

## A Study of Parental Attitudes in Relation to Depression among Senior Secondary School Students

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**Abstract:** Purpose of the present investigation was to study the parental attitudes in relation to depression among Senior Secondary School Students. The sample comprised of 200 (100 male and 100 female) students from Senior Secondary School of Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh. Parent-Child Relation Questionnaire (PCRQ) (Singh, 1984) was used for measuring parental attitudes and Beck Depression Inventory second edition (BDI-II, 1996) was used for measuring depression. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Stepwise Regression Analysis were used for analyzing the data. Result showed that there was significant negative predictive relationship between father's attitude i.e. loving attitude of father and depression. Result also showed that there was significant positive predictive relationship between dominating attitude of father and depression. When regression analysis was done for mother's attitudes. It was also found that there was significant negative predictive relationship between two positive dimensions of mother attitude i.e. loving, protecting attitude of mother and depression. Result also showed that there was significant positive predictive relationship between two negative dimensions of mother's attitude (i.e. dominating, rejecting attitude of mother) and depression.

**Keywords:** Parental Attitudes, Depression, Adolescents.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Depression among adolescents is a common mental health problem in modern era, because in present modern century science and technology have reached at its maximum level of growth and development. As a result individuals are generally prefer to live more comfortable and luxurious life, for which they work hard for gaining standard of excellence in their field. No doubt, this highly developed technology not only made everything easy rather it also effect on individuals physical lives, as well as it significantly influence on individuals thought, emotion and behaviors. For students population, in one side they have many opportunities for growth and personality development from their schools, colleges and home environment, while on the other hand they are facing a large number of potentially stressful circumstances, such as academic demands, parental attitudes, parental pressure, financial difficulties, and a variety of social stressors. As a result, up to one third of all adolescents population are suffering from anxiety and depression [1]; [2]. Lewinsohn, Rohde, Seeley, & Fischer, (1993) found that depression is one of the most frequently diagnosed psychiatric disorders in youth with as many as 9% of children having experienced at least one episode of DSM-IV major depression by the age of 14 [3]. Prevalence rates for sub-syndromal depressive symptoms are even greater with between 10% and 30% of youth exceeding cutoff scores on self-report measures of depressive symptoms [4]. Similarly, Mohanraj and Subbaiah (2010) found that based on the cut-off scores, 378 adolescents (39.2%) were non-depressed, 358 (37.1%) were mildly depressed, 187 (19.4%) were moderately depressed and 41 (4.3%) severely depressed [5].

**Depression:** Depression is described by National Institutes of Mental Health as persistent, sad or anxious mood, feelings

of hopelessness or pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, helplessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed. Depression is associated with augmented suicide risk, relationship stress, decreased work productivity, and increased likelihood of developing physical disorders. Studies conducted using community and school samples of adolescents have shown depression as the most common psychiatric disorder among adolescents [6]; [7]. There have only been a few reported studies on depression per se among the adolescent population in India. Psychiatric morbidity among school samples of adolescents was found in about 29% of girls and 23% of boys with depression being the most common disorder [8]. An other study that specifically assessed depression reported a prevalence of 3% in 13-19 year old school going 11 adolescents. Moreover, depression during adolescence is associated often with suicide, a phenomenon that is also on the rise among adolescents in India in recent times [9]; [10].

**Parental Attitudes:** There is research evidence suggesting that the parenting attitudes play important role in development of depressive symptoms. Parenting attitudes are the expressions of the values individuals have about raising children and include thoughts, beliefs, and judgments about child care [11]. Psychologists suggested the importance of two dimensions of parental behavior i.e. **acceptance-rejection** and **permissiveness-restrictiveness** [12]. Acceptance-Rejection: It refers to the respects and love or lack of both that parents feel for their children. At the extremes, **accepting parents** show warmth, affection, approval and understanding; **rejecting parent** on the other hand, are cold, disapproving and punitive. They do not enjoy their children nor are they sensitive to their needs,

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rejecting parents criticize, punish or ignore their children's physical and emotional needs even as limiting their expression of affection and approval. Rejecting parents express their aggression physically by hitting, pushing, pinching and hurting the child, whereas verbal expression of anger involves sarcastic, cursing, shouting, humiliating, behaviors toward their child. All forms of these behaviors tend to include children to feel unloved or rejected, as a result such children develop usually aggressive and hostile behaviors [13].

