TODAYS' PARENTS AND THEIR PARENTING STYLES ON ADOLESCENTS LIFE

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ABSTRACT:

Education is about all-round development. This study puts the ball in the parents' court in the quest for all round education of the adolescent. The culmination of the effects of parenting may be seen in the adolescent who is on the threshold of independence. Adolescence is a time when a person is torn by conflicting feelings. On the one hand, he is eager to be free, and on the other hand, he wants that there is always someone behind him who supports and takes care of him. This study puts light on the fact that the healthy home environment especially parents can be a strong source of support for developing adolescents. Their styles of nurturance contribute on children's various psycho social aspects of development as well as their academic achievement. Healthy parents can produce healthy children, who in return, can produce a healthy nation. Good parenting can provide close relationships, strong parenting skills, good communication, and modeling positive behavior, so that modifications in the patterns of parenting can be made to make it more favorable for the enhancement of psychosocial competence of the children. This study is an eye-opener for parents so that they may resolve their own conflicts.

KEY WORDS: Parenting styles and adolescents.

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Life is dynamic and constant change is one of its essential features. Change is a law of nature and is noticeable in the phenomena of life as well as in every sphere of man's life and the life of society. Globalization and Information Technology is transforming Indian Society from a local culture into the international milieu. This new and ever-evolving information equip people with new ideas and generate new thoughts in their minds, forcing people to strive to cope with the fast changing modern world and to live their lives happily and efficiently (Kour & Kour, 2014). The growth of industrialization and consequent urbanization of life gives rise to a commercial outlook to life. For the present day generation, the prime importance of life is success, success at any cost. Modern society is full of complexity especially for adolescents because, this stage is turbulent, but crucial. Adolescence has always been an interesting stage of life to explore.

Adolescents of today have conflicts with changed value systems, transformed social strategies, atomization, craving for materialistic life, too much consumerism, changed family patterns and parental attitudes. The family is an 'anchor' that supports the adolescent in coping with the challenges of transition to adulthood. Women's empowerment, exposure to media (Mahmood, 2000), social-networking sites (Winterberg,2010), increasing competitive demands of the market economy and higher standards of academic achievement, especially parents' high educational expectations, and pressure for academic achievement (Deb, 2001) are few aspects of the family dynamics that very much influence the personality traits of adolescents.

In the growing complexities of life, the present scenario of the family presents a picture in which both the parents are busy in outside the home to make life economically stable. They want to achieve equity between their own demands and the demands of modern sophisticated society. Ukiah (2003); Onyewadume (2004) and Otuadah (2006) analyzed that, for family financial commitments, both parents work outside the home, hence they cannot spend quality time with their children to monitor their activities and to guide their upbringing. So, children are often left under day care centers, paid servants etc. That means, they are deprived of parental love and care. Working parents are mostly very stressed and tensed about their workload, so they may lose their temper at the children. Parents often feel guilty about their lack of time, care and attention for their child and try to compensate by indulging the whims and demands of their children. Thus the child's and later the adolescent's upbringing become faulty.

Consequently, adolescents are often fraught with upheavals of emotion and battles with those in authority (Hall, 1904).

Adolescence is a period when boys and girls are still subject to the vagaries of parental whims on the one hand and wanting to break free from parental control on the other. In this arena of opposing forces and loyalties, confrontations and clashes emerge. Media regularly portrays the problems of adolescence like, gang violence, school shootings, alcohol-related accidents, drug abuse, and suicides etc. While this can accelerate with tactless parental behavior and it can also be dissipated by the right sort of parenting. So, there has always been a debate regarding what exactly a 'good parenting' approach is. Healthy parental behavior is a valuable gift that a child can receive and a parent can give. So,parenting is a natural and inborn role that leads to the development and realization of personality characteristics of children. At no stage of life is the effect of parenting more apparent than at adolescence. This is the time that the children are preparing to 'break free of the nest'. In other words, adolescents have not broken free of the moorings at home, and their actions and personality traits reflect the parenting they receive.

