

## Effects of different parenting styles on adolescent adjustment

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**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:** This study focuses effects of different pattern of parenting styles on the adjustment of the adolescents. Adjustment is a built in mechanism for coping with the problematic or other realities of life. Adolescents go through a transition in teenage years and may show problems in psychosocial adjustment affecting their mental health and social identity. Parent's relationship with each other and their ability to create a favourable atmosphere for children i.e. the different parenting styles affect psychosocial adjustment in adolescents. The objective of the study was to study the interrelationship between different modes of parenting style and psychosocial adjustment of the adolescents. **METHODS:** A sample of 120 adolescents (60 girls and 60 boys) between 15 to 17 years age were randomly selected for this study. Personal information in the specified format was collected. Bharadwaj Parenting scale was administered to know the pattern of parenting styles. In order to measure the adjustment, Adjustment Inventory prepared by A.K.Singh and A.Sengupta was used. Collected data was statistically analysed and inferences were drawn. **RESULTS:** The degree of relationship between the different modes of parenting and areas adjustment was measured through the correlation analysis. On positive dimensions of parenting a positive correlation was seen in most of the domains of adjustment as compared to negative dimensions of parenting. **CONCLUSION:** The manner in which parents meet the joint needs of children for nurturance and limit setting greatly influences their degree of social competence and behavioural adjustment in adolescent.

**Key words:** Parenting, Adolescent, Adjustment

**INTRODUCTION**

Family plays most important role in the social development of adolescents. The child uses his parents as models for his adjustment to life. The fundamental pattern once estimated at home, cannot be eradicated completely yet modified or changed as the child grows up. Researchers found that parenting style was significantly related to adolescent's behavioural adjustment. Adolescents who experience maladaptive parenting practices often have serious adjustment problems. In the present scenario due to rapid sociocultural changes in the society parent child relation is becoming complex, which in turn effects the social adjustment of adolescents. Parenting style alters the parent's capacity to socialize their children by changing the effectiveness of their

parenting practices<sup>1-4</sup>. This study will focus on the pattern of parenting of adolescents in private school and its impact on their adjustment. Adjustment is a built in mechanism for coping with the problematic or other realities of life. Adjustment has been considered as an index to integration; a harmonious behaviour of the individual by which other individual of society recognise person is well adjusted. Adolescents go through a transition in teenage years and one of the biggest issues they face affecting mental health and social identity. Parental involvement, encouragement of psychological autonomy, and demands for age appropriate behaviour combined with limit setting and monitoring (i.e. authoritative parenting) contribute to good psychological, academic and behavioural adjustment among adolescents<sup>5-6</sup>. In Indian scenario, "To Nurture" is a better word for parenting and it is the inbuilt quality of Indian parents. Nurturing is never a planned process and it differs from family to family in the cultural, community and spiritual context. The ultimate efforts of parents is to shape child's life in a way

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they think is best suited for him and in the whole process sometimes occurs errors in nurturing. A child when becomes adolescent, around 15 to 17 years of age wants independence in various domains of life and parents may interfere in this by giving guidance, which is correct from their point of view but may not be acceptable to the child. Moreover, this gives way out for various conflicts in parents and children leading to maladjustment in adolescents. The objective of the present study was to investigate the interrelationship of parenting style and psychosocial adjustment of adolescents.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

A sample of 120 adolescents, 60 girls and 60 boys studying in private school were selected by simple random sampling. This was an ex-post facto research aimed to identify the status and relationship of parenting style and adjustment of adolescents in home, health, social, emotional areas. For the present study, Models of Parenting and Demographic characteristics were selected as independent variables and adjustment in home, health, social, emotional areas as dependent variable.

**Following tools were used to carry out present research:**

1. Personal information schedule
2. Parenting scale (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 1998)
3. Adjustment inventory (Singh, 1974)

**Personal information schedule:** Personal information schedule developed by the investigator and consist of items to collect information on the demographic characteristics of the subjects. The demographic characteristics comprise of three sets of characteristics viz., respondents related variables: age and gender; parents related variables: education and occupation and family related characteristic consisted of type of family religion, domicile and siblings.