**Permissiveness-Restrictiveness:** It refers to the degree to which parents permit their offspring's autonomy and freedom in their action. Permissive parents allow relative freedom in decision making and carrying out the decisions. In contrast, restrictive parents maintain control, exhibiting behaviors that are opposite to those of permissive parents. Other psychologists conducted a number of studies in the field of child development, focusing on two main domains of child rearing styles i.e. **Parental Warmth** and **Parental Control** [14]. **Parental warmth** is the first dimension of child rearing style. It refers to the amount of affection and approval that parents display toward their child. Parents described as warm and nurturing are those, who often smile at, praise and encourage their child while limiting their criticism, punishments and sign of disapproval. Warm parents are deeply committed to the child's welfare, and are responsive to the child's need. All kinds of nurturing, supportive and loving, behaviors are expressions of parental acceptance. **Parental control** is the second dimension which conceptualized in term as such monitoring, supervision, control, and discipline. On the basis of large number of studies on children's perceptions of parental behavior internationally psychologists suggested that the warmth dimension is more important in the positive development of children [15]. Some research suggests that child characteristics such as noncompliance and aggressiveness have been associated with negative parent-child relationships and parenting attitudes [16]. Other studies in the child maltreatment literature have shown that negative parenting attitudes, such as a disregard for a child's needs, displeasure in the parenting role, and the belief that one's children intentionally annoy you, strengthen the likelihood of poor parenting behaviors within single-mother families [17].

#### **Parental Involvement and Adolescent Depression**

Parents who provide psychological assistance and support to their children in the development of social skills, such children are found have better achievement, enhanced social skills and less experience of depression in comparison to those children whose parents do not provide such psychological assistance and support. It is well-replicated that the more parental involvement and support are provided the less likely adolescents are to be depressed [18]; [19]; [20]; [21]; [22]. Young et al.'s (2005) in a longitudinal study, found parental involvement to be an important predictor of future adolescent depressive symptoms [23]. Mc Cauley, Pavlidis, & Kendall, (2001) found that parenting attitudes have significant effect in the development of adolescent depressive symptoms [24]. It was also found that adolescents who were members of families that were less supportive, discouraging and have negative parent-child relationships,

experience more anxiety, depression and developed maladaptive behaviors such as delinquent behaviors and substance use in comparison to adolescents who were members of families that were supportive, and foster positive parent-child relationships [25]; [26]. Specifically, the adolescent's perception of familial factors, such as parental acceptance, family interactional patterns, family coherence, family closeness, and doing activities together were shown to be associated with lower levels of adolescent substance use, depression, and anxiety [27]; [28]. Therefore the aim of present investigation is to study the parental attitudes in relation to depression among senior secondary school students.

**Objectives of the study:** Following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To find out the predictive relationship between different types of father's attitudes and depression.
2. To find out the predictive relationship between different types of mother's attitudes and depression.

## **II. METHOD**

**Participants:** Sample of the present research paper comprised of 200 (100 male and 100 female) students from senior secondary school of Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh. The random sampling technique was used for collecting data. Age of the subjects ranged between 15 to 20 years, the mean age being 18.5 years. All the students belonged to upper middle class socio-economic background.

