



ISSN: 0975-833X

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### PARENTAL AND PEER ATTACHMENT AMONG ADOLESCENTS OF JAMMU

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2015  
Received in revised form  
08<sup>th</sup> April, 2015  
Accepted 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2015  
Published online 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

##### Key words:

Adolescents,  
Attachment,  
Trust,  
Communication,  
Alienation,  
Parents,  
Peers.

#### ABSTRACT

Human beings tend to form attachment with their primary caregivers since the very beginning of life. Attachment theory has particularly interesting applications for understanding adolescent's development, because it is during this time that children explore intimate, supportive relationship outside the family. The present study analyses and compares the attachment adolescents of Jammu city share with their mothers, fathers, and peers. Attachment was evaluated in three dimensions namely, degree of mutual trust, quality of communication and level of anger and alienation. The sample for the study comprised of 160 school and college going adolescents in the age group of 12-19 years. The sample was selected through random sampling technique. The tool for data collection was the IPPA scale (Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment) designed by Arms den and Greenberg. The results reveal that most adolescents shared high degree of mutual trust with their mothers, fathers and peers. Comparatively more adolescents were highly attached with their respective father and mother than their peers. Similarly, most adolescents shared higher levels of communication with their mothers, fathers and peers. There was no significant difference in the sample adolescents' communication pattern. On the dimension namely anger and alienation most adolescents scored moderately with parents as well as peers. The adolescents weren't overly detached or angry with neither their parents nor the peers. The findings indicate that most adolescents shared healthy attachment with not only their mothers and fathers but also with their peers.

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**Citation:** Dr. Sarika Manhas and Arpana Roshan, 2015. "Parental and peer attachment among adolescents of Jammu", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (6), 16667-16669.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important transition period, because of the cognitive, biological, and social changes that occur during this developmental stage (Adams and Gullotta, 1989). While the vast majority of adolescents navigate this transitional period with much success, happiness, and confidence, a significant minority of adolescents experience much uncertainty and distress (Cauce *et al.*, 1994). The quality of relationship that the adolescent share with both his/her parents and peers is an important determining factor influencing the smoothness of transition to this developmental stage. Traditionally, adolescence was viewed as a period of life in which the support of the peer group gradually outlasted the influence of parents, mostly as the result of intergenerational conflict over fundamental values, norms, and behaviors (Collins and Reed, 1990). Attachment theory has particularly interesting applications for understanding adolescent's development, because it is during this time that children explore intimate, supportive relationship outside the family. Attachment is long term relationship between the members of the social groups.

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Passer and Smith (2007) define attachment as a strong emotional bond that develops between children and their parents. The roots of attachment lay in Bowl by (1969) theory of attachment. He described attachment is a special emotional relationship that involves an exchange of comfort, care and pleasure. Hazen and Shaver (1994) state that children must create bond with other available figures and as development progresses, peer become extremely important attachment figures. These new peer relationships, however look different than with parents (Freeman and Brown, 2001; Nickerson and Nagle, 2005).

For example, adolescents begin to spend less time with parents and much more time with their peers (Collins and Reed, 1990). Kerns (1994) argues that the forming of closer peer bonds allows adolescents to explore independence from parents additionally. Nickerson and Nagle (2005) found that adolescents go to their peers in times of need (proximity seeking behavior) much more after entering this developmental period. Despite this, however, researchers have only recently begun to show an interest in the functions that attachments to others than parents might serve during adolescence (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987; Hazen and Shaver, 1994). It is clear that supportive relationship with both parents and peers play an

important role in adolescent's adjustment. The rapid neurological, cognitive and social changes of adolescence create a social-cognitive dilemma for youth, the integration of new and diverse experiences in relation to the world and oneself. Adolescence also presents an attachment dilemma that is, maintaining connection with parents while exploring new social roles away from the family and developing attachment relationships with peers and romantic partners of great importance is the fact that the successful transition of adolescence is not achieved through detachment from parents. In fact, healthy transition to autonomy and adulthood is facilitated by secure attachment and emotional connectedness with parents (Freeman and Brown, 2001). With this as background the present study explores and compares the attachment pattern of the adolescents with parents (both mothers and fathers) and peers.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Sample:** The total sample for the present study comprised of 160 school and college going adolescents in the age group of 12-19 years.

**Locale of the Study:** The entire sample was selected from various private and Government schools and colleges of Jammu city. The areas covered under Jammu city include - Mubrak Mandi, Kachi Chowni, Prade, Panjtirthi and Rehari.

**Criteria for sample selection:** The following criteria were fixed for the selection of sample.

- Age- Only adolescents in the age group of 12-19 years were selected.
- Residence- All selected adolescents had to be native of Jammu city only.
- Education of adolescents- All selected adolescents had to be enrolled in regular schools and colleges for education.

### Sampling Technique

The entire sample was selected randomly through multistage sampling. In the first stage, one zone out of four zones of Jammu was selected by lottery method. In the second stage a list of schools and colleges located in the selected zone namely Jammu city was obtained from the concerned education department authorities. From this comprehensive list schools and colleges were again selected by random sampling. In 3<sup>rd</sup> stage school/college authorities were contacted and list of children matching the sampling criteria was prepared. Then the required sample of children was drawn randomly post securing required permission from the school authorities. Then finally interactions were carried out with the adolescents. They were explained the objectives behind data collection and were ensured completely confidentiality and secrecy of the data. Any confusion or fears in the minds of the adolescents were laid off before data collection.

