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Influence of socio economic status on protecting behavior of parents

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Abstract

The relationship between adolescents and parents is one of the most unique relationships in the family. It provides a frame work within which the child may find roots, continuity and a sense of belongingness. 'Fathering' and 'Mothering' symbolizes emotional support, protection, interpersonal sensitivity, socialization and patronage. A total of 600 adolescents in the age group of 15 – 16 years in Mysore City were selected for the present study to find the influence of socio economic status on protecting behavior of parents. Out of 600 selected subjects 300 were adolescent boys and 300 were adolescent girls. The results revealed that there is a significant difference between the gender and fathers' protecting behavior. The mean scores (34.63) of mothers exhibited equal degree of protecting behavior towards both adolescent boys and girls. The mean scores on protecting behavior of fathers and mothers of different socio economic groups' did not differ significantly. However, fathers of middle class and mothers of lower class exhibited comparatively high degree of protecting behavior towards adolescent boys. The mean scores on protecting behavior of fathers and mothers of different socio-economic groups showed a significant and highly significant difference towards adolescent girls respectively. The fathers and mothers of middle class exhibited comparatively a high degree of protecting behavior towards adolescent girls. On the whole a significant difference was observed in protecting behavior between the fathers of different socio economic groups although mean scores of mothers of different socio economic groups did not differ significantly towards adolescents. Nevertheless, the mothers of middle class exhibited comparatively a high degree of protecting behavior. Difference of experience in parent-adolescent relationship with respect to protecting behavior is notable. The quality of parent-adolescent relationship is a key component to healthy adolescent development. Secure bond between parents and adolescents permit them to grow and explore independently.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Status, Protecting, Adolescents, Parents, Behavior

1. Introduction

The relationship between adolescents and parents is one of the most unique relationships in the family. It provides a frame work within which the child may find roots, continuity and a sense of belongingness. 'Fathering' and 'Mothering' symbolizes emotional support, protection, interpersonal sensitivity, socialization and patronage. The adolescents who do not have a high level of protection and support from their parents are most likely to be involved in undesirable risk behaviors. A number of developmental psychologists have made significant contributions to the study of parent child relationship. The research on family relationships and adolescence constituted about 24% to 36% of all writings on adolescence published in major professional research journals between 1991 and 2001 [1]. The adolescents are surrounded by their parents and family members who provide moral, emotional and material support for the development of their personalities. The social and economic status of the families also considerably affected the adolescents [2].

Good communication with their father was found to be linked to close personal relationship in adolescent boys. These boys had more close friends, longer friendships, higher self-esteem and better communication with their fathers than girls. Also, higher levels of perceived family support were associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms in adolescents [3]. Deficits in parental social support and control of discipline were associated with adolescents' anti-social behavior and substance use [4]. Father-adolescents relationship is basically characterized by physical and emotional distance. In contrast, the mother – adolescent relationship is fundamentally characterized by attachment and intimacy [5]. Maternal acceptance showed a significant negative association with depressive symptoms, and maternal psychological control was positively associated with depressive symptoms [6]. Poor home environment significantly brought about more frequent occurrence of emotional disturbances which led to mental disturbances [7].

In several families the father-daughter relations mainly consisted of shared activities and doing things together. The girls desired to have more time with their fathers regardless of the father’s residential status. Fathers were viewed as overprotective and that they try to keep their daughters away from romantic relationships and other harmful conduct [8]. Fathers were significantly higher in favor of punishment to their adolescent boys as compared to their adolescent girls. The mothers’ attitude toward their adolescent girls was more indifferent as they were more loving toward sons as compared to daughters [9]. Families with adolescent boys and mother with inadequate families’ financial resources demonstrated the mothers’ and adolescents’ depressive symptomatology. Mothers’ optimism was also positively associated with family routine and mediated the association of family financial resources with family routine. Families with adolescent girls revealed that family resources were positively associated with family routine [10].

