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Perception of parents and adolescents on parenting: A sociocultural study

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Abstract

The present study was undertaken at Barpeta district of Lower Assam of North East India in the year 2018. The objectives of the study were to study the perception of parents and adolescents on parenting and to determine the socio-cultural factors on parenting. Sample of the present study comprised of 200 adolescents between age 16 to 17 years of age and their parents. Background information was collected by using a socio-economic status (SES) scale developed by Aggrawal (2005). A self developed parenting style questionnaire was used for studying parenting style. Findings of the study revealed that parents perceived their parenting style as authoritative parenting style with highest mean scores of 33.68 (SD=5.68). Same as their parents adolescents also perceived their parents parenting as authoritative parenting style with highest mean score of 33.22(SD=5.4). No significant difference was observed between urban and rural adolescents' perception on their parents' parenting style. Urban and rural parents also not significantly differ on their perception on all four types of parenting style i. e authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, uninvolved parenting style and permissive parenting style.

Keywords: Parents, adolescents, parenting style, sociocultural factors, perception

Introduction

Parenting starts from planning of a child and runs throughout the life span of the individual. According to Veenes (1973) parents as the style of child upbringing refers to a privileged or responsibilities of mother and father, together or independently to prepare the child for society and culture. Parenting is influenced by many factors. Parental biological factors such as age, diet, stress, disease, environmental factors and even birth processes affects parenting. Parents' personality and associated characteristics including intelligence, traits and attitudes, motivation to become involved with children and child care knowledge and skills result individual differences in parenting process. Parents ideal image of parenting is dynamic, changing over time in accordance with their children's ages and developmental needs (Galinsky 1986 and Smilansky, 1989) [16, 25], children's other characteristics like gender, physical appearance, temperament governs the parenting practices. Above all parenting is influenced by physical and social context, child-rearing customs and psychological characteristics of adults (Boushel, 2000; Rosenthal and Roer-strier, 2001) [10, 20].

Perception play an important role in parenting adolescent. Significant perception plays an important role in parenting adolescent. Significant perception related to parenting influences their interactions, communication and behaviour. Adolescents are influenced more by their perception of parenting, than by the actual parental behaviour or the one reported by their parents (Demo *et al.* 1987) [13]. Parenting is effective and productive only if it is perceived similarly by the adolescents and parents. But sometime there are differences in perception of parenting goals and activities pertaining to attain the goal with children. These differences in perception may reach his peak during adolescent years, which is characterized by identity crisis and a greater need for autonomy of adolescents and gradually reduce as the teenagers grows (Fisher *et al.*, 1990 and Barber 1994) [15, 4]. It can be smooth process if facilitated by secure nurturing and understanding parents in an emotionally conducive environment (Erikson, 1968) [14]. A better understanding on parenting may be achieved when one can understand how adolescents perceived their parents' involvement in their upbringing. Adolescents views and their needs are important for parents in providing psychological, physical and educational support and guidance to them.

Children's perception of parenting are better predictor of their behaviour and psychological development (Buri 1989, Paulson, 1994) ^[11, 17]. Different types of studies conducted in the twenty first century in India and abroad found that parenting style or parental behaviour has statistically significant relation with developmental outcomes like performance, achievement strategies, self-regulated learning achievement goals, self-efficacy and wellbeing of students (Aunola *et al*, 2000, Chen and Chen, 2005, Turner *et al*, 2009, Revers *et al*, 2012) ^[3, 27].

Thus psychologist and sociologist agreed that involving both parents and adolescents in developing any child development programme is more effective rather than treat them as passive recipient to knowledge & services. Again parenting encompasses sociocultural variables which if ignored make it impossible in getting a complete knowledge on parenting. Hence, the present study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To study the perception of adolescents on parenting.
- To study the perception of parents on parenting.
- To determine the sociocultural factors on parenting.

Research Methods

A total sample of 200 adolescents and their 200 parents were selected for the study. The adolescents comprising of 100 boys and 100 girls had selected from higher secondary schools and colleges from rural and urban areas of the district. Adolescents belonged to the age group of 16 -17 years who lives with their biological parents in rural or urban areas by birth were selected for the study. In this study municipal areas or notified town committee areas were considered as urban and areas other than urban areas are considered as rural. The background information of the respondents were collected by using a socioeconomic status (SES) scale developed by Aggrawal (2005) ^[11]. The scale was designed so as to measure both rural and urban population. The scale consisted of 22 items and the maximum aggregate score was 100. Based on the final score, the socioeconomic status of the family is divided into six socioeconomic categories, namely upper high (combined score of more than 76), high (61-75), upper middle (46-60), lower middle (31-45), poor (16-30, and very poor (combined score less than 15). A parenting style questionnaire was developed to study the perception of parents and adolescents on parenting. The questionnaire was developed based on the existing parenting style questionnaire developed and used by prominent psychologist, develop mentalist and researchers. The questionnaire consisted of 32 items in four parenting style. The sub head of the parenting style questionnaire were authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style and uninvolved parenting style. Responses to each statement was scored by using 5 point Likert scale. The data gathered in this study were analyzed by using mean, standard deviations and t- test. Each sub head (parenting style) had eight statement based on parental dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness. The same questionnaire was used for both adolescents and their parents. The questionnaire was also prepared in both English and vernacular language.

