one of the best colleges in the city or country.

**Analysing problem situation :** Whenever we face conflicts in life, we usually think of only one alternative solution. If that alternative is not a viable one to help us arrive at the solution, we stop at that point itself and start worrying about it. An intelligent person will not react in such a passive manner. He may think of as many alternatives as possible for a given problem and analyse the pros and cons of each of the alternatives and may find a better solution.

**Prioritising the goal :** At times, you might have observed that individuals meet with conflicting situations, where more than two goals are involved. In such situations, one should work out positive and negative aspects of achieving each one of these goals and choose the best. For example, a student may want to finish an assignment in time but there is a very interesting movie on television he does not want to miss. Here he may face a conflict which may be resolved by prioritising the goal.

**Developing value-judgement :** One should develop the ability to judge values when one is facing a moral or value dilemma. Study the following situation.

'Gopu is an honest and sincere boy. He has a friend named Shamu. Both like each other very much. In the final examination Shamu copies all the answers from Gopu answer scripts without his knowledge. The teacher finds that both the answer scripts are identical. He questions Gopu and threatens to punish him if he does not admit the truth. Gopu is in a dilemma : whether to be honest in admitting the fact or be loyal towards his friend in the interest of friendship.

**Diverging one's interest :** Open mindedness could help solve one's problems easily. Narrowing down our interest to one specific act leads to conflict. For example, Preethi is good at drawing. She is keen to take up Architecture as her specialisation because of her interest towards arts. Unfortunately, she fails to obtain a seat in that course. Immediately she switches over to Mechanical Engineering. She further utilises her talent by developing interest in free-lancing artwork, calligraphy, advertising, etc. Thus, changing one's interest also solves the problem to some extent.

### 13.5.4 Defence Mechanism

So far we have discussed the different adaptive mechanisms that are employed to solve the problem intellectually. But **defence mechanism** is quite contrary to the **adaptive measures**. Defence mechanism may not assist an individual to solve his problem in a constructive way, but may impede the constructive activity and become disruptive. Defence mechanism is a technique adopted by individuals to cope with tension, stress and anxiety that are mainly aroused by conflicts. When an individual meets with such a problem, instead of developing an insight to solve it, he may find an easy way to escape from the problem and give a totally different explanation for it. However, psychologists are of the view that a defence mechanism rescues

the individual from maladjusted behaviour. Nevertheless, excessive use of such techniques may again lead to maladjustment.

You may like to go through the various types of defence mechanisms along with suitable illustrations given in the following paragraphs.

**Repression** is a tension-reducing device and is temporary in state. Human tendency is to retain the pleasurable experiences in mind and push aside the undesirable one's to the sub-conscious mind, or one may force oneself to forget such unpleasant experiences by repressing it. This is true even with growing children.

**Reaction formation** is a technique wherein an individual reacts in an extreme way for the one he is already in conflict about. It is just switching over from one end of reaction to the other end. For example, a child who has been very notorious during his early school becomes cooperative later on and helps in the study of his classmates.

**Rationalisation** is a mechanism wherein the individual gives false reasons, other than the actual one in order to reduce his guilt feeling raised out of conflict. A student, after successfully completing his Senior Secondary School education, eager to seek admission at the Indian Institute of Technology, could not succeed in the test or interview. He conveniently blames the authorities for their defective testing or interviewing technique.

Similarly students who score less marks may blame teachers for their poor achievement. This type of rationalisation is known as sour grapes mechanism. It gets its name from the story of Aesop's fables, who secured his pride by saying that the unattainable grapes are sour and hence not worth attempting. However, this technique could be used even in the reverse way also by rationalising, with a sweet reason. A simple illustration could be, a senior teacher who has lost the chance of promotion may proclaim that she is happy with the present job, as it does not demand much commitment. But, internally she might have longed to become the headmistress of the school and felt sorry for not getting the post.

**Identification** is a technique by which an individual fulfils his basic needs by associating himself emotionally with famous persons or popular institutions. By allying himself with popular persons he gets the satisfaction, thereby overcomes his limitation and shortcomings. Through this technique he glorifies himself, when his own goals are not fulfilled. For example, Varun feels proud to boast that he resides in the same street where Sachin Tendulkar does. A person who hails from Merkara may proudly proclaim that General Cariappa is his grandfather's nephew. By identifying oneself with famous personalities, one reduces one's inferiority complex.

**Sublimation** is a type of mechanism, wherein the individual compensates for the socially discredited behaviour in a socially accepted way. In other words, one may try to substitute for what is not achieved in life when a person's physical urges are not fulfilled, he substitutes his energy by involving himself in a socially acceptable manner. For an example, a person who is biologically not satisfied may resolve his frustration by developing interest in sports, scientific research or social services.

