

# Dimensions of Parental Behavior with Reference to Adolescent Girls

## Abstract

Adolescence, a crucial transitional stage with the onset of puberty and growth spurt, is often a period of turmoil progressing through a series of developmental challenges. Vulnerability to emotional breakdown, the need to affiliate, developing an identity and a sense of freedom evokes a tendency to deviate from parental norms and seek solace with the peer group. Favorable parental behavior and a happy ambience at home, relatively free from stress and anxiety significantly influences the overall wellbeing of the adolescents. This study aims to explore the behavior of parents of 540 adolescent girls in Kamrup district of Assam with the Three Dimensional Parental Behavior Inventory (TDPBI) developed by Hardeo Ojha.

**Keywords:** Parental Behavior, Development, Adolescence, Kamrup District.



**Switymala Deka**

Research Scholar,  
Deptt.of Psychology,  
Gauhati University,  
Guwahati, Assam



**Mala Chaliha Talukdar**

Associate Professor,  
Deptt.of Psychology,  
B.Sc. Nursing College  
Dibrugarh, Assam

## Introduction

Development, an essential aspect of a person's transitional stage of life highly correlates with parental attitude and upbringing. Parents' childrearing practices are important in shaping the lives of their children. Significant aspects of childrearing practices deal with discipline techniques, general attitudes and behaviors displayed by the parents. The period of adolescence is an important phase of life with changes pertaining to physical, cognitive, social, emotional as well as moral development. It deals with adjustment and a sense of acceptance with the family, friends, neighborhood and school thereby leading to risk taking behaviors as a measure of seeking attention from the significant others in their life. According to Erik Erikson, it is a stage of psychosocial development with changes in persons understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. Confusion in an attempt to understand and discover them and the roles they are expected to play in the society leads to interpersonal problems, deviant and maladaptive social behavior, and a state of emotional immaturity. Family as a social institution constitutes an integral part in dealing with the conflicting stage of adolescent life emerging from the demands of the heterogeneous society. Parents exert phenomenal influence on the lives of their children by providing a stable atmosphere at home to thereby shape them into healthy adults by effectively dealing with the stressful events of life. Discipline techniques and the parental attitudes are very crucial to the development of personality, though parenting styles and respective behavioral pattern depends on the temperament of a child. Every child is born with a specific innate disposition of behavior, when some are easy going, happy and cheerful others are relatively fussy, trouble makers and irritable. A healthy Parent - Child relationship with a significant balance of authority & independence effectively nurtures the developmental stage of Adolescence.

Parenting, across the globe share pivotal goals of ensuring child's health & safety, preparing children for life as productive adults, and transmitting cultural values as stated by the American Psychological Association. Parental behavior is found to vary from general acceptance to hostile rejection, extreme indulgence to care free, neglect and complete autonomy to authoritarian control. (Hardeo Ojha, Manual for TDPI). Parental behavior with their significant styles of attachment and attitude largely influences the life of young children and paves the way for dealing with a challenging future ahead. Developmental Psychologist Diana Baumrind mentions four important parenting styles:

### Authoritarian Parents

Authoritarian parents are rigid and punitive do not engage in explaining their actions and demand strict adherence to rules and regulations formulated by them. They exercise dominance with a less responsive attitude. Children of authoritarian parents are unfriendly,

unsociable and withdrawn in the later phases of life showing an impaired level of emotional maturity.

#### **Permissive Parents**

Permissive parents are undemanding and do not maintain a strict consistency in directing and controlling their children. Considering the relaxed parental attitude with no strict adherence to rules, young children with permissive parents become moody, immature and dependent showing low self control.

#### **Authoritative Parents**

Authoritative parents are firm, set clear rules and reason with their children by clearly explaining the logic. They believe in setting clear goals and encourage active involvement and independence of their children. They display warmth and care with a sense of support and spend quality time with their children. Children of authoritative parents' exhibit mature social behavior with well nourished social skills and are self reliant and independent.