**Instruments:** The following questionnaires and tests were administered on the participants for the study.

**1. Parental Attitudes Scale:** In order to assess the parental attitudes or child rearing style, parent-child relation questionnaire (PCRQ) developed by Singh (1984) was used [29]. The PCRQ consists of two forms labeled as F-form (father form) and M-form (mother form). Each form has six subscales i.e. loving, dominating, rejecting, protecting, punishing and disciplining. Out of these six dimensions of parental attitudes, three dimensions or subscale are positive (i.e. loving, protecting and disciplining) and other three dimensions or subscale are negative (i.e. dominating, rejecting and punishing). There are 10 items in each subscale with a total of 60 items. Three response categories i.e. 'yes', 'no' and 'doubtful', have been provided against each question. A score of 3, 1 and 2 have been assigned for each positively worded question for yes, no, and doubtful categories respectively. In case of negative items the order is reversed as 1, 3, & 2 respectively. Thus a maximum possible score on each scale is 30 and minimum 10 for both F form and M form. Split half reliability coefficients for different dimensions on both the forms ranged between .75 to .85. The test-retest reliability coefficients ranged between .55 to .68.

**2. Beck Depression Inventory-II:** The second scale is Beck Depression Inventory second edition (BDI-II, 1996) it was used for measuring students depression [30]. It consists of 21 items for measuring the existence and severity of symptoms of depression given by American Psychiatric Association in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of

Mental Disorders Forth Edition (DSM-IV;1994). For scoring each of the 21 items corresponding to symptoms of depression is summed as to give a single score for the BDI-II. There is a four point scale for each item ranging from 0 to 3. On two items i.e.16 and 18 there are seven options to indicate either an increase or decrease of appetite and sleep. Total score of 0-3 is considered minimum range, 14-19 is mild, 20-28 is moderate and 29-63 is severe. BDI-II is high valid and reliable, as its coefficient alpha is .92 for outpatients and .93 for the college students.

**Analysis:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Stepwise regression analysis was used to analyze the data.

### III. RESULTS

**Table- 1:** Correlation between Parental Attitudes and Depression.

Parental Attitudes	Depression
<b>Father's Attitude</b>	
Loving	-.335**
Dominating	.377**
Rejecting	.277**
Protecting	-.180*
Punishing	.228**
Disciplining	-.041
<b>Mother's Attitude</b>	
Loving	-.595**
Dominating	.463**
Rejecting	.482**
Protecting	-.459**
Punishing	.331**
Disciplining	-.236**

\*correlation is significant at .05 level, \*\*correlation is significant at .01 level.

From the above table it is found that there is significant negative correlation between father's positive attitude and depression. In other words, there is a significant negative correlation between two positive dimensions of fathers attitudes out of three positive dimensions (i.e. loving, protecting and disciplining) of parental attitudes and depression scores. It is also observed from the table that there is a significant positive correlation between all three negative dimensions (i.e. dominating, rejecting and punishing) of fathers negative attitude and depression.

Similarly, it is also found that there is significant negative correlation between all three positive dimensions of mother's attitude (i.e. loving, protecting and disciplining) and depression. it is also apparent from the table that there is a significant positive correlation between all three negative dimensions (i.e. dominating, rejecting and punishing) of mothers negative attitude and depression.

**Regression Analysis for Father's Attitude:** The output of regression analysis for the Father's attitude has been organized in the following tables i.e. table no. 2 and 3.

**Table-2:** Stepwise regression analysis for Father's Attitude to find out significant predictors of depression among the students.

Model Summary and coefficients										
Step No	Independent Variable	R	'F' value for 'R'	Sig. of 'F'	R <sup>2</sup>	Standard Error of 'R'	t' value of β	Sig. of t	constant	β
1	Dominating	.377	32.89	.000	.142	4.85	4.45	.000	-.426	.336
2	Loving	.439	23.57	.000	.193	4.71	3.52	.001		-.343

**Table -3:** Description of variance in depression accounted for by the predictors

Step. No.	Variable entered	'R'	Increase in 'R'	% of Variance	Increase in % of Variance
1	Dominating	.377	.	14.2	.
2	Loving	.439	.062	19.3	5.1

Above table indicates that for father's attitude only two independent variables have entered in the regression model in a hierarchical manner. These variables are father's dominating attitude and father's loving attitude. These two variables collectively account for approximately 19.3% of the total variance in depression.