Scoring: Keeping the more influential parent in mind or both, the adolescents required to respond on the 5 point scale (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= neutral, 4=agree and 5 = strongly agree). Parents were also requested to respond in the item on the 5-point scale which they felt deem fit on them in parenting adolescents. Scores for each subscale were taken

separately. There were no negative items. Scores for each subscale was calculated by summing the individual items comprising a sub-scale. Scores on each subscale range from 8 to 40.

Research findings and discussion

Perception of parents on parenting: The results on parent's perception on their own parenting (Table-1) revealed that respondent parents perceived their parenting style as authoritative parenting style with highest mean scores of 33.68 and standard deviation 5.03 followed by authoritarian parenting style (mean = 29.2, SD= 5.68). The results also showed that parents' mean score for permissive parenting style 17.46 (SD=4.73) and uninvolved parenting style 16.6 (SD =5.16) were found to be less than the neutral value of the parenting style questionnaire.

Parents' perception on their own parenting shows highest mean on authoritative parenting. This revealed that parents under the study adopted authoritative parenting style for their adolescents. Results of the present study reveals contemporary changes in Indian parenting style i.e from authoritarian to authoritative. Current research in this field also found similar results in India and abroad. Radhika and Joseph (2015) found that in village of Nillore district in Andhra Pradesh, village mothers followed authoritative parenting style. Rutherford (2009) ^[21], Sharma *et al* (2006) ^[23] and Saraswathi *et al* (2002) ^[22] concluded from their work that present parenting style shows characteristics of Baumrinds (1971) ^[9] authoritative parenting styles compared to traditional authoritarian parenting style. According to them, parenting styles have undergone evolution, specially urban parents who have led to a sense of connectedness, greater autonomy with control, more permissive, more responsive and child control. Moreover, Sharma *et al* (2006) ^[23] described that the model of present parenting style shows characteristics of a dialectical synthesis of both material independence and psychological interdependence. This may be due to the fact that, there have been changes within the family size and structure (Sonowat 2001; Baruah, 2015; Ahmed, 2000) ^[26, 8, 2] i.e increase numbers of nuclear families, increase in dual income families, less numbers of children or single child underling significant changes in parenting trends. The respondents under the study had similar characteristics with more nuclear families (82%) (Fig-1) small family size with less numbers of children and dual income families which may lead to a change in their parenting style from authoritarian traditional parenting style to authoritative parenting style. Besides, Bala (2014) reported that with the advent of technological innovation, especially the increasing role of the social media lead a definite change in the nature of communication pattern in families. The present study also revealed that respondents' parents possessed television sets, subscribed news papers (Fig-2) and expressed that they were concerned about their behaviour according to the expectations of present days adolescents.

Perception of adolescents on parenting: Results (Table 2) shows that adolescents perceived their parents parenting style as authoritative parenting style with highest mean scores of 33.22 and standard deviation 4.79 followed by authoritarian parenting style (mean = 28.81, SD=5.4). Results also revealed that adolescents' mean score for permissive parenting style was 18.79 (SD=5.2). The mean scores for permissive parenting style and uninvolved parenting style was found to be less than the neutral value of the parenting style

questionnaire. Adolescents under the study could already express with examples for their parents parenting. According to them family harmony will be possible only through mutual understanding. Parents should believe on their adolescents and allow freedom in their choices and activities. Although adolescents under the study perceived authoritative parenting style still they need more freedom. This may be due to the fact that adolescent also perceived authoritarian parenting style, which was scored next to authoritative parenting. Similar finding was reported by Barnhart *et al.* (2010)^[5] in his cross cultural study on parenting found that a higher percentage of Indian adolescents chose permissive and authoritative styles a representative of their own parents more than US adolescents. Another study by Silva *et al.* (2012)^[24] reported that Portuguese adolescents perceive their parents as using predominantly a democratic parenting style.