#### **Uninvolved Parents**

Uninvolved parents do not actively involve and show little or no interest in their children and are emotionally detached from them. Parenting according to them is nothing but providing food, clothing and shelter to children and are often guilty of neglecting their child. Parenting with an uninvolved attitude has a detrimental effect on the emotional wellbeing of young children and are indifferent with a rejecting behavior.

#### **Aim of the Study**

The study aims to research on the behavior of parents of adolescent girls in Kamrup district of Assam.

#### **Importance of the Problem**

Parental behavior impacts not only family relationships but also the attitude and behavior of the growing adolescents. Happy, well adjusted and successfully constructive members of the society usually come from families displaying a positive concern with a favorable pattern of parental behavior. While, poorly adjusted children are usually the product of unfavorable parent-child relationships with faulty parenting styles. Adolescents deprived of attention and affection from parents is socially withdrawn and afraid of being left out and show unstable emotional patterns of behavior. Mother and father have equal roles in shaping the moody adolescents into emotionally mature youths later in life by contributing to their overall wellbeing. Positive parenting in the early formative years of life help the adolescents manage transitions and develop effective coping strategies. Despite provocative situations, adolescents matured with a right parental nurture can effectively deal with and suppress negative emotional outburst in social settings.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the behavior of father towards adolescent girls of Metro and Rural District of Kamrup.
2. To study the behavior of mother towards adolescent girls of Metro and Rural District of Kamrup.

#### **Review of Literature**

Marvin S (1966) in the study "Loving and Punishing Parental Behavior and Introversive Tendencies in Sons" observed that punishing behavioral attitude of parents essentially lead to dependency and introversive in children and also exhibit depression as a result of lack of parental warmth and love.

Viktor G and Michael L (1986) in the study "Parental Behavior and Adolescent Self Esteem" found that predisposition of control/autonomy patterns of behavior largely influenced the self esteem of boys while support and participation in case of girls. Paternal parenting was found to be significantly contributing to the overall self esteem of the adolescents compared to the parenting behavior of mother.

Maja D and Jan R (1992) in the study "Parental Reasoning Complexity, Social Class, and Child Rearing Behaviors" highlighted the fact that higher levels of reasoning were an observed phenomenon in case of authoritative childrearing parenting and dealt with warmth, quality support, acceptance and indirect positive control, while negative relationships and restrictions were in case of authoritarian parenting.

Kakkar (1999) did a study on "Parental treatment as a factor determining the level of adjustment of children" and found a significant relationship of parental acceptance- rejection with the problems faced by adolescents and concluded that rejection from parents' side holds a negative relationship with intellectual ability.

Raja D and William B (2006) in his study of "Parental involvement and its impact on children" found positive effects of parental involvement on children's attitude and social behavior regardless of factors like home of parents', educational background and their level of employment or unemployment.

Joshi S et al (2011) in a study on "Achievement Motivation and Parental Support" highlighted a significant influence of parental support on achievement motivation which relates to success, satisfaction and quality of life.

Khan A (2012) showed that parental education, parental occupation, good parenting skills and values of parents' have a positive effect on adolescence. Socio-economic position, higher level of parental education, particularly in mothers is clearly associated with healthier dietary habits among adolescence. The health oriented values was related to physical activity and diet control and social value orientation showed significant associations in the life of an adolescent.

Sameera S et al (2015) in "The Studies of Relationship between Parental Styles with Emotional Intelligence in Elementary Schools Students of Makoo" highlighted a significant correlation of the different parenting styles with the emotional intelligence of young school students.

Satnam K Johal and Kiranjot K (2015) in their correlational study of "Aggression and Parental Behavior" showed a deviant pattern of parenting towards girls compared to boys and highlight a

significant gender difference in the aggressive behavior of adolescents.