A perusal of the values in the table shows that the first independent variable i.e. father's dominating attitude is the most significant predictor of depression which accounts for 14.2% of the total variance in depression. Beta value for this variable is .336, that signifies a positive predictive relationship between depression and father's dominating attitude. In other words, if we increase father's dominating attitude by 1 unit, the level of depression will be increased by .336units (provided that the effect of all other variables is held constant). t value and its significance shows that beta significantly differs from zero and in the slope of regression line is positive and significant.

Other next important significant predictor is father's loving attitude. It along with father's dominating attitude, accounts for 19.3%of the total variance in the depression However, its individual contribution is 5.1%. The beta value for this variable is -.343, that signifies a negative predictive relationship between depression and father's loving attitude.

**Regression Analysis for Mother's Attitude:** The output of regression analysis for the mother's attitude has been organized in the following tables i.e. table no. 4 and 5.

**Table-4.** Stepwise regression analysis for Mother's Attitude to find out significant predictors of depression among the senior secondary school students.

**Table-4:** Stepwise regression analysis for Mother's Attitude to find out significant predictors of depression among the senior secondary school students.

Model Summary and coefficients										
Step No	Independent Variable	R	'F' value for 'R'	Sig. of 'F'	R <sup>2</sup>	Standard Error of 'R'	t' value of β	Sig. of t	constant	β
1	Loving	.595	108.42	.000	.354	4.21	5.19	.000	16.24	-.474
2	Dominating	.644	69.95	.000	.415	4.01	2.61	.01		.207
3	Protecting	.658	49.95	.000	.433	3.95	2.25	.05		-.188
4	Rejecting	.668	39.28	.000	.446	3.92	2.13	.05		.145

**Table -5:** Description of variance in depression accounted for by the predictors

Step No.	Variable entered	'R'	Increase in 'R'	% of variance	Increase in % of variance
1	Loving	.595	-	35.4	-
2	Dominating	.644	.049	41.5	6.1
3	Protecting	.658	.014	43.3	1.8
4	Rejecting	.668	.01	44.6	1.3

The above table indicates that for mother's attitudes four independent variables have entered in the regression model in a hierarchical manner. These variables are loving, dominating, protecting and rejecting attitude. All of these variables collectively accounted for approximately 44.6% of the total variance in depression.

A perusal of the values in the table shows that the first variable i.e. mother's loving attitudes is the most important predictor of depression which accounted for 35.4% of the total variance in depression. Beta value for this variable is  $-.474$ , that signifies a negative predictive relationship between mother's loving attitude and depression. In other words, if we increase mother's loving attitude by 1 unit, the level of depression will be decreased by  $-.474$  units (provided that the effect of all other variables is held constant).  $t$  value and its significance shows that beta significantly differs from zero and in the slope of regression line is negative and significant.

The next important significant predictor is mother's dominating attitude. It along with loving attitude, accounted for 41.5% of the total variance in the depression. However, its individual contribution is 6.1%. The beta value for this variable is  $.207$ , that signifies a positive predictive relationship between mother's dominating attitudes and depression.  $t$  value and its significance shows that beta significantly differs from zero and in the slope of regression line is positive and significant.

The third significant predictor is mother's protecting attitudes. It along with loving attitude and dominating attitude accounted for 43.3% of the total variance in the depression. However, its individual contribution is 1.8% of the total variance in depression. The beta value for this variable is  $-.188$ , that signifies a negative predictive relationship between depression and mother's protecting attitudes.

The last important predictor is mother's rejecting attitude. It along with all other variables accounted for 44.6% of total variance in depression. However its individual contribution is 1.3% of the total variance in depression. The beta value for this variable is  $.145$ , that signifies a positive predictive relationship between depression and mother's rejecting attitude.  $t$  value and its significance shows that the beta significantly differs from zero and in the slope of regression line is positive and significant.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between parental attitudes and depression among senior secondary school students. Positive parental attitude (both father and mother) play important role in adolescents personality growth and development as well as protecting them from different types of mental health

problems like anxiety, distress and depression. The results of the study indicate that positive parental attitudes was negatively correlated with depression, which is supported by the findings of the earlier studies for example **Bean et. al. (2006)**, found in their study that when youths feel that their parents are supportive, caring, and loving towards them they experience low level of depression [22].