Attachment is a long term relationship between the members of the social groups. Passer & Smith (2007) define attachment as a strong emotional bond that develops between children and their parents. The quality of an adolescent's relationship with his or her parents is a key factor to healthy adolescent development. Karthik (2009) concluded that, parents influence their children's lives in every aspect and make an impression for their future lives. Mother and father both have an important role in the upbringing of their child. According to Gadeyne et al.,(2004), parenting is considered to be an important element of several aspects of children's outcomes. It is one of the hardest tasks to describe the parents' efforts as every parent would hope to succeed in parenting. Parenting as 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 (Veenes,1973a). So, parents have unique attitude, behavior, belief, values and family culture and all these criteria vary from parent to parent (Bibi et al.,2013).

Parenting can be defined on the basis of two components- responsiveness that means, parental emotional characteristics and demandingness, that means set of parental guidelines and disciplines for the child (Fletcher et al., 2008). Both parenting responsive and demanding has been linked to secure attachment in children (Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz, 2003). In terms

of the interaction between these two dimensions. Baumrind (1971) classify parenting styles are of four types: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive and Neglectful parenting.

(a)   Authoritative Parenting: This type of parents maintain an equilibrium between the levels of responsiveness and demandingness. They control their children according to their age related manner, they make logical demands, create an affectionate and loving atmosphere where children can express their feelings, opinions, offer their points of view and participate in decision making process within the family(Berg et al.,2011). Authoritative parenting is defined as the best and most appropriate style for developing competent and confident children in all aspects of life. In a study by Castrucci & Gerlach(2006), this parenting is revealed to be the optimal style.

(b)   Authoritarian Parenting: The parents are highly demanding but less responsive to their children. According to Baumrind (1966), these parents do not allow the child to express their opinions and needs. These parents pretend that they know the 'best' for their children. They attempt to mold and control the behavior and attitudes of their children according to a set of standard. A study by Berg (2011) found that, authoritarian parents show loving attitude in respect to their success and not as a result of nurturing. Another study (Hoeve et al.,2008; Hoeve et al.,2009) also showed that, authoritarian parents show high levels of control, supervision, overprotection, belief in harsh punishment and moderate levels of love and support.

(c)   Permissive Parenting: Permissive parents are responsive but exert low demands on their children. Baumrind (1971, 1989) found that parents exercise minimal control and authority, and often fail to impose rules and standards and cannot define the limits of acceptable behavior of the child. The study by Schaffer, Clark & Jeglic (2009) found that, permissive parents provide their child high levels of independence without interfering with the child's daily activities, thus resulting in low levels of parental guidance. Another study by Rossman & Rea (2005) also stated that, this style of parenting provided high levels of freedom. Children who are exposed to this type of parenting can not control their behavior unless physical punishment is imposed.

(d)   Neglectful Parenting: This style of parenting exhibits low levels of responsiveness as well as low levels of demandingness. Adolescents who have neglectful parents showed low levels of

psychosocial adjustment, social competence and academic achievement(Lamborn et al.,1991) This type of parents provide inadequate punishment skill and very low level of controlling attitude (Hoeve et al.,2008). A study by Steinberg et al.,(2006) concluded that, neglected children show less maturity and are more likely to be motivated by peers.

These four parenting styles denote two approaches. One stresses on a constellation of positive behaviors like warmth, responsiveness, supportiveness, influence, consistency. The other approach stresses a constellation of negative behaviors like disapproval, hostility, punitiveness, inconsistency and harshness (Collins et al.,2000) Faulty parent-adolescent relationship leads to adolescents' maladjustment (Erickson,1963) and each of healthy relationship between parent-adolescent and consequent growth of self-esteem, self-confidence (Holfman, 1960).