**Research Method and Materials**

The current study is an Ex Post Facto Research, a non experimental research type. Purposive sampling technique is employed to explore the behavior of parents of 540 adolescent girls with an equal distribution of sample in two districts of Kamrup - Metro & Rural. The Three Dimensional Parental Behavior Inventory (TDPI) by Hardeo Ojha, a scale with 48 items is used to collect data for the present study. It has a Father form and a Mother form with three dimensions, "Restrictive - Permissive, Neglecting - Protective & Rejecting - Loving encompassing both positive and negative items. With prior permission from the principal and various head of the department of the colleges, the test was conducted in a semi

structured informal atmosphere in a well ventilated classroom. Adolescent girls studying in 12<sup>th</sup> standard in the faculty of Arts & Humanities, in colleges affiliated to Gauhati University were considered for the study. Administration was in groups and questionnaires were verbally explained and translated as and when required. It was completed in a period of one hour. Every statement in the inventory deals with a particular pattern of parental behavior and students were asked to recall how their parents behaved with them until they were 12 years of age and accordingly mark their response in the space provided. The responses of the students are interpreted according to test norms and analyzed with descriptive statistics and students "t" test to understand the difference in behavior.

**Objective 1: To Study the Behavior of Father towards Adolescent Girls of Metro and Rural District of Kamrup**

Father Form	Area I (Rp) Restrictive-Permissive (RP)		Area II (Np) Neglecting-Protecting		Area III (RI) Rejecting-Loving	
	Kamrup M	Kamrup R	Kamrup M	Kamrup R	Kamrup M	Kamrup R
Number	270	270	270	270	270	270
Mean	46.40	45.68	60.94	62.37	59.10	62.25
Interpretation	Moderately Restrictive	Moderately Restrictive	Highly Protective	Highly Protective	Highly Loving	Highly Loving
Standard Deviation	6.826	6.853	8.517	8.582	7.980	7.835
Degree of Freedom	538		538		538	
T	1.227*		1.953*		4.636**	

\*Not Significant

\*\*Significant

For a measure of the behavior of father for the girls of Kamrup M and Kamrup R, obtained mean score in the Restrictive - Permissive (RP) dimension is 46.40 and 45.68, the standard deviation is 6.826 and 6.853 and the t value is 1.227 at 538 degrees of freedom. Interpretation of the mean scores according to the test norm reveals no significant difference in the behavior of father. A moderately restrictive parental behavior attitude for girls of the both the districts is exhibited which is evident from statements like if the fathers were stern in their behavior and kept a strict eye on their daughters, they also allowed their wards to go out with friends and did not restrict friends from coming home either.

In the Neglecting - Protecting (NP) dimension, mean score is 60.94 and 62.37; standard deviation is 8.517 and 8.582 and t value at 538

degrees of freedom is 1.953 with no significant difference. Father from both the districts exhibit "highly protecting behavior" pattern for the girls and took quite a lot of interest in the activities of their girls with special attention to their good qualities.

Mean score in the Rejecting - Loving (RL) dimension is 59.10 and 62.25, standard deviation is 7.980 and 7.835 and t value is 4.636 at 538 degrees of freedom. Interpretation of mean score reveals a significant difference in the behavior of father of both the districts but they are found to exhibit a "highly loving behavior" and were concerned about the safety and protection of their girls when going out with a significant amount of importance and a sense of belongingness attached to them as measured by the three dimensional parental behavior inventory.

**Objective 2: To Study the Behavior of Mother towards Adolescent Girls of Metro and Rural District of Kamrup**

Mother Form	Area I (Rp) Restrictive-Permissive (RP)		Area II (NP) Neglecting-Protecting		Area III (RL) Rejecting-Loving	
	Kamrup M	Kamrup R	Kamrup M	Kamrup R	Kamrup M	Kamrup R
Number	270	270	270	270	270	270
Mean	46.41	45.44	62.23	63.35	60.63	63.18
Interpretation	Moderately Restrictive	Moderately Restrictive	Highly Protective	Highly Protective	Highly Loving	Highly Loving
Standard Deviation	7.870	7.786	8.507	7.026	7.909	7.300
Degree of Freedom	538		538		538	
t	1.440*		1.666*		3.902**	