While negative parental attitudes (both father and mother), on the other hand, may lead to mental health problems like depression among adolescents. In the present study negative parental attitudes was found to be positively correlated with depression. This study is supported by **Bansal, Goyal, and Srivastava (2009)**, who conducted a study for detecting early symptoms of depression in adolescents. Their results showed that negative parental attitudes were associated with depression [31].

When regression analysis was done to predict depression from father's attitudes, it was found that only dominating and loving attitudes emerged as the important predictors of depression. While, when regression analysis was done for mother's attitudes, four variables emerged as important predictors of depression i.e. loving, dominating, protecting and rejecting.

It is clear from the results that the first variable i.e. father's dominating attitude was the most significant predictor of depression as it emerged at first step in regression analysis and accounted for 14.2% of the total variance in depression. While mother's dominating attitudes was the second important predictor of depression as it emerged on second step in regression analysis and accounted 6.1% individual variance in depression. It was apparent from the beta value that there was a positive predictive relationship between parental dominating attitude and depression. It means that if parental dominating attitude will increase the level of depression will also increase.

Similarly, the next important predictor was parents' loving attitude. Father's loving attitude accounted for 5.1% of the total variance in the depression and emerged at second step of regression analysis. While mother's loving attitudes was the most important predictor of depression as it emerged at first step of regression analysis and accounted as 35.4% as large as individual variance in the depression. From the beta value it is clear that there is negative predictive relationship between parental (father's and mother's) loving attitude and depression. It means that parental loving attitude is more important for children's positive growth and development and plays a vital role in enhancing good mental health and wellbeing among adolescents. This study is also supported by an earlier study conducted by **Wang & Liu, (2000)**, who found that both maternal and paternal warmth were significantly negatively correlated with student anxiety [32].

It is also clear from the results that the third significant predictor is mother's protecting attitude. It along with loving attitude and dominating attitude accounted for 43.3% of the total variance in the depression. However, its individual contribution is 1.8% of the total variance in depression. This predictor is significant only in mother's attitudes, as it emerged at third step of regression analysis, while protecting attitude was not significant for father's attitudes as it was not emerged in regression analysis.

Similarly, the last important predictor was mother's rejecting attitude which emerged at fourth step in regression analysis. It along with loving, dominating and protecting accounted for 44.6% of total variance in depression. However its individual contribution is 1.3% of the total variance in depression. From the beta value it was apparent that there was a positive predictive relationship between depression and mother's rejecting attitude. It means that if we increase mother's rejecting attitude by one unit, the level of depression will be increased by .145 units. On the basis of above results we can say that negative parental attitudes have detrimental impact on adolescents mental health and wellbeing. This study is supported by McCauley, Pavlidis, & Kendall, (2001), as they also found in their study that parenting negative attitudes have significant affect in the development of adolescent depressive symptoms [25]. One important finding of this study is that mother's attitudes are more important and significant impact on adolescents positive growth and development as well as it enhanced individuals mental health and wellbeing as compared to father's attitudes.

## V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of above results and discussion it is concluded that positive parental attitudes (both father and mother) play important role in protecting individuals from different type of mental health problems like anxiety, distress and depression, as it was found in this study that positive parental attitudes was negatively correlated with depression. While negative parental attitudes (both father and mother) play a crucial role in developing mental health problems like depression among Senior Secondary School Students, as it was found in present study that negative parental attitudes was positively correlated with depression. Similarly it is also concluded on the above results and discussion that mother's attitudes are more important in experienced of depression among adolescents as compared to fathers attitudes. As it is clear from this study that mothers negative attitudes play significant role in developing depression adolescents.

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