

Role of Family Environment on Socio-emotional Adjustment of Adolescent Girls in Rural Areas of Eastern Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT The present study was conducted at Kumarganj, Faizabad District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The purpose of the study was to assess family environment of adolescent girls and its impact on their socio-emotional adjustment. One hundred adolescent girls of age group between 17-18 years comprised the sample of the study. Family Environment Scale (FES) and Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) were administered. Data was analyzed in terms of percentage and multiple regression analysis. The statistical analysis revealed that all the eight family environment factors, viz. cohesion, expressiveness conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control together showed significant role in socio-emotional and educational adjustment of adolescent girls.

INTRODUCTION

The image of adolescence as a time of storm and stress, intense moodiness and preoccupation with the self has permeated both professional and lay perspectives on this developmental period. The families in general and parents in particular, have often been deemed to be the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in moulding a child's personality is his relationship with his parents (Mohanraj and Latha 2005). The family in its most common forms is a lifelong commitment between man and women who feed, shelter and nurture their children until they reach maturity. It is a primary socialization context and is, therefore, considered to be a very important factor influencing child development (Ozcinar 2006).

Family members are very important for survival, thus, strong emotional bonds evolved to faster long term commitment among parents, children and other relatives. The experience that the adolescent girls gain from the family decide the future adjustment of adolescent girl within society and her peer group which eventually reflect the social maturity of adolescent girls (Unisa 1995). Family environment continues to be of crucial importance throughout adolescence and

young adulthood (Van Wel 2000). Because of the important role of psychological functioning for youngsters' daily lives and their further social adaptation, it is apparently relevant to study the effect of the family environment on the emotional adjustment of adolescents (Mc Farlane et al. 1994). Family cohesion and supportive relationships between family members are associated with adolescent psychological adaptation and lower depression (Herman et al. 2007). Research regarding level of family conflict suggests that a conflictual family environment is associated with adolescents' insecurity and psychological distress, as well as aggressive behaviour and conduct disorder (Wissink et al. 2006). During adolescence, well-being decreases and psychological problems increase. One aspect of the family that has been steadily found to affect the emotional adjustment of adolescents is the quality and stability of their parents marriage (Amato and Keith 1991a). Numerous studies have shown that youngsters growing up in families with a happy, harmonious parental marriage experience fewer problems and a higher well-being than those from divorced or maritally distressed families (Spruijitt and De Goede 1997). Parental divorce generally has negative effects on the adjustment of children (Amato and Keith 1991a, 1991b) compared to their peers growing up in continuously intact families. Adolescents who have gone through the divorce of their parents are more likely to experience emotional problems, less likely to attend or complete college, more likely to display problematic behaviour and more likely to engage in early sex

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and experience relational problems (Amato and Keith 1991a, 1991b). Previous studies indicate that family environment influences adolescent's psychological adjustment and problem solving strategies as well as self-confidence and ability to set clear goals (Jewell and Stark 2003).

METHODOLOGY

Selection of Locale: The research was carried out in district Faizabad of Eastern Uttar Pradesh during March 2008. It was purposely selected for the study because of logistic convenience in N.D University of Agriculture and Technology, Kumarganj, Faizabad (U.P.), where the investigator had been pursuing studies which is situated in the district itself.

Sample and Its Selection: Three colleges of rural areas in district Faizabad were selected to represent the population under study. The list of adolescent girls between the age group of 17-18 years from three selected colleges was prepared. One hundred adolescent girls were selected from the list by simple random sampling without replacement. Standardized Family Environment Scale and Adjustment Inventory for School Students were used to find out the socio-emotional adjustment of adolescent girls in rural areas.

FES scale (Bhatia and Chadha 1993) consists of three dimensions which are mentioned below:

1. *Relationship dimension* (cohesion, expressiveness, conflict acceptance and caring)
2. *Personal growth dimension* (independence, active recreational orientation)
3. *System maintenance dimension* (organization, control)

The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) by Sinha and Singh (1971) was used to measure adjustment of adolescent girls. It seeks to discriminate well adjusted students from poorly adjusted students in respect of three areas of adjustment viz., Emotional, Social and Educational. An interview schedule was used to collect background information of the respondents. Data was analyzed in terms of percentage and multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the result of multiple regression analysis to study the effect of family environment factors on the overall socio-emotional

adjustment of the adolescent girl. Out of eight environmental factors, two factors viz., acceptance and caring and active recreational orientation have been found highly significant ($P < .01$) to show significant adverse effect on the overall status of adolescent girls. Two factors viz., expressiveness and organization also exhibited significantly adverse effects as well but at 5 per cent probability level of significance. However, cohesion also affected negatively and significantly at 0.10 per cent probability level of significance. It is obvious from the overall results that most of the environmental factors have played negative role in influencing the overall socio-emotional adjustment of the adolescent girls. The significant value of F is also indicative of the fact as mentioned above.