\*Not Significant

\*\* Significant

Mean score obtained for the behavior of mother in the Restrictive - Permissive dimension is 46.41 and 45.44, standard deviation is 7.870 and 7.786 and the t value is 1.440 at 538 degrees of freedom. Table value of "t" reveals no significant difference in the behavior pattern of mother of both the districts and exhibits a "moderately restrictive" attitude for girls as evident from their responses like they were occasionally given permission to go out but cautioned about safety and also sends people to search if not home on time.

In the Neglecting-Protecting dimension, the mean score obtained is 62.23 and 63.35, the standard deviation is 8.5017 and 7.026 and the t value at 538 degrees of freedom is 1.666 with no significant difference. Mother of the adolescent girls in both the districts exhibit a "highly protecting" behavior pattern and took a great deal of interest in them and seldom tried hurting their feelings.

Obtained mean score in the Rejecting - Loving dimension is 60.63 and 63.18, standard deviation is 7.909 and 7.300 and the t value is 3.902 at 538 degrees of freedom showing a significant difference. However, the mothers were found to exhibit a "highly loving" pattern of behavior towards the girls of both the districts and always concerned about keeping their wards free from worries to the extent of telling the friends to proper take care of them when going out. Responses in the inventory revealed the mothers never ignored or kept themselves occupied when the girls were ill or never had hesitation for taking care of their food and eating habits.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The present topic, an ex post facto research study aims to explore the behavior of parents', an integral factor related to shaping the life and personality as a whole of their children. The growing adolescents are prone to establishment of identity, seeking self worth and emotional turmoil owing to academic expectations, relationship and formation of close bonds with family and friends and demands of the society as a whole. Parental behavior has a significant impact on the lives of young children to help them mature as stable adults later in life. A right parental behavior in the early formative years of life exerts considerable influence in contributing to developing confidence and positive attitude towards life. It formulates a sense of emotional and social wellbeing and helps one effectively deal with the stressors and emerge victorious in various life situations.

Regardless of geographical area, culture, and socio economic status, a parent is a child's first teacher and contributes to an optimal development and nurturing of the behavior of their children. Considering the environmental influence, type of livelihood, exposure to societal demands, family environment, traditional belief, custom and cultures pertaining to urban and rural habitat an attempt is made to study the difference in behavior and attitude of parents towards their children.

Various research studies reveal that father and mother share the equal role and responsibilities towards their children. Their childrearing practices with the effective styles of attachment contribute to a healthy growth. Parents are leaders in the family and many a times become a role model too. Healthy relationship and cooperative upbringing practice leads to emotional maturity and a feeling of contentment and happiness in the young adults.

The underlying rationale of the present study was to identify significant difference in behavior and ways of upbringing by highlighting the fact that though parenting is a universal phenomenon there might be a difference across geographical areas of rural and metro origin. The study revealed no significant difference in the behavior of father and mother towards the adolescent girls in the dimensions of Restrictive - Permissive and Neglecting - Protective, but reveals a significant difference in statistical interpretation in the Rejecting - Loving dimension though exhibiting a highly loving attitude.

### **Implication and Suggestion**

The study provides a good scope for understanding the behavior of parents across different cultures and ethnic communities. Parents are an important pillar of strength for the adolescents and their attitude and behavior constitute a major role in effectively shaping the life of their children. Healthy childrearing practices with an attempt to understand the pattern of behavior of their children would help rule out emotional instability, social isolation, maladaptive and abusive behavior, and negative dominance thus contributing to their positive developmental milestone and healthy functioning individuals later in life.

The study can be conducted to explore gender difference and preference pertaining to parenting among tribes in different geographical areas. It can be effectively employed to understand parenting with a background of different socio economic status to see if poverty also has an impact in behavior changes of a parent and justify from the point of level of education and employment.

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