**Compensation** is a mechanism in which an individual substitutes attainable goals for the goals which are difficult to attain in their life, for some reason. There is a difference between sublimation and compensation. For example, a student who is weak in studies, may put extra effort to develop a beautiful handwriting. Similarly a student who cannot fare well in athletics may develop her ability in dancing. In such situations you find that students try to prove their ability in order to save their ego or self-esteem. Those students who suffer from inferiority complex may feel secure by adopting such mechanisms. The compensation mechanism is a vulnerable aid to adjustment. It reduces tension and anxiety and promotes good mental health. However, you should remember that compensation can be done in the negative direction also. A highly complexed student may turn out to be a truant or delinquent student.

**Ego-centrism** is another type of defence mechanism employed by insecure students. You might have seen some ego-centric type of children in your classroom. Such children ask a lot of irrelevant questions, talk loudly, play mischievous pranks and try to be witty, mainly to draw the attention of others. You might have come across instances when an older student bursts crackers in the class, when you were teaching the lesson. A case study of the particular boy may reveal that he is very poor in mathematics and continuously fails in the monthly test. By indulg-

ing in such an act, he wants to draw the attention of not only his classmates but also wants to satisfy his ego.

**Negativism** is similar to that of ego-centrism. Negativism is another ego-enhancing and attention-seeking device employed by thwarted students. They express their reactions in a negative way by sulking, rebelling, refusing to eat, talking and behaving in a stubborn way.

**Aggression** is a form of reaction to frustration. The frustrated students may transfer their emotions on others. The pent-up emotions such as hatred, hostility, irritation or annoyance will be passed either on human beings or on inanimate objects. Let us understand this concept with the help of an example. An employee who is insulted by his boss, vents his anger on his wife, she in turn, may pass it on to her son, by beating him for a petty reason. The boy who is hurt by his mother, represses his feelings and runs to the ground to play. While playing he loses at games. Annoyed by this he kicks his friend badly and brings out his repressed feeling. The chained reaction of frustration is exhibited in various forms e.g. destroying, damaging, retaliating, hurting, humiliating, insulting, and threatening.

---

## 13.6 SENTIMENT

---

Emotions are aroused out of the instincts during the early life of children. These instinctive feelings in children create excitement and develop special interest towards an act. Children are impulsive in their behaviour and this is often expressed through specific modes. The positive emotions like love, attachment, gregariousness, possession, happiness and joy are conveyed through overt actions like hugging, kissing, shaking hands, clapping, smiling and laughing. To cite an example, a three year old child sees an acrobatic performance of a clown in the circus and claps with excitement. The same child at the age of eight, is thrilled to see a beautiful doll, as a birthday gift from her mother, she hugs and kisses the doll. That act may be momentary, she may not hesitate to throw away the doll after some time, when she gets torn of it. These impulsive reactions of children are quite common during the childhood stage. But the same girl expresses her emotion in a different way at the age of 16 years. Her father is abroad on a job. She is very much attached to her father. On her birthday, he sends a beautiful card. The girl preserves it, as it has been sent by her beloved father. Similarly she develops attachment towards an object, because of her emotional bonding with it. She files all the letters of her father, enjoys wearing the dress sent by him, prays for his good health and respects him by behaving properly. At this stage/age she shows a maturity in her behaviour.

A sentiment is a combination of various emotions clustered around some important persons, objects, ideals and values. These sentiments form one's permanent emotional disposition. In the initial stage, these sentiments are centered around family members. Later these are developed around one's community members and are based on caste, religion and language. Gradually they are transformed into abstract ideals of cooperation, gregariousness (fond of company), honesty, truthfulness and justice. For instance, one person from Bihar gets excited to see another Behari in Kanyakumari, because they belong to the same state. But the same Behari may be happy to see any Indian in Canada, because they belong to the same nation. This is how sentiments are centered around abstract ideals-religious, moral, social aesthetic, patriotic and finally towards one's own self, that is the sentiment of self-regard.

### 13.6.1 Self-regarding Sentiments

Before we discuss the concept of self-regarding sentiments we should understand the term 'self' clearly: 'Self' means 'oneself'-one's identity, one's personality i.e. what one is. Self can be defined roughly as the elaboration of such statements as -'I am this sort of a person. These are my strengths and weaknesses.....'. Thus 'self' refers to the image of total personality of an individual, including bodily self and the sense of identity. Self is the central point of personality. It directs the process of individualisation through which the useful and creative aspects of the unconscious are made conscious and channeled into productive activity.

**Self-concept** : A human being is aware of himself. He is aware of his past and future, and of other people, friends, enemies and strangers. As he is aware of his own life and ultimate death, he must establish a firm identity and a purpose and meaning for his life. Without an adequate concept of himself, he will feel anxious and may fall into social isolation and despair. Self-

concept is the totality of the perceptions that one has about himself, his attitude towards himself, the language he uses to describe himself.