Table 1: Effect of different environmental factors on total of socio-emotional adjustment of adolescent girls

S. No.	Factors	Regression co-efficient	Standard error	t value
1	Intercept	34.6885**	4.8898	7.0941
2	Cohesion	-0.1105 ⁺	0.0733	1.5069
3	Expressiveness	-0.1292*	0.0622	2.0761
4	Conflict	-0.0205	0.0613	0.3347
5	Acceptance and caring	-0.2842**	0.0898	3.1638
6	Independence	0.1068	0.0755	1.4146
7	Active recreational orientation	-0.2098*	0.0963	2.1778
8	Organisation	-0.2441 ⁺	0.1395	1.7499
9	Control	0.1474	0.0999	1.4767

F value: 4.801**, $R^2 \% = 29.68$ **

*Significant at $P < 0.05$, ** Significant at $P < 0.01$,

⁺Significant at $P < 0.10$

It may be concluded from the above results that socio-emotional adjustment is influenced by degree of support, help and commitment in the family (cohesion), extent to which set rules are followed in the family (control), the amount of anger and aggression in the family (conflict), the degree of interest in political, social and cultural activities (intellectual-cultural orientation) and the extent to which family members are assertive, self sufficient and make their own decisions (independence) (Mohanraj and Latha 2005). If adolescents are unconditionally accepted and cared in the family, then they show poor adjustment because parental support for social interaction influences the social and total adjustment. Johnson et al. (2001) studied that decreased family cohesion and increased interparental conflict can inadvertently provide fam-

ily environments that are associated with increased feelings of loneliness, which may be associated with problems in adolescents' social interactions. Adolescent psychological adjustment, and satisfaction is significantly related to level of perceived conflict in the family.

In case of active recreational orientation, if adolescents are more engaged in recreational activities then they spend less time with their peers, neighbors and family members and also they are less serious towards their goals which show adverse effect on socio-emotional adjustment of adolescent girls. If adolescents act openly and express their feelings and thoughts directly then it affects the degree of commitment, help, and support of family members provided from one another which affects the adjustment of adolescent girls. (Bronstein et al. 1996) revealed that *non-hostile expression of emotion within the family (both observed and self-reported) appears to have provided a buffer against psychological problems over the transition to middle school and to have enhanced concurrent and long-term developmental outcomes, as evidenced by greater peer popularity, more positive self-concept for girls, and more positive social behavior in the classroom for boys. Parents' and children's levels of observed emotionality were highly inter-correlated, suggesting that parents were modeling a level of emotional expressiveness that was similar to the level they allowed or supported in their children.*

Organization also shows adverse effect on social adjustment of adolescent girls because families with happy, harmonious parental marriage experience fewer problems and a higher well-being than those from divorced and maritally distressed families. These findings are in agreement with previous research of Berndt and Keefe (1995). Dasgupta and Basu (2002) reported that emotional maturity may have played an important role in determining good marital relations thereby improving father-child relationship by minimising the intensity of conflicts between spouses and their children. Huxley (2006) described that emotionally healthy parents showed patience, did not enforce physical punishment, value autonomy, were warm and provided rationales and explanations for rules they set to follow. Adams DYK and Bennion (1990) found that parental control, exercised in a supportive environment, is widely recognized as a facilitator of social development in adoles-

cents. Ahmed and Nigam (2009) studied that academic achievement motivation is significantly related to favorable and unfavorable home environment of higher secondary students.

CONCLUSION

From the above results it is concluded that all the family environment factors, viz. cohesion, expressiveness conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control together showed significant role in socio-emotional adjustment of adolescent girls at 1 per cent, 5 per cent and 10 per cent probability level of significance.

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