Sociocultural factors on Parenting: Rural-Urban differences was observed to find out the sociocultural factors on perception of parenting. The results on parent perception on parenting according to sociocultural differences (Table 3) reveal that mean and standard deviation for parenting style scores of urban parents (mean=33.5, SD=5.59) and rural parents (mean=33.76, SD=4.43) were nearly equal for authoritative parenting style. Again authoritative parenting style scored highest mean score for both rural and urban parents among authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style and uninvolved parenting style. It is observed from the results (Table-3) that rural parents scored higher mean in authoritarian parenting style (mean= 29.2, SD=5.69), Permissive parenting style (mean=17.46, SD=5.69) and uninvolved parenting style (mean=16.6, SD=5.17) compared to urban parents. However, no significant differences were found between rural and urban parents in relation to their perception on all four types of parenting styles. Present study also indicates that urban adolescents' perception on their parents parenting was higher for authoritative parenting (mean=34.2, SD=4.92) than rural adolescents (mean 32.23, SD=4.47) (Table 4). Results also indicate that rural adolescents' perceived higher mean scores than urban adolescents on authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style and uninvolved parenting style. However, no

significant differences was found between urban and rural adolescents in relation to their perception of four types of parents' parenting style.

Present study reveals that rural and urban parents and adolescents perceived their parenting style or parents' parenting style in similar pattern. This may be due to the multifaceted reasons observed under the study. One of many, was that majority of the population (91.37) of the district was living in rural areas and only 8.7 percent living in the urban areas. The neighborhood facilities available had similarities in both the areas (Barpeta.gov.in), because towns of the district were in developing stages and urban areas were not observed very different from those of villages in terms of their home environment. Besides, the socio-economic strata of the rural and urban population was also not found significantly different (Table-5). Again it was found that respondents under the study had similarities as they were selected from government colleges and government higher secondary schools from both rural and urban areas. Therefore, it could be predicted that sociocultural beliefs and practices adopted in parenting influenced in same way in both urban and rural parents which result in unique perception of parenting styles by the parents and adolescents under the study. Research in this aspect by Baruah, (2015)^[8] found no significant rural urban differences in value priority by the parents.

Conclusion

Parenting is meant for survival and development of the offspring. Freud opined that childrearing is one of three "impossible profession" the other two being governing nation and psychoanalysis. Parenting adolescents is considered traditionally as a difficult task of parents due to their specific developmental characteristics. Findings of different researches reveal that positive and negative outcomes of adolescents are dependent on parenting style applied to them. Authoritative parenting style is considered predominantly responsible for positive outcomes of the children. After analyzing the data it was observed that irrespective of the areas, authoritative parenting style was perceived by both parents and adolescents. Parentings under the study reveal that both parents and adolescents perceived authoritative parenting style with traditional authoritarian control.