The parents’ gender and residence are fundamental factors that shape patterns of parent-adolescent involvement. More importantly, parental involvement has a definite impact on the behavior outcomes of the adolescents. In particular, father involvement reduces both the size and significance of behavior problems of adolescent boys than adolescent girls [11]. The quality of an adolescent’s relationship with their parents is a key component to healthy adolescent development. Secure bonds between parents and their adolescent children allow young people the freedom to grow and explore. Knowing their home represents a safe haven to

which they can return when necessary. Hence, an attempt has been made in the present study to find out the influence of socio economic status on protecting behavior of parents

2. Methodology

A cross sectional study was conducted to find the influence of socio economic status on protecting behavior of parents. A total of 600 adolescents in the age group of 15 – 16 years studying in various private and government Pre University colleges of Mysore city were selected as samples using stratified randomized design. The samples were stratified based on gender and socio economic status. The socio economic status scale by Bharadwaj [14] was used to assess the socio economic status and the Parent-Child Relationship Scale by Nalini Rao [15] was administered to assess the protecting behavior of parents as perceived by adolescents. The collected data were scored and interpreted according to the norms given in the manual of the scales. Further, the data were statistically processed using SPSS package version 14.0. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for the study variables and ‘t’ test and ‘F’ test were applied to see the significant difference between gender and socio economic groups.

3. Results and Discussion

Protective Behaviors refers to behaviors of parents in which the sense of safety of their adolescent children are confronted with regard to their lives, health, friendships, self-esteem, and expectations for the future.

Table 1: Gender-wise Mean Values for protecting behavior of parents

Parent	Boys N = 300	Girls N = 300	Total N = 600	‘t’ value	P value
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Fathers	33.48 ± 8.00	34.67 ± 6.50	34.04 ± 7.31	2.100*	0.036
Mothers	34.63 ± 6.38	34.63 ± 6.48	34.63 ± 6.43	0.006	0.995

*Significant difference

According to table 1, mean score of protecting behavior of fathers towards adolescent girls (34.67) was higher than that of adolescent boys (33.48). A significant gender difference (‘t’ value – 2.100, P<0.036) with regard to protecting behavior of fathers confirms that fathers were more protective towards the girls than the boys. Mean score of protecting behavior of mothers towards adolescent boys and girls were found to be equal (34.63). No significant gender difference was observed. When compared with protecting behavior towards adolescent

boys and girls between fathers and mothers, mothers were found to be more protective than fathers towards the adolescent boys while the protecting behavior was similar towards girls and adolescents as a whole. This result supports the results of the studies conducted on adolescent and parent relationship where fathers were viewed as overprotective towards girls and favoured punishment to boys and mothers were protective in a similar way towards both boys and girls but are indifferent towards girls and loving towards boys [8,9].

Table 2: Socio Economic Status Wise Mean Values for Protecting Behavior of Parents towards Boys

Parent	SES Status	N	Mean ± SD	‘F’ Value	P value
Fathers	U C	100	33.26 ± 4.715	0.761	0.468
	M C	100	34.18 ± 7.269		
	L C	100	32.81 ± 10.822		
Mothers	U C	100	33.91 ± 5.109	1.208	0.300
	M C	100	34.67 ± 6.307		
	L C	100	35.31 ± 7.488		

UC: Upper Class, MC: Middle Class, LC: Lower Class

The Socio economic status wise mean values of protecting behavior of parents’ towards adolescent boys is shown in table 2. The mean score of protecting behavior of fathers from middle class (34.18) was higher than upper class (33.26) and lower class (32.81) fathers. Meanwhile the protecting behavior of lower class mothers was higher (35.31) than that of middle class (34.67) and lower class (33.91) mothers. However, the protecting behavior of fathers and mothers

towards the adolescent boys in all the three classes did not differ significantly. On the whole when compared the protecting behaviors of fathers and mothers in all the three socio economic groups, the middle class and upper class fathers and mothers showed a similar values of protecting behavior, while in lower class the values of protecting behavior of mothers was higher than the fathers.