**Parenting scale:** Parenting scale developed and standardized by Bharadwaj *et al.* (1998) consists of eight models of parenting, with mothering, fathering and parenting status. Eight parenting models measured by this scale are

1. Rejection vs. Acceptance

2. Carelessness vs. Protection
3. Neglect vs. Indulgence
4. Utopian expectation vs. Realism
5. Lenient standard vs. Moralism
6. Freedom vs. Discipline
7. Faulty role expectation vs. Realistic role Expectation

8. Marital conflict vs. Marital adjustment  
There is a dichotomy in each parenting model that can be studied as role of mothering and fathering separately as well as parenting as a whole.

**Adjustment Inventory:** In order to measure the social adjustment of the students, Adjustment inventory prepared by A.K.Singh and A.Sengupta was used. There are 150 items. This scale measures the adjustment of an individual in areas of home, health, social, emotional and educational areas. By means of statistical analysis, following inferences were drawn from the collected data.

**RESULTS:** The degree of relationship between the variables under consideration was measured through the correlation analysis. It does not tell us anything about cause and effect relationship. The study of correlation is an immense use in practical life because most of the variables show some kind of relationship. Once we know that two variables are closely related, we can estimate the value of one variable from the value of another variable, which is known as regression analysis. In the present study, we made an attempt to search the relationship of different models of parenting with five areas of adjustment. The data was initially treated by mean and standard deviation. Later on for searching the strength of association between the variables, the data was analysed, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

**Table No. 1 Showing Correlation among different models of parenting with five areas of adjustment**

Variables	Home	Health	Social	Emotional	Educational
Rejection	- 0.37	0.24	0.29	- 0.22	- 0.36
Acceptance	0.49	0.53	0.57	0.51	0.62
Carelessness	- 0.39	0.37	0.40	- 0.23	- 0.37
Protection	0.67	0.54	0.47	0.60	.59
Neglect	- 0.47	0.34	- 0.37	- 0.41	- 0.44
Indulgence	0.45	0.39	0.41	0.67	0.49
Utopian	0.33	0.37	0.38	- 0.49	- 0.46

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Expectation					
Realism	0.47	0.55	0.50	0.61	0.59
Lenient Standard	0.46	0.57	0.59	0.40	0.33
Moralism	0.52	0.46	0.67	0.50	0.55
Freedom	0.37	0.46	0.57	0.51	0.33
Discipline	0.35	0.37	0.42	0.44	0.68
Faulty Role Expectation	- 0.31	0.35	0.37	- 0.29	- 0.30
Realistic Role Expectation	0.61	0.53	0.67	0.58	0.60
Marital Conflict	- 0.52	0.29	- 0.37	- 0.56	- 0.54
Marital Adjustment	0.63	0.49	0.51	0.66	0.41

(N=30, df =28)

Rejection of parents manifests itself in direct ways, when the child has to face excessive criticism, invidious comparison, harsh and inconsistent punishment by both or either of the parents in his upbringing. Rejection of parents may also evince itself in physical neglect, denial of love and affection, lack of interest in his activities and failure to spend time with him. On rejection model of parenting a significant negative relationship in home and educational adjustment is found. Hence, it could be asserted that with increasing rejection, the degree of adjustment on both the areas decreases. Parental acceptance implies an attitude of love for the child. The accepting parent puts the child in a position of importance in the home and develops a relationship of emotional warmth. Parental acceptance encourages the child and makes itself apparent in respective or positive attitude towards the child's idea and judgement, worthiness and capability, love and admiration along with adequate attention towards him. On acceptance model of parenting a significantly positive relationship is observed in all areas of adjustment. Parenting on carelessness dimension manifests itself, when both or either parents do not pay adequate attention towards child's activities thus giving an impression of unwantedness by careless and unthoughtful negligible behaviour towards him even in presence of child's proper and worthy behaviour in day to day matter. On carelessness dimension a negative relationship observed with home and education while positive and significant relationship with social and