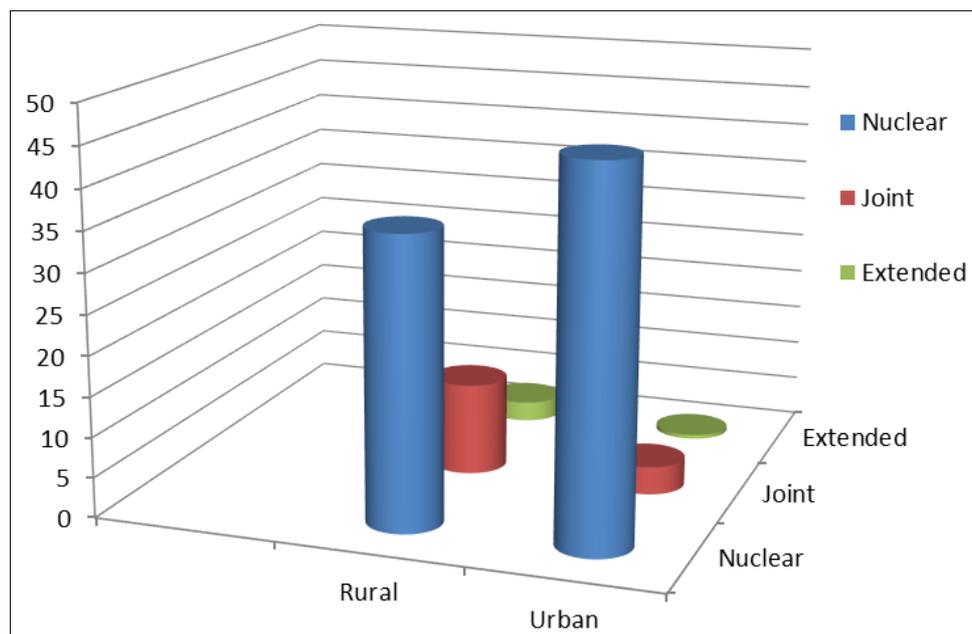


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to the type of family

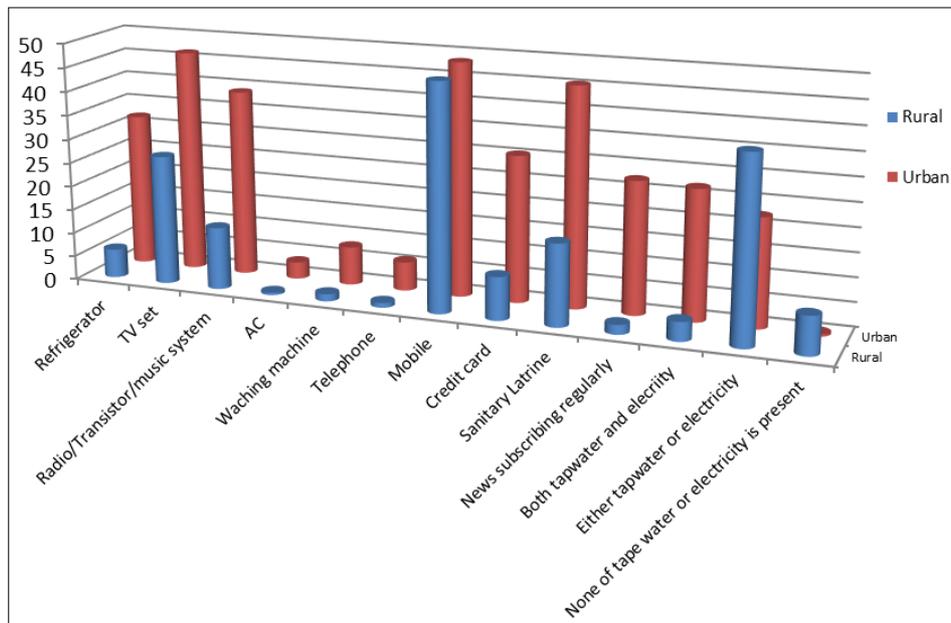


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents according to the family possessions and essential facilities available

Table 1: Perception of parents on parenting

Parenting style	No. of items	Total score	Neutral score	Mean	Standard deviation
Authoritative	8	40	24	33.68	5.036
Authoritarian	8	40	24	29.2	5.681
Permissive	8	40	24	17.46	4.732
Uninvolved	8	40	24	16.6	5.166

Table 2: Adolescents' perception on parenting

Parenting style	No. of items	Total score	Neutral score	Mean	Standard deviation
Authoritative	8	40	24	33.22	4.79
Authoritarian	8	40	24	28.81	5.40
Permissive	8	40	24	19.22	4.461
Uninvolved	8	40	24	18.79	5.202

Table 3: Parents' perception on parenting according to sociocultural differences

Parenting Style	Urban Parents M (SD) N=100	Rural Parents M (SD) N=100	Independent t-test
Authoritative	33.6 (5.59)	33.76 (4.436)	0.822906 (NS)
Authoritarian	27.07 (6.724)	29.2 (5.69)	0.016556 (NS)
Permissive	15.98 (4.11)	17.46 (4.744)	1 (NS)
Uninvolved	15.22 (4.115)	16.6 (5.17)	0.038395(NS)

NS= Not significant

Table 4: Adolescents' perception on parenting according to sociocultural differences

Parenting Style	Urban Adolescents M (SD) N=100	Rural Adolescents M (SD) N=100	Independent t-test
Authoritative	34.21(4.92)	32.23 (4.471)	0.003291NS
Authoritarian	27.11(5.254)	30.51(5.032)	5.47633E-06NS
Permissive	18.78(4.584)	19.66 (4.311)	0.163618NS
Uninvolved	17.59 (5.045)	19.99 (5.101)	0.000985NS

NS= Not significant, M= Mean, SD =Standard deviation

Table 5: Distribution of respondents according to the overall socioeconomic status of the family

Social status	No. of respondents			Independent t-test score
	Rural (N ₁ = 100)	Urban (N ₂ = 100)	Total (N ₁ +N ₂ =200)	
Upper high	0	2 (1)	2 (1)	1.26742E-12 (NS)
High	3 (1.5)	24 (12)	27 (13.5)	
Upper middle	21 (10.5)	36 (18)	57 (28.5)	
Lower middle	57 (28.5)	33 (16.5)	90 (45)	
Poor	19 (9.5)	5 (2.5)	24 (12)	
Very poor	0	0	0	

Figures within parentheses indicate percentages

NS = Not significant

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