Table 3: Socio Economic Status Wise Mean Values for Protecting Behavior of Parents towards Girls

Parent	SES Status	N	Mean \pm SD	'F' Value	P value
Fathers	U C	100	35.18 \pm 6.605	4.007*	0.019
	M C	100	35.62 \pm 5.708		
	L C	100	33.20 \pm 6.943		
Mothers	U C	100	34.72 \pm 6.439	5.382**	0.005
	M C	100	36.07 \pm 6.034		
	L C	100	33.11 \pm 6.674		

UC: Upper Class, MC: Middle Class, LC: Lower Class

*Significant difference, **Highly Significant

Table 3 shows the socio economic status wise mean values for protecting behavior of parents towards girls. The mean score of protecting behavior of fathers from middle class (35.62) and upper class (35.18) were similar and higher than the fathers of lower class (33.2). A significant socio economic status wise difference ('F' value – 4.007, $P < .019$) between the fathers was found with regard to protecting behavior towards the girls. The mean score of protecting behavior of mothers from the middle class was higher (36.07) than that of upper class (34.72) and lower class (33.11). A highly significant

socio economic status wise difference ('F' value – 5.382, $P < .005$) between the mothers was found with regard to protecting behavior towards the girls. When compared between the fathers and mothers, mothers from middle class showed a higher value of protecting behavior than fathers and fathers of higher class showed higher value of protecting behavior than mothers. While, both fathers and mothers of lower class showed a similar values of protecting behavior towards the adolescent girls.

Table 4: Socio Economic Status Wise Mean Values for Protecting Behavior of Parents towards Adolescents (Total Subjects)

Parent	SES	N	Mean \pm SD	'F' value	P value
Fathers	U C	200	34.22 \pm 5.80	3.478*	0.031
	M C	200	34.90 \pm 6.56		
	L C	200	33.01 \pm 9.07		
Mothers	U C	200	34.32 \pm 5.81	2.001	0.136
	M C	200	35.37 \pm 6.20		
	L C	200	34.21 \pm 7.16		

UC: Upper Class, MC: Middle Class, LC: Lower Class, *Significant difference

The Socio economic status wise mean values of protecting behavior of parents' towards adolescent boys is shown in table 4. The mean score of protecting behavior of fathers of middle class (34.9) and upper class (34.22) were found to be similar and higher than lower class fathers (33.01). A significant socio economic status wise difference ('F' value – 3.478, $P < .031$) between the fathers was found with regard to protecting behavior towards the adolescents children. The mean score of the mothers from the middle class (35.37) was higher than that of mothers from upper class (34.32) and lower class (34.21) who had similar mean values. However no significant socio economic status wise difference between the mothers was found with regard to protecting behavior towards the adolescent children. On the whole, the mothers from middle class and lower class had higher mean values than fathers and the upper class fathers and mothers had similar mean values on protecting behavior towards the adolescent children. These results supports the results of the studies conducted on parenting practices and family processes that shows the family socio economic status or income status have influences on parenting and parent – adolescent relationships and parenting practices and authority uniquely in middle-class families [12, 13].

4. Conclusion

The present study highlights that there is a significant difference between the gender and fathers' protecting behavior. The mean scores of mothers exhibited equal degree of protecting behavior towards both adolescent boys and girls. The mean scores on protecting behavior of fathers and mothers of different socio economic groups' did not differ

significantly. However, fathers of middle class and mothers of lower class exhibited comparatively high degree of protecting behavior towards adolescent boys. The mean scores on protecting behavior of fathers and mothers of different socio-economic groups showed a significant and highly significant difference towards adolescent girls respectively. The fathers and mothers of middle class exhibited comparatively a high degree of protecting behavior towards adolescent girls. On the whole a significant difference was observed in protecting behavior between the fathers of different socio economic groups although mean scores of mothers of different socio economic groups did not differ significantly towards adolescents. Nevertheless, the mothers of middle class exhibited comparatively a high degree of protecting behavior. Difference of experience in parent-adolescent relationship with respect to protecting behavior is notable. Parent-adolescent bondage actually ensures the survival and progress of the adolescents. It also provides a frame work within which the child may find roots, continuity and a sense of belongingness. Parent adolescent relationship primarily affects the personality of adolescents in general and behavior and adjustment patterns of adolescents in particular mainly because of Indian values, family relations, parent-child bondage, motherly affection, cultural ethos and other environmental factors. The loving and protecting parents provide a congenial atmosphere for the adolescents to exercise their potentials, develop their capabilities and make their destinies in a meaningful way. The quality of parent-adolescent relationship is a key component to healthy adolescent development. Secure bond between parents and adolescents permit them to grow and explore independently.

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