Parental influence on the adolescent's life

The parent-child relationship has been studied extensively as it is closely related to many social issues (Bernado, 2010). Adolescents who are securely attached to their parents display higher LS (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004); academic success (Bell, Allen, Hauser, & O'Conner, 1996; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994); interpersonal functioning (Black & McCartney, 1997); self-efficacy (Arbona&Power, 2003; Thompson, 1999); and lower psychological distress (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994). Bednar & Fisher (2003) further opine that, adolescents tend to turn to their parents instead of peers in times of need to make decisions. Howard et al., (2006) stated that, when parents increase the amount of quality time with their child, they enhance the emotional bonding and make a strong, close relationship with their children. Research by Harris (2002) indicates that, the parent-child relationship is important in the life of infants, young adolescents and late teens. Parent-child relationship is one of the most influential factors by which adolescents adopt social interactions, education, nutrition and also problem behaviors (Hair,Jager & Garrett,2002). The high quality of parent-adolescent relationships are linked to a wide range of positive outcomes, mental and emotional well-being, adjustment, social competence and also decreased problem behaviors

(Borkowsky, Ramey & Bristol-Power,2002; Hair et al.,2002).Parental support refers to parental affectionate qualities and is associated with characteristics like warmth, acceptance and involvement. High levels of parental support are related to affection for parents, community attachment, happiness, life satisfaction and also low psychological distress .Another study by Barber & Erickson,(2001); Hair et al.,(2002) indicates that, parent adolescent relationship is directly associated with self –confidence, empathy and cooperative personality.On the contrary, poor quality parent-adolescent relationships are associated with the antisocial tendencies (Barber & Erickson, 2001).

Identity development is a key task of adolescence and that occurs in the context of warm and interactive parent-adolescent relationship. Parental rejection, poor family communication and lack of parental bonding which are the factors of family negatively affect the formation of the identity of an adolescent (Heaven, 2001). A balance between psychological and behavioral freedom from the parents make a close and supportive relationship and is the main criteria of identity development. Parental acceptance provides healthy social and emotional adjustment (Akkuset al., 2010). It is positively associated with ego strength (Ahmed et al., 2008), social adjustment (Gulay, 2011) and emotional adjustment (Alegre &Benson, 2008).

One of the core societal values that parents try to teach their children are sharing and caring and to make their children kind and generous. That is, thoughtful parents develop qualities of altruism in their children(Eisesnberg,1983). The study by Carlo et al., (2007) explored the relations among parenting styles, parental practices, sympathy and prosocial behaviors of adolescents. The respondents were 233 adolescents from public high schools in the Midwestern region of the United States. The researcher found evidence that, parenting practices were significantly associated with adolescents' prosocial behaviors. Shaver & Milkulincer (2005) concluded that, the secure attachment in early life may help to foster a capacity for compassion and altruism that carries forward into adulthood. Akhter (2011) defines attachment styles as the typical ways of interacting in close relationships. Meyers & Landsberger (2002) described attachment as the ways in which adults think, feel and interact in the context of their relationships. Komagata & Komagata (2008) opined that, secure attachment of parents helped to develop balance personalities in children.

The study by Arzeen, Hasan & Riaz (2012) examined the differences between emotionally empathic and non-empathic adolescent's perception of parental acceptance and rejection. The sample comprised of 100 girls and 100 boys between 13 to 17 years of age. The respondents were taken from private, government and semi government schools of Wah Cantt. Emotional Empathic Scale (Ashraf.2004) and Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (Haque, 1981) were used to collect data from the adolescents. The results indicated that, the right sort of parenting style predisposed the empathy level of adolescents. Emotionally empathic adolescents were significantly different from non-empathic adolescents in respect to the parental acceptance-rejection dimension.

Home and Family has also been recognized as an influential component of academic achievement of children (Nzewuawah, 1995; Ajila & Olutola, 2007) .The study by Daulta (2008) found that, there is a positive impact of good quality home environment on the scholastic achievement of children. This means that a healthy home environment is significantly associated with high levels of success in school. Warm parental relations with adolescents also showed universal association with positive psychosocial outcomes, psychological well-being, self esteem and academic achievement of adolescents. According to Ahuja & Goyal (2005) high parental involvement leads to high achievement and low parental involvement leads to low achievement. Parental strategies and academic success have been found to be interrelated. The study by Rogers et al.,(2009) found that, the use of proper support and encouragement, parents provide their children with a sense of initiative and confidence in relation to learning. According to Jeynes (2010), children who are doing better in school are more likely to have parents who hold high expectation for their children's educational achievement. Parents who believe in the importance of doing well in school may attempt to instill such an attitude in their children. Epstein (2001) suggested that, parents who are informed and involved in their children's school can positively impact their child's attitude and performance. Parental involvement can have a positive impact on student's academic work at all grade levels.