health adjustment was found. With emotional adjustment, negative non-significant relationship observed. On the other hand the sense of protection in the child makes him better and more confident. It is true that overprotection is a disease and obstructs the independent growth of the child, but the sense of protection gives him strength and psychological support. So the sense of protection should not be confused with overprotection. On protection model of parenting, highly positive significant relationship is observed for home, health, social, emotional, and educational adjustment. This positive significant relationship shows that, adequate degree of protection helps in adjustment. Neglecting the children by their parents even after conscious of their need is again injurious to their psychological health. It manifests itself in lack of attention and cooperation with them, wilful ignoring them and their activities and avoidance of their genuine needs comes within purview of neglect. With this dimension, on home, social, emotional and educational adjustment significant negative relationship was observed. It suggests that, with increasing score on neglecting behaviour of parent, the level of adjustment decreases. On the other hand over indulgence of parents with the child develops certain whims and psychological inconsistencies in the latter. It may be seen in the parents yielding to every demand of the child and failure to exercise the needed constraint even when necessary. Such a child becomes unfit for reasonable adjustment in the social circumstances. However, indulgence to a reasonable degree may be deemed as a healthy sign. It helps in developing the appropriate emotional response by the child in the given situation. On indulgence mode of parenting, a positive significant value of correlation coefficient is obtained for all areas of adjustment. It suggests that, degree of adjustment increases with reasonable increasing indulgence. The utopian expectation dimension exhibit itself in expecting a very high quality of performance from the child even against his capabilities. Some parent use their children as a means of achieving their own

thwarted ambitions without taking into consideration their abilities and limitations. Such parents are over ambitious regarding their children. Thus, a very high, unrealistic and imaginary demand of parents regarding performance of their children comes within the purview of utopian expectations, which are not fulfilled by the children. On this variable, a significant negative value of correlation coefficient obtained with emotional and educational adjustment. With health and social adjustment, positive significant relationship exists. With home adjustment non-significant association was observed. A parental attitude of realism signifies itself in taking into consideration the objective realities pertaining to both, the child's capabilities and outside world while setting up and expecting his level of performance. The results obtained on this variable brought out highly significant values of correlation coefficient in all domains of adjustment. From the results, it could be depicted that, there is strong association between parental attitude of realism and adolescent adjustment at home, health, social, emotional and educational areas. Lenient standard is a negative dimension of parenting. Lenient standard of parents make themselves apparent in permitting lesser restrictions from deviations from ethical and moral behaviour and an attitude showing indifference against such inhibitions to restrict child's freedom and individuality. On this dimension of parenting except for emotional adjustment, a significant positive relationship existed in rest all of the areas of adjustment. Moralism is a socio-cultural product refers to the doctrine of duties of life, principles and conduct adhering to what is right and virtuous and plays an important role in the dynamics of social relations. If parental behaviour evinces moralism to an excessive degree, it harms the child's natural and dynamic integration. Result obtained on this dimension of parenting supports the assumption of study. A significant positive relationship exists on this dimension with all domains of adjustment. Freedom manifests itself in absence of restraints over all matters to

what they may pertain to. In fact the child is a sole decision maker of his activities. There is hardly any questioning on the part of parents. He may disregard or disobey his parents without any fear of punishment from them. On this dimension of parenting, except with educational adjustment, for rest of the areas of adjustment a significant relationship exist. On the other hand, parents with a penchant for strict discipline simply pass on orders to their children who have to merely obey them. The child is not allowed to take any decision regarding his dress, appearance, manners, friends or other activities of his life. Disobedience is met with punishment whereas obedience is appreciated. The result obtained on this dimension brought out positive significant value of correlation coefficient for all areas of adjustments. On the dimension of faulty role expectation parenting, the child is always confused and embarrassed because of the unpredictable expectations of his parents. Parents usually expect divergent and contradictory roles from their children. From the result, it is seen that the scores on health and social adjustment are correlated while scores on home, emotion and educational adjustment are not correlated with faulty role expectation parenting. The other dimension of parenting is realistic role expectation, is just reverse to the dimension of faulty role expectation parenting. On this dimension, parent themselves set an example to be followed by the children and their behaviour is thoughtful, consistent and predictable in day to day life. The children know for certain what their parents are alike and what is expected from them. On this dimension, the scores on realistic role expectation and scores on home, health, social, emotional and educational adjustment found significantly correlated at .01 level at 28 df. A positive relationship exists between the variables. Marital conflict affects the child's physical and mental development negatively. From the result, it is conclude that, the scores on marital conflict and scores on home, social, emotional and educational adjustment are negatively correlated. The score on health adjusted was not

correlated. Marital adjustment exhibits itself in a calm and composed adjustment between the parents thereby creating a solidarity and congenial atmosphere of peace and harmony in the family. There is significant positive relationship between marital adjustment scores and all areas of adjustment.

