RESEARCH ARTICLE

TO UNDERSTAND AND COMPARETHE IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESS IN ADOLESCENTSON THE BASIS OF GENDER AND AGE THROUGH JAMES MARCIA'S MODEL OF IDENTITY STATUSES

Ms. Himanshi Sachdeva[1] and Mr. Nipun Sachdeva[2]
1. MA Psychology Department of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University.
2. Data Analyst, Marks & Spencer plc, UK.

……......

Manuscript Info
……………………….

Abstract
………………………………………………………………

The purpose of the study was to investigate Marcia's ego identity paradigm in the Indian adolescent population.The study examined the role of age and gender and on the process of Identity formation. A representative sample of 161 adolescents(girls and boys) was collected across three different age groups 13-15, 15-17 and 17-19 years. The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ) was used to measure participants' level of Exploration and Commitment and accordingly classify them into one of Marcia's four Ego Identity Statuses: Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion identity.The results indicated that most of the adolescents in today's times are realistic and more informed about their lives and decisions. Thus, mean scores for both girls (70.24) and boys (70.24) were high in Identity Achievement. Also, both genders were found to be equally active in exploration and commitment domains.The T- scores indicated the comparison between girls and boys in different Identity statuses. The values were found to be non- significant indicating an equal growth in both the genders.

…….......

Introduction:-

The quest to know "who am I?" in terms of one's physical appearance, emotional state, political views, spiritual and developmental growth is referred to as the 'Identity' of a person. The psychologists define identity as a process of finding our true selves. James Marcia is a well- known developmental and clinical psychologist who contributed the essential time of his life to understand the concept of identity formation in adolescents. James Marcia's work is based on Erik Erikson's fifth psychosocial stage of development that is, Identity vs role confusion in adolescents (12-19years). During this stage, adolescents search for a sense of self and personal identity, through an intense exploration of personal values, beliefs, and goals.The virtue of this stage is Fidelity.According to the psycho social theory of Erikson, fidelity emerges as a virtue at the end of the identity crisis in adolescence and indicates that a stable identity has been achieved. According to Erikson, adolescence is the age when a person starts to relate himself or herself to the society in terms of being a citizen who has its rights and responsibilities and existence as an individual. Therefore, concepts such as loyalty and commitment regarding choices, people, and beliefs are at the heart of fidelity (Erikson, 1962, 1964; Furrow, King, & White, 2004; Markstrom&Kalmanir, 2001). James Marcia worked on the similar trajectory as Erikson. His theory of "Identitystatuses" signifies that the identity of a person results from a series of choices regarding ideologies, political views, relationships, hobbies that he or she makes

Corresponding Author:- Ms. Himanshi Sachdeva
Address**:-** MA Psychology Department of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University.

usually during adolescence. Therefore, identity statuses aretypically focused on late adolescents and on determining their status through an examinationalong the dimensions of explorationand commitmentto possible identities. Marcia's model consists of two domains: crisis (later renamed exploration) and commitment.Exploration indicates the number of times during adolescence when the individual seems to be actively involved in choosing among alternative occupations and beliefs. On the other hand, commitment is about the resolution of this crisis through finding answers and committing to values, vocation, and career choices (Marcia, 1967).

On the basis of these two domains there are four identity stages in which an adolescent can be categorized. Diffusion (low exploration, low commitment), foreclosure (low exploration, high commitment), moratorium (high exploration, low commitment), and achievement (highexploration, high commitment). This paper aims at understanding and comparing the identity formation process among adolescent boys and girls. In some studies, some different patterns have also been observed. For example, in a large study on identity achievement, Meeus et al. (2010) found that adolescent females tended to be in Moratorium The reasons could be the increase in digitalization. Adolescents of all groups are becoming aware of themselves and their environment and Achievement whereas adolescent males were mostly in Foreclosure and Diffusion.

Rationale
The Rationale of doing this research was tounderstand how boys and girls differ in their approach towards identity formation and explore how gender roles are changing with time. Is equality in terms of opportunities and exposure blurring the line of gender differences? India is a developing country which is undergoing new and modern changes every now and then. India is moving towards modern mindsets where there are ample of opportunities for girls and boys to explore and establish themselves. Identity achievement stage has an immense impact on the Adolescents' self-image, self-presentation, as well as their social adaptation (Kumru& Thompson, 2003). Schwartz et al. (2011) stated that people who know who they are, what they want, and where they are heading tend to feel satisfied with themselves, share good rapport in their social circle, and are less likely to participate in harmful behavior. Such people are thought to have achieved identities that provide them with a sense of uniqueness and adequate future adjustment (Heidary, Roodbari, Naderi, Isanezhad, &Jalilvand, 2012).