The study by Letha (2013) examined the perception of adolescents about their parents' influence in academic activities. The sample comprised of 200 students of class XI from senior secondary schools in Delhi. Their age range was 15 to 19years. The tool was constructed by the researcher and consisted of a questionnaire with 40 agree-disagree statements. The results

indicated that, the adolescent students perceived their parents as influencing their academic activities and parental support was the main component of parental influence.

The national Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1994 conducted a study to find out the relationship between study habits and academic performance of students. This study revealed a positive correlation between study habit and academic achievement. Singh (2011) examined academic achievement and study habits of higher secondary students. The result indicated that girls and boys differ significantly in their study habits and academic achievement. It found that effective study habits help students to achieve good results (Sadia, 2005). Poor study habits, as observed by Kemjika (1998) definitely ends in poor academic performance. The child-rearing pattern of parents is also an important factor in good study habits as well as academic achievement of adolescents. Researchers have found a strong positive relationship between parents initiated involvement practices and school outcomes (see Epstein and Sanders, 2002; Hess and Holloway, 1984; Hill et al., in press).

Adolescent anti-social behavior is related to poor child rearing practices, poor supervision, harsh discipline, parental disharmony, rejection of the children, and low involvement (Scott, 1998; Simons et al., 2007). When children are rejected by their parents, their sense of conscientiousness is likely to be negatively affected, their feelings of empathy are likely to be lowered, and their perception of their self-worth is likely to be negative (Buikhuisen, 1988). Parents who are cruel, rejecting, or display anti-social traits have been found to significantly influence the manifestation of behavioral problems in children and adolescents Barnow, Schuckit, Lucht, & Freyberger, 2002; Patterson, 1999). It has also been found in a study published in an issue of 'The Journal of Children Psychology and Psychiatry' that over reactive parenting such as heavy criticism or yelling as a response to children's negative behaviour can produce higher levels of aggression or rule breaking in children who are normally introverted , non violent and imaginative (2010).

Conclusion

Education is about all-round development. This study puts the ball in the parents' court in the quest for all round development of the adolescent. It shows that, just sending children to

school cannot ensure complete future citizen. Parents along with teacher, have to take the reins in their hands and strive towards the development of well rounded personalities of adolescents' life. Parents are the main influence on a child's life. Their styles of nurturance contribute on children's academic achievement and various psycho social aspects of development. It is imperative that parents and education together nurture the adolescent to become humane citizens. This study is an eye-opener for parents so that they may resolve their own conflicts. They have to sit together and give proper time to their children's activities. This study clearly illustrated that, parental disciplinary activities and responsiveness play crucial role in adequate parenting of the adolescent. Adequate monitoring, control, supervision irrespective of the gender and age are paramount factors in positive and effective child rearing. Adequate parental love, warmth, care and attention are factors for effective parenting. Dialogue, communication, explanations and establishment of good and cordial relationships between parents and adolescents could enhance positive and effective parenting which prevent adolescents' problem behaviors. The findings of this study have implications for counselors, educationists as well as parents that there is a need to facilitate good quality of parent-child relationship with proper communicative and supportive home environment for their adolescent children. They would be able to learn how to parent effectively and what parenting techniques are important. This study has shed light on the fact that the parenting styles can be a strong source of support for developing adolescent and parents are also the backbone of the future of the nation. Healthy parents can produce healthy children, who in return, can produce a healthy nation. Good parenting can provide close relationships, strong parenting skills, good communication, and modeling positive behavior, so that modifications in the patterns of parenting can be made to make it more favorable for the enhancement of psychosocial competence of the children.

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174

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