### Tools for Data Collection

The IPPA (Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment), scale designed by Arms den and Greenberg was used with the sample adolescents. It is designed to learn about relationship of adolescents with important people in their life, their mother,

father, and their close friends. The measured the attachment under three dimensions namely, degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of anger and alienation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attachment of adolescents yielded results under three main categories namely, degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of anger and alienation. The findings are elaborated as follows:

### 1. Trust among Sample adolescents

Table 1.

Levels	Mothers		Father		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	144	90	149	93.13	126	78.75
Moderate	16	10	11	6.87	34	21.25
Low						
Total	160	100	160	100	160	100

$\chi^2$  value= 16.48, df=2, p value 0.00\*

Trust pattern of the sample adolescents reveal that most adolescents showed high levels of mutual trust with their fathers (93.13%) and mothers (90%). As far as trust with peers was concerned, though most (78.75%) adolescents had high levels of trust with them, yet this number was comparatively lower when compared with that of the parents. These results highlight that most adolescents tend to highly trust their parents than the peers. Statistically also there was significant difference in trust of adolescents between parents and peers. The remaining adolescents had moderate levels of trust on their respective mothers, fathers and peers, indicating for adolescents' parents and peers constitute a significant source of trust and reliance. Most of the respondents mentioned that they could share anything with their parents and peers without worrying that it could be misinterpreted.

### 2. Communication among Sample Adolescents

Table 2.

Levels	Mothers		Father		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	138	86.25	131	81.87	130	81.25
Moderate	22	13.75	29	18.13	30	37.75
Low						
Total	160	100	160	100	160	100

$\chi^2$  value =1.69, df=2, p value= 0.42

Communication pattern of adolescents when analyzed reveals that most of the sample had high level of communication with mothers (86.25%), fathers (81.87%) and peers (81.25%). The remaining in each category scored moderate on communication. Statistically there was no significant difference in the communication pattern of adolescents between the three groups. Most adolescents were able to communicate their feelings and inner emotions with equal ease with both their parents as well as the peers. Whenever they were troubled with problems depending on the nature of their problem they either consulted their parents or friends for support and solutions. Most adolescents were able to maintain high quality communication with both the groups.

### 3. Alienation among Sample Adolescents

Table 3.

Levels	Mothers		Father		Peers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	14	8.75	14	8.75	10	6.25
Moderate	114	71.25	124	77.5	133	83.13
Low	32	20	22	13.75	17	10.62
Total	160	100	160	100	160	100

$\chi^2$  value=7.23, df=2, p value=0.12

Alienation in context of the present study represented the sense of distance, hostility, anger and disengagement adolescents may develop as they grow. Analysis of alienation pattern of the sample adolescents reveal that most of them had moderate alienation with peers (83.13%), fathers (77.5%) and mothers (71.25%). This was followed by 20% adolescents who had low alienation from their mothers, 13.75% fathers and 10.62% with peers. Contrary to expectations only a very small segment of adolescents had high level of alienation with mothers and fathers. Findings highlight that the sample adolescents were neither distanced from their parents nor their siblings but rather shared higher levels of trust and communication with both the groups. However, adolescents reported that in certain instances they did get anger with their parents especially when there were differences of opinion. Similarly, in some situations they did have differences with the peers as well.

#### Summary

Adolescence is an important developmental stage where teenagers are supposed to give greater importance to the peer group. Even though the parents continue to hold a place of importance in the lives of their teenage children yet the presence of peers cannot be understated. The current research analyzed the attachment pattern of sample adolescents under three dimensions namely, degree of mutual trust, quality of communication; and extent of anger and alienation. Adolescents rated their mothers, fathers and peers on these three dimensions. Findings indicate that overall most adolescents had high levels of trust on their parents- both mothers as well as fathers. More number of adolescents trusted their parents than their peers. Many of the adolescents mentioned that since parent-child relation is an irrevocable bond and parents work all their lives for their children, therefore trust comes naturally between the two. Similar patterns were found for communication, as most adolescents indicated having high levels of communication with their parents as well as peers. Though the content of communication varied between the two groups yet quantitatively there was no significant difference. Adolescents in the selected cultural context continued to communicate freely and regularly with their parents, even though peer communication was also equally important to them. On the third dimension, that is, anger and alienation most adolescents scored moderate, indicating that even though there was no major disconnect between them and their parents or fellow mates, yet sometimes they showed anger and aggression towards their parents as well as peers. Overall the results indicate that the sample adolescents were not overly attached to their peers nor did they overlook their parents. Rather, it was noted that they shared high levels of trust and communication with them and hence were adequately attached with both their fathers and mothers.

Interestingly, levels of trust and communication, adolescents had with their mothers and fathers were the same. Alienation levels were also noted to be moderate for parents as well as peers, representing that even though there was no major estrangement between the adolescents and their parents and peers yet sometimes issues did develop among them. The results highlight the importance of parents in the lives of adolescents. Karthik (2009); Imtiaz and Naqvi (2012) concluded in his article that parents influence the lives of their children in every aspect and leave an impression which remains throughout their lives. Mother and father both play an important role in upbringing of their children. Unlike their western counterparts (Cauce *et al*, 1994; Kerns, 1994) most adolescents in Indian cultural context continue to maintain healthy relationship with their parents. Even though the presence of peers in their lives is undeniable yet the influence of parents continue to be overwhelming. Attachment which children form with their parents continues to exist even when they reach adolescence. Parent-child attachment is a irreversible and an ever continuing bond, the presence of which is felt by both the parents as well as their children in one form or the other through out life.

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