### DISCUSSION

Parents' influence on the healthy development of children starts as early as they project some kind of attitude on the conception of the new child. This means the more positive parents' attitude is toward a child's conception, the more favorable will be the development of the child. Right after the child is born and has become a social being, among the social factors it will be more or less only the family that influences the child's development. However, when the social environment of the child grows, the influence of elements (for example, peers, teachers, neighbors, media) in his/her social environment comes into play. However, parents' influence continues as long as the child is under the roof of the family<sup>1</sup>. Parenting is the style of child upbringing refers to a privilege or responsibility of mother and father, together or independently to prepare the child for society and culture, which provides many opportunities to a child to find roots, continuity and a sense of belonging and serves as an effective agent of socialization. Though parenting, as a perception of the parents of their own attitude towards the child, happens to be of great significance in the dynamics of behaviour for socio-psychological researches, but how child perceives his/her parenting always remains a neglected phase of researches and should be deemed most important as he is the one whose process of socialization stands for furtherance<sup>1-3</sup>. Individual experiences not only help in making the sense of self identity and self ideal but may also lead him to perceive, think and act in a self directed manner. Therefore, it appears that child's perception of parental attitude towards himself should be of great concern in the dynamics of behaviour and may

open new avenues of research for deeper probe in the domain of parent child relationship<sup>4-6</sup>. The two distinctive roles of parents include both mothering and fathering. A child bestows on both mother and father together or independently, the responsibility of upbringing him. These perceptions may be referred to apparently direct and immediate knowledge associated to their conscious or unconscious experiences by which they initiate and control behaviour enormously. It is important to note that most of the children have a definite clear cut concept of 'father', which differs markedly from their concept of 'mother'. Therefore, it appears to be of utmost importance to study perceptions regarding their fathering and mothering separately as well as parenting as a whole on different dichotomous modes of parenting<sup>1-7</sup>. Overall, reviews of parenting styles on parent child interaction effects reveal that majority of the studies use the two dimensions (i.e., parental acceptance and parental control) models to classify parents in to distinct parenting styles. Bhadadwaj (1998) conducted a study on "Perceived Parenting of Rejection – Acceptance and Adolescents Value Conflicts". Sample consisted of 500 adolescents. It is discerned that a few value patterns like evasion, dependence, selfishness and hate were found to be associated with perceived parenting of acceptance. Fear as a value assumption was found to be greater in rejected adolescents as compared to accepted ones. However, pragmatism value emerged as an important tendency of Indian adolescents in making their course of action<sup>1</sup>. Steinberg *et al.* (1992) conducted a study on "Impact of Parenting Practice on Adolescent Achievement: Authoritative Parenting, School Involvement and Encouragement to Succeed". The sample consisted of 6,400 adolescent of age 14-18 years old. Results indicated that authoritative parenting leads to better adolescent school performance and stronger school engagement. The positive impact of authoritative parenting is mediated by its facilitation of parental involvement in schooling<sup>8</sup>. Weiss *et al.* (1992) carried out a study on "Some

Consequences of Early Harsh Discipline: Child Aggression and a Maladaptive Social Information Processing Style". The results revealed consistent relation between harsh discipline and aggression in two separate cohorts of children. This relation was not due to confounding factors such as child temperament, socio-economic status and marital violence, although the latter variables were related to child aggression<sup>9</sup>. Laurence *et al.* (1994) conducted a study on "Over-time changes in Adjustment and Competence among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families". One year follow up was conducted in order to examine whether the observed differences were maintained over time in 1987, an ethnically and socio-economically heterogeneous sample of approximately 2,300 adolescents belonging to age range of 14-18 year olds. The result revealed benefits of authoritative parenting were largely in the maintenance of previous levels of high adjustment, the deleterious consequences of neglectful parenting continued to accumulate. In the present study we observed that adolescents show significant positive correlation with positive dimensions of parenting in limit-setting. Crossing limits of parenting even in case of positive parenting can harm psychosocial adjustment in adolescent as the negative parenting does. Therefore, it seems logical to say that quality of adolescents-parents' relationship has a vital role in the adolescents acquisition of skills that are important for their healthy psychosocial development and survival.

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