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A comparative study on perception of displaced adolescents and nondisplaced adolescents about their family environment

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to study the perception of displaced adolescents about their family environment living in a R&R colony and compare them with the perception of nondisplaced adolescents living in a normal village. Two hundred and forty-two sample in the age group of 13 to 16 years age group studying 8th, 9th and 10th standards constituted the sample. Among the total sample 113 adolescents were from R&R colony and 129 adolescents were from normal village. Family environment scale by Bhatia and Chadda (1996) was used for data collection. Results revealed that the perception of home environment by adolescents of R&R colony significantly differed from the perception of home environment by adolescents of normal village in all dimensions except on conflict dimension. The scores revealed that the perception of home environment by normal village adolescents is comparatively higher on cohesion, expressiveness, independence, active recreation orientation and organisation dimension than the perception of R&R village adolescents. Whereas R&R colony adolescents perceived their family environment high on acceptance and caring and control dimension when compared to normal village adolescents. Conflict is the only one dimension on which adolescents of both the villages showed similar trend. It is interesting to note that adolescent boys and girls did not differ significantly on any dimension of family environment.

Keywords: Adolescents, displacement, R&R colony, normal village, family environment, dimension

Introduction

Adolescence is an important phase of development in a child's life characterized by stress, conflict and intense mood swings. Family environment play a crucial role in the personality development of adolescent children. Family is the support system that evolve desirable personality patterns and healthy psychological development. Displacement is a special condition experienced by some rural villages, where they were forcibly migrated from their native villages to a new place for the purpose of industrial development. Adolescent tend to feel the most helpless and vulnerable during times of conflict and may experience feelings of shame and loss of self-confidence in their ability to control their own lives. Poverty is an important post-displacement factor that affects the development and maintenance of emotional, behavioral, and psychiatric problems. This development induced displacement effects the people in many ways, especially their livelihood opportunities. People were away from their cultural setting at the same time continuously under stress to search for livelihoods. This in turn influence the family environment where the parents concentrate more on earning a living rather than providing a supportive and conducive environment to their growing children. Research shows that those adolescents who show more success in life belong to households in which parents are both supportive and are accepting the child's needs for psychological independence (Lee *et al.* 2006, Deepshika and Bhanot, 2011) [6, 5].

Objectives

1. To compare the perception of family environment by adolescents of R&R colony and normal village.
2. To compare the perception of family environment by adolescent boys and adolescent girls.

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**Method
Sample**

The study was carried out in R&R colony and Konapapapeta village of U.Kothapalli Mandal of East Godavari district. The sample taken was in the age group of 13 to 16 years studying 8th, 9th and 10th standards in government high schools. The sample comprised of 242 adolescents of which 45 boys and 68 girls are from R&R colony and 61 girls and 68 boys are from normal village.

Tools:

1. General questionnaire was used to gather information regarding personal profile of the sample.
2. Family environment scale by Bhatia & Chadda (1996) [1] to assess the perceptions of adolescents on family environment.

Results & Discussion

Association between the Type of Village and Level of Family Environment of Adolescents

Several factors contribute to the development of adolescents. It is important that these factors do not operate in isolation. The interaction between the environmental factors and the individual organism helps a child to develop certain perceptions about his own self and his environment, in turn, affect his social development. Among the psycho-social factors in the life of an adolescent, family environment is the most crucial, as family is the smallest unit, representing the culture/cultural differences.

Table 1 shows the association between the type of village and level of family environment as perceived by the adolescents.

Table 1: Association between the Type of Village and Level of Family Environment

Level of FE	R and R Colony		Normal Village		Chi-square
	No	%	No.	%	
High	20	17.70	22	17.05	17.844**
Average	66	58.41	100	77.52	
Low	27	23.89	7	5.43	

In R&R colony 58.41 per cent adolescents have perceived their family environment as average and 17.7 per cent as high. Whereas 23.89 percent adolescents perceived their family environment as low. In contrast to these results in normal village majority (77.52) of adolescents considered their family environment as average. Seventeen per cent of adolescents in normal village felt that their family environment is high and only 5.43 percent perceived their family environment as low. The chi-square value is 17.844, which is more than the table value at 0.01. The result is highly significant and there is association between type of village and level of family environment.

Comparison of Mean Scores of Adolescents of R&R Colony and Normal Village on Dimensions of Family Environment

Family environment is considered as a system where the behaviour and relationship among all family members is interdependent. A stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement and affection are linked to better performance of children. Every individual bears an impact of the environment in which he or she is brought up. The family environment maintains its importance for the psychological development of the child.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of adolescents of R&R colony and normal village on dimensions of family environment.

Table 2: Mean and SD Scores of Adolescents of R and R Colony and Normal Village Family Environment Dimensions

Dimension	R&R Colony		Normal Village		t Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Cohesion	48.15	10.61	56.13	5.83	7.49**
Expressiveness	29.03	5.89	32.28	4.61	4.96**
Conflict	38.31	6.01	39.51	5.75	1.65@
Acceptance & Caring	43.26	6.99	39.28	5.29	5.04**
Relationship Dimension	159.04	23.99	167.58	16.57	2.12*
Independence	28.99	4.69	29.8	4.04	8.93**
Active Recreation	24.70	5.11	28.41	5.09	5.89**
Personal Growth Dimension	53.70	8.50	58.25	7.41	2.85**
Organization	7.00	1.70	12.13	4.22	13.09**
Control	14.30	4.80	9.42	2.55	10.19**
System maintenance dimension	21.34	5.44	25.39	9.43	7.29**

From table 2 it can be observed that cohesion and expressiveness are the two dimensions in which adolescents of normal village scores are comparatively higher than the scores of adolescents of R&R colony. This result indicates that parents of adolescents of R&R colony will find less time to spend with their children and they do not give much importance to the expression of opinions of their adolescent children. Similar findings were shown in Desai (1997) study on family environment in a rehabilitation colony. The respondents in his study expressed that they find no time to spend together and expressiveness is not allowed in their homes.