In addition, examining gender differences in identity statuses within the context of a patriarchal society is of significance, as gender directly affects developmental outcomes. Thus, males and females are raised with different expectations, leading to different developmental trajectories (Sarouphim&Chartouny, 2017). For example, girls are expected to be homemakers and men are expected to be bread winners for their family (Ayyash-Abdo, 2007). In early adolescence, menarche is associated with increased restrictions and decreased mobility for girls whereas puberty in males signals more freedom outside the home and within the community. However, in recent years, the gender gap seems to be narrowing. The purpose of this study is related to identifying the recent trends in the identity formation process of the youth.

Research Methodology:-
Hypothesis
The following are the null hypotheses for the research
1.There will be a significant impact of age on identity formation.
2.There will be significant impact of gender on identity formation.

Method:-
Design& sample:A comparative analysis was done on girls and boys of three adolescent age groups that is; 13-15 years, 15-17 years and 17-19 years. A total sample of 161 was collected using Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ).

Sampling
Purposive sampling was used to collect the data across different age groups of adolescents from different cities. Total data of 161 was collected, out of which there were girls (81 girls) and boys (80 boys).

Data Analysis
Mean and Standard Deviation(SD) was calculated to compare the age and gender differences in four Identity statuses i.e., Achievement, moratorium, diffusion, and foreclosure. Independent T test was used to compare the

Identity Statuses and domains between girls and boys (combined adolescent stages i.e., early, middle, and late). All the statistics was performed using SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences).The independent t-test, also called the two-sample t-test or an independent-samples t-test, is an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unpaired groups.

Tools
Balistreriet al., 1995 developed Ego identity process questionnaire (EIPQ), which is widely used measure of identity status. It consists of 32 items which assess the dimensions of exploration and commitment in eight areas including occupation, religion, politics, values, family, friendship, dating and sex roles. It contains 20 positively intended items and 12 negatively intended items. Respondents indicate their degree of agreement towards each statement on 6-point Likert type scale. In scoring positively stated items, "strongly agree" receives 6 points, "agree" 5 points, "slightly agree" and so on. Scoring is reversed for negatively stated items.

Results:-
Role of age
Table 1:- Comparison of Identity Statuses and Identity Domains in early, middle, and late adolescence age wise (n=161).

		C+	C-	E+	E-	A	M	D	F
Early Adolescence	MEAN	36.29	16.22	36.12	20.16	71.12	56.33	36.37	52.27
	SD	6.78	4.16	5.91	5.86	10.28	10.80	7.53	7.09
Middle Adolescence	MEAN	34.56	16.45	36.00	19.34	69.72	53.66	35.80	51.64
	SD	6.72	4.58	5.44	5.38	10.02	10.60	6.24	8.96
Late Adolescence	MEAN	34.23	16.28	36.11	18.59	69.25	52.65	34.87	51.83
	SD	6.48	3.74	5.96	5.36	10.09	10.15	6.45	8.19

Table 1 shows the mean of identity statuses and domains across different age groups.

The results indicate that for all the three age groups the mean of achievement is comparatively higher than other domains.

Role of gender
Table 2:- Gender comparisons of Identity statuses and Identity domains (boys=80, girls=81).

		C+	C-	E+	E-	A	M	D	F
Boys	MEAN	35.50	16.33	35.20	19.72	70.75	55.22	36.05	51.36
	SD	5.90	3.91	6.00	5.45	10.30	9.85	6.52	7.84
Girls	MEAN	34.96	16.33	36.40	19.06	70.24	53.85	35.39	51.79
	SD	6.45	4.35	5.38	5.71	9.60	10.72	6.79	9.14

Table 2 shows the gender comparisons of identity statuses and domains.

The results show that the mean for achievement is found to be highest for both girls and boys in comparison to other domains.

Table 3:- Highlighting comparison between boys and girls in different identity statuses and domains using t-ratio.

VARIABLES	Boys		Girls		t-ratio	SIGNIFICANCE
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD		
C+	35.50	5.90	34.96	6.45	.55	.81
C-	16.33	3.91	16.33	4.35	.006	.43
E+	35.20	6.00	36.40	5.38	-1.34	.51
E-	19.72	5.45	19.06	5.71	.75	.53
A	70.75	10.30	70.24	9.60	.32	.50
M	55.22	9.85	53.85	10.72	.84	.79

| D | 36.05 | 6.52 | 35.39 | 6.79 | 62 | .72 |
| F | 51.36 | 7.84 | 51.79 | 9.14 | -.78 | .30 |

Table 3 shows the independent t-ratio analysis and the comparison of males and females on identity formation process. No significant difference is found in gender comparison in identity formation process.

The T- scores indicated the comparison between girls and boys in different Identity statuses. The P value is≥.05, stating that null hypotheses cannot be accepted. The significance level for each of the identity Statuses and domains are insignificant at 0.05 level.