**Self-esteem :** The child's self-esteem is, especially, his self-judgement of his own abilities, influence and popularity. To a certain extent, it is a mirror image of the judgement of others. His degree of self-esteem will affect his behaviour - either by limiting or extending the range of things he will attempt, whether in academic tasks, sports or friendships. Low self-esteem makes the child less original and more imperative, whereas high self-esteem brings out initiative and independent judgement. So self-esteem is a positive attitude toward oneself and one's behaviour. Quite often it is a lasting personal disposition.

**Self-image :** The perfect and ideal self which the individual imagines himself or herself to be after identification with an idealized conception of what he or she should be.

As the child grows, he develops an understanding about his likes and dislikes, distinguishes between right and wrong, discriminates good and bad mainly through the external sources like parents, teachers, peers and relatives. Gradually he develops an image for himself and attaches special regard for himself. This is known as self-regarding sentiment or master-sentiment. For example, a student may develop a feeling that 'I am a person who cannot tolerate injustice', 'I cannot speak lies', 'What will my teacher think, if I don't submit the assignment on time'. These are the self-regarding sentiments or master-sentiments which give stability to a student's whole life. The fulfilment of such self-regarding sentiment gives satisfaction, and failure leads to conflict and frustration. A person who has a strong self-regarding sentiment often experiences conflict in life. Consider the example of Gandhiji who promised his mother that he would not eat meat and drink liquor in England. When the situation forced him to perform such acts, he was in conflict. His complex sentiments of keeping the promise, honesty and sincerity, respect for parents clashed with one another. But, he had the strong will-power to overcome the conflicting situations in his life.

Whenever a child experiences conflicts in master-sentiments, he should develop the will-power to overcome the temptations of lower order or mean acts. Such a child is considered, a person of character. Thus character is judged through the kinds of sentiment a person has.

### 13.6.2 Formation of Character

The basic units of character are the sentiments. The character is the system or organisation of sentiments. Hence, sentiments are directly related to the formation of character.

Possession of multiple sentiments combined with strong will-power, ability to judge and sensitivity to social norms, forms the character. A person who possesses a good character will be a self-disciplined person and will act according to his own principles and consciousness. His decision to solve a moral dilemma is based on his rational judgement rather than the fear of punishment or regards for reward. The character of such persons is reflected in their conduct.

### 13.6.3 Types of Character

Peck has identified five types of character. These types fall in line with Kohlberg's six stages of moral reasoning. You have already studied Kohlberg's six stages of moral reasoning in Unit 2 (Section 2.5).

**Amoral :** Such type of students are self-centered and act on impulses. There is no sense of discriminating right and wrong, no feeling of guilt, mere self-gratification. They may conceal and give a charming appearance to other.

**Expedient :** Such types of students are self-centered and always strive to gain reward and avoid punishment. They are inconsistent in their behaviour and concerned about their own welfare only.

**Conformist :** Some students act in accordance with social demands. They are basically immature in nature, but superficially appear to be conforming to societal norms and pretend to be model citizens.

**Irrational conscientious :** Such types of students have a set of standard and moral code of their own, but conform quite rigidly. They are bound to their conscience and feel guilty if they violate it. They have a sense of right and wrong, and certain acts may be considered right and certain wrong.

**Rational altruistic :** Such students have a stable set of morals, principles. They understand, evaluate, accept and habitually act upon principles. They may tend to change their principles according to their insights and welfare of other human beings. They may act in a socially constructive way but in accordance with their personal convictions. They are unselfish persons.

#### Check Your Progress 4

Notes : a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

i) Explain the role of self-regarding sentiment in the formation of character.

.....

.....

.....

.....

ii) List five types of character.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### 13.7 EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

After studying the different techniques of adjustment, both adaptive and defensive, you might feel that at least once or twice, you too have employed some of these techniques to overcome conflicting situations in your life. However, as a teacher, what is your role towards your students when they face such problems or situations? The implications are analysed and discussed as follows. Your role is to :

- **identify problem and maladjusted children :** Children with personal inadequacies and who are maladjusted in the school environment should be identified / recognised. Problem children require special attention in the school in general and in the classroom in particular. Students who suffer from physical disabilities should be asked to sit in the front row so that they are under direct observation of the teacher. Moreover they should be referred to physicians for appropriate medical check-up, if so required.
- **reinforce the isolated :** Special care should be given to students who isolate themselves from others. Regulated boosting of their ego may help them overcome the feeling of isolation. School activities should be designed in such a way that every student receives due attention from the teacher and acclaim for creditable achievements.
- **reform the inferior :** You should identify the students who are poor in specific subjects like maths and science, and diagnose their specific problems. At the same time you should identify the special abilities of such students and provide them maximum opportunity to excel in their special abilities. By compensating for their shortcomings you can help them cope with their inferiority complexes.
- **transform aggression :** The mission of converting the aggressive and hostile feeling of maladjusted students lies in your hands. The socially useful outlets for energy as that of athletic contest, painting, dramatics and stage plays will assist the aggressive students to overcome from the repression and anxiety.