It is evident from table 3 that there is no significant difference

between the mean scores of adolescents of R&R colony and normal village on conflict dimension. This indicates that conflict is the common feature of adolescent period irrespective of the type of place they are living in.

The mean acceptance and caring score of adolescents of R&R colony is significantly higher (at 0.01 level) than the mean score of adolescents of normal village. Displacement from their native village and adjusting to the new circumstances can bring about strengthening of family relations and improvement in acceptance and caring aspect.

Adolescents of R&R colony and normal village differed significantly on both the subscales, independence and active-recreation orientation of personal growth dimension. In both

the subscales adolescents of the normal village scored significantly higher than their counterparts in R&R colony. The mean differences of the two groups are significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that the adolescents of normal village perceived their family environment as giving them choice of independence and active recreation orientation.

The adolescents of R&R colony scored significantly lower than the adolescents of normal village at 0.01 level in organisation subscale. These results can be attributed to the fact that the elders are continuously in search for suitable livelihoods and could not spend time on other aspects of family life. Umadevi and Kavita (2014) [2] findings suggest that 50 percent of the adolescents perceived that they have average organizational capacities at home.

Unlike other subscales that scored high by the adolescents of normal village, control subscale scores are significantly higher in R&R colony, when compared to the scores of adolescents of normal village. Agitations and conflicts between local communities and authorities are a regular phenomenon of R&R colony. This makes the parents of adolescents to over emphasise on control aspect, worrying about the adverse effects of outside influences. The results of the present study are in line with Shor (2000) [7] study that parents in the low-income deprived neighbourhood

emphasized the need to control and monitor their children's behaviour because of the extra risks to their children's safety in that environment.

It is evident from table 2 that the perception of family environment by the adolescents of R&R colony is different from the perception of the adolescents of normal village. Adolescents of R&R colony scored significantly lower on cohesion, expressiveness, independence and active recreation orientation dimensions whereas higher on acceptance & caring and control dimensions compared to their peers in normal village.

Gender and Perception of Family Environment

Many researchers tried to find the effect of gender of the adolescent on perception of family environment. Researchers pointed out that adolescents who see themselves as rejected by their parents run the risk of developing a range of psychological problems (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002) [4]. These findings were particularly strong for girls. Boys, on the other hand are likely to react to parental rejection by engaging in socially unacceptable behaviour such as aggression. Table 4 gives mean scores of boys and girls on dimensions of family environment.

Table 3: Mean and SD Scores of Adolescent Boys and Girls on Dimensions of Family Environment

Dimension	Boys		Girls		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Cohesion	51.69	9.82	53.39	9.19	0.02@
Expressiveness	30.5	6.18	30.87	4.90	0.01@
Conflict	38.62	6.04	39.48	5.83	0.01@
Acceptance and Caring	40.27	7.25	41.82	5.73	0.02@
Relationship Dimension	161.08	21.42	165.55	20.12	0.02@
Independence	29.14	3.98	29.65	4.68	0.01@
Active-Recreation Orientation	26.53	5.76	26.84	5.23	0.01@
Personal Growth Dimension	55.67	8.01	56.49	8.44	0.01@
Organisation	10.33	4.52	9.32	3.91	0.02@
Control	11.43	3.67	12.29	4.86	0.02@
System Maintenance Dimension	25.93	10.08	21.60	5.37	0.07@

It can be seen from table 3 that adolescent boys and girls did not differed significantly on any one of the dimensions of family environment.

The results of present study are in line with the results of Umadevi and Kavita (2014) [2] that gender differences were not noticed in the perception of adolescents on all eight dimensions of family environment. In other research study conducted by Vandana (2015) [3] on adolescent boys and girls, she found a significant gender difference only on cohesion dimension.

Major findings

- The perception of adolescents of R&R colony is significantly lower about their family environment when compared to adolescents of normal village in cohesion, expressiveness, active recreational orientation, independence and organisation.
- However, the perception of adolescents of R&R colony is significantly higher on acceptance & caring and control dimensions when compared to the perception of adolescents of normal village
- There is no significant difference between the perception of adolescents of both the villages in conflict dimension.
- There is no significant difference observed in the perception of boys and girls in all the dimensions of

family environment.

Conclusion

The present study indicates a considerable difference between the perceptions of adolescents between the two villages. These results are indicative of the pressures and uncertainty of the situations in R&R colony that in turn influence the family environment. Measures should be taken to improve the conditions of the R&R colony by providing adequate and secured livelihood opportunities. Parents should be given awareness on the importance of spending time with their growing children and provide a supportive environment at home. The adolescent group of the colony should be given special concern during planning rehabilitation interventions.

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