Discussion:-

The purpose of the study was to understand and compare the Identity formation process in adolescents on the basis of Gender and Age through James Marcia's Model of Identity Statuses. The null hypotheses for the study cannot be accepted as no age and gender differences were found in girls and boys with respect to identity statuses and domains. The results indicate, Identity Achieved Status (high commitment and high exploration) was high among all the three groups of adolescents. The hypothesis that there will be a significant role of age on identity formation process of adolescents stands rejected. This points towards the high level of moral development, stability, and goal achievement behaviors of adolescents these days. They are capable of balancing their relationships, work and interests.The second hypothesis that there will be a significant role of gender on identity formation process of adolescents stands rejected. There is no significant difference found between girls and boys. The T scores also point towards the nullification of any comparison between girls and boys. Both the genders were found to be equal in achievement and growth aspect. Both the gender of early and late adolescence portrays high commitment and exploration level, indicating high Identity achieved status. This might be because of the positive reduction in gender gaps. Both males and females have been provided with same exposure to opportunities and experiences. This sameness reflects in their identity formation. The conventional beliefs of gender roles and responsibilities are now declining. Until the early 1990s in India, women entered colleges and universities mainly in general education or in arts subjects. Now, they enter private self-financing institutions and study in both new and traditionally labelled 'masculine' disciplines (Karuna Chanana, 2006). This increase of females as well as males in pursuit of education has made them exhibit high exploration and commitment levels.Also,middle Adolescents are reaching out to gain information and skills related to career options. They have high sense of self awareness and know what they want, which might be because of changed environment as schools seem to be working more towards helping middle adolescents take informed decisions and seem to encourage their interests. A supportive school environment along with teams, teachers and other trusted adults who provide adolescents with support for exploration of identity alternatives and confirm adolescents' commitments are some embodiments of holding environments (Josselson, 1994; Good & Adams, 2008). Also support systems embodied in supportive educational environments help "adolescents feel comfortable to more fully explore their identity options" without being "pressured to adhere to certain values by the school or from their parents" (Adams &Palijan, 2004, p. 240).Late adolescents tend to develop a high ideological self and show balance with regard to work, relationships and interests

Conclusion:-

In the process of identity development both males and females are found to be on same level. They both are exploring and committed to their goals, morals and value beliefs. Also, no significant age difference has been found for the differences in identity formation. Here the biggest role is played by the changing times where the children are smart enough to explore the world around them at a comparatively earlier age. The role of media, schools and plenty of information is available so easily making it possible for them to use this knowledge positively and maintain their personal value systems about politics, or deciding their career based on their interests and available opportunities.

References:-

1. Adams, G. R. (1992). Introduction and overview. In G. R. Adams, R. Montemayor, & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), Adolescent identity formation (pp. 1–8). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications
2. Adams, G. R., &Palijan, S. (2004). The 'identity-education' link: Six themes in an educational setting that influence adolescent identity development and well-being. In T. Urban & F. Pajares (Eds.), Educating adolescents challenges and strategies (pp. 237–253). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing Inc.
3. Ayyash-Abdo, H. (2007). Adolescence in Lebanon. In J. J. Arnett (Ed.), International encyclopedia of adolescence (pp. 583-590). London, England: Routledge.

3. Brittian, A. S., & Lerner, R. M. (2013). Early influences and later outcomes associated with developmental trajectories of Eriksonian fidelity. Developmental psychology, 49(4), 722–735. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028323

4. Erikson EH. Youth: Fidelity and diversity. Daedalus. 1962;91:5–27

5. Erikson EH. Insight and responsibility. New York, NY: Norton; 1964.

6. Furrow JL, King PE, White K. Religion and positive youth development: Identity, meaning, and prosocial concerns. AppliedDevelopmentalScience. 2004;8:17–26. doi: 10.1207/S1532480XADS0801_3

7. Heidary, M., Roodbari, O., Naderi, M., Isanezhad, O., &Jalilvand, M. (2012). A study of the relationships between the family performance and ego identity status with academic achievement in students. Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research, 2, 7421-7427

7. Josselson, R. L. (1994). Identity and relatedness in the life cycle. In H. A. Bosma, D. J. de Lavita, T. L. G. Graafsman, & H. D. Grotevant (Ed.), Identity and development: An interdisciplinary approach (pp. 81–102). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

8. Kumru, A., & Thompson, R. (2003). Ego identity status and self-monitoring behavior in adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Research, 18, 481-495. doi:10.1177/0743558403255066

8. Markstrom CA, Kalmanir HM. Linkages between the psychosocial stages of identity and intimacy and the ego strengths of fidelity and love. Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research. 2001;1:179–196. doi: 10.1207/S1532706XID0102_05.

9. Muuss, Rolf E., "Marcia's Expansion of Erikson's Theory of Identity Formation." Theories of Adolescence.6th ed. McGraw-Hill,1996 260-270.

10.W. Meeus, R. Van De Schoot, L. Keijsers, S.J. Schwartz, S. Branje: On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: a five-wave longitudinal study in early to middle and middle to late adolescence, Child Dev., 81 (5) (2010), pp. 1565-1581

11. Schwartz, S. J. (2008). Self and identity in early adolescence: Some reflections and an introduction to the special issue. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 28, 5-15. doi:10.1177/0272431607308662