- **encourage healthy development of self** : If you, as a teacher, possess values like honesty, truthfulness, sincerity and perseverance, naturally the students will develop same sentiments towards you and admire you. By emulating the personality of such teachers, they develop master-sentiment in themselves. Apart from this, you should encourage the students to read autobiographies of great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Ambedkar, etc.
- **train in will-power** : The family as an institution is undergoing changes in the value system. The generation gap between parents and children creates conflicts in the family. Adolescents often experience conflicts/dilemmas, whether in observing the traditional familial values or in adhering to new emerging values. In such a situation you can play your role effectively. You can adopt certain new approaches to develop value judgement amongst students. There are certain interesting approaches like value analysis, value discussion and jurisprudential inquiry through which students can reach the solution. These approaches develop will-power, reasoning ability and rational judgement amongst students.
- **refurbish the skills of counselling** : You are expected to be motivated to acquire extra knowledge about counselling and refurbish it. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore, has been actively engaged in orienting and organising counselling programmes for the benefit of school teachers. Participating in useful programmes of that type will help the teachers to counsel the problem children in the classroom. The intervention programmes conducted in NIMHANS are open for all teachers. The orientation programmes focus on the nature and causes of various problems, disorder of emotions such as extreme shyness, over-anxiousness or depression, disorder of conduct such as lying, stealing and truancy. As an effective teacher, you should enrich your knowledge by attending these programmes.
- **refer to counsellors** : Teachers who do not have scope to enrich themselves with the knowledge of counselling by attending various programmes may refer the problem children to professional counsellors. The trained counsellors may diagnose the case and provide appropriate guidance and counselling to students.

---

## 13.8 LET US SUM UP

---

In this unit, you have studied:

- the elements involved in shaping and moulding the well adjusted behaviour of an individual.
- the decisive factors like family, school, teachers and peer group responsible for causing maladjustment in an adolescent.
- conflicting situations that one encounters in life and the application of direct and indirect mechanisms to overcome frustrations in life .
- the formation of character and its relevance to master-regarding sentiments, and
- the role of the teacher in helping the student to adjust well in society.

---

## 13.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

---

1. What do you mean by adjustment?
2. Describe in brief the characteristics of maladjusted pupils.
3. Discuss the causes of maladjustment.
4. What do you mean by self-regarding sentiment?
5. Discuss the role of self-regarding sentiment in the development of character.
6. Define conflicts. What are the various types of conflicts?

---

## 13.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

---

Chauhan, S.S. (1987) : *Advanced Educational Psychology*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.

Hurlock, E.B. (1978) : *Child Development*, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York.

Kale, S.V. (1983) : *Child Psychology and Child Guidance*, Himalaya Publishing House, Girgaon, Bombay.

Pichowski, M.H. (1975) : *A Theoretical and Empirical Approach to the Study of Development, Genetic Psychology Monograph*.

Sharma, B.R. (1988) : *Frustration : Reactions of Government Executives*, Times Press 910 Jatwara, Tiraha Behram Khan, Darya Ganj, New Delhi.

---

## 13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

---

1. Healthy and adjusted person should be :

- i) Mature in thinking
- ii) Emotionally balanced
- iii) Capable of independent decision making
- iv) Fulfilled needs
- v) Capacity to cope with the tensions of routine life.

2. Causes of maladjusted behaviour of Kapoor are:

- lack of role-model in father
- socio-economic status
- unequal treatment with other siblings
- mother vents her anger on Kapoor for his stubborn behaviour
- this treatment in family results in aggressive behaviour in the school and more punishment by the teacher.

3. In this case the girl has :

- a) a desire to participate in the badminton match.
- b) a fear that she may lose in the game.

This is an approach-avoidance conflict which may lead her to avoid the match though she is motivated to participate.

4. i) Self-regarding sentiments results from the regard a person attach to himself as a result of learnings from role models like parents, teachers and other strong influences.

Self-regarding sentiments provide stability to the person's life. Therefore, the small dissatisfaction or frustration may lead to a conflict.

To overcome such conflicts the person needs strong will-power.

Thus high regard for self due to chosen standards of conduct alongwith strong will-power can actually frustrate a character that make meaningful changes to the society.

- ii) Five types of character are – amoral, expedient, confirmist, irrational conscientious, and rational altruistic.