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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT AND ADOLESCENT PERCEPTION ON PEER RELATIONS

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#### ABSTRACT

The present study was done to assess the relationship between parental information seeking and adolescent disclosure about peers. The sample for the study comprised of 60 adolescents, 30 boys and 30 girls, in the age group of 15-18 years and either of their parents. The tool used for data collection was 'Right to know Inventory' by B.B. Brown and M.J.Lohr (2005) which was used for both adolescents and their parents. Results showed no significant sex differences among adolescents on 'Right to know Inventory' whereas t-scores indicated significant sex difference among parents on the aspect of 'Activity with Friends'. Results of 'Right to Know Inventory' show that there is no significant sex difference in perception of adolescents about their peer relations in aspects of 'Activity with friends', 'Features of relationship', 'Negative peer characteristics' and 'Positive peer characteristics'. Regarding peer relations significant sex difference were found among parents on the aspect of 'Activities with friends' whereas other indicators did not show any statistical differences about peer relations of their adolescents. A positive relationship was found between parents' information seeking about peer interactions and adolescents' disclosure of this information in Jammu. From the present study it can be concluded that there is no difference of opinion among parents and adolescents regarding peer relations.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a state or process of growing up. The ability to make and keep good friends is important throughout life, and much of that ability develops in adolescence (<http://www.merriam-webstar.com/dictionary/adolescence>).

Adolescents spend much of their time in groups. Numerous studies show that peers have a strong effect on the achievement of important developmental tasks in this period of life: developing autonomy and independence and building up a positive self-concept. The establishment of a peer network is an important part of early adolescents (Larson and Richard, 2007). Peer relationships are not entirely positive, however, and peers may also play a role in the development of negative outcomes such as poor academic adjustment, delinquency, aggression, depression, or social anxiety (Greenberger *et al.*, 1998). The most important factor that determines the quality of a child's life is his relationship with his parents. The feeling and attitude which usually result from this relationship hardly develop in the fullest measure in later years if they have been absent during child's early life (<http://www.hhfamilylaw.com.au>).

The great majority of adolescents feel close to their parents and do not perceive any major problems in their adolescent-parent relationship. Parents of adolescents can be a model of what it is to be a mature and responsible adult (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Peer relationships provide many opportunities for adolescents to learn skills and develop their identity, but parent's relationship with their adolescent is the key means of influencing their growth and development and a positive self image. Both the relationships, if they move synergistically, can enhance adolescents self esteem. The relative influence parents and peers exert on the lives of adolescents depends on several factors, including the adolescent's maturity relative to his/her age, the parent-adolescent relationship, and the particular issue involved.

The adolescent's orientation toward parents and peers generally changes with age. The degree of influence parents have over their teenagers also depends on how well they get along with each other (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>). Parents who retain a great deal of influence in the lives of their adolescents generally show a higher level of interest, understanding, and helpfulness toward their teenagers than do other parents (Larson, 1980). Till recently adolescence was not a stage in the Indian developmental scheme. There was continuity from childhood to adulthood because of early

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marriages practiced here. Though there are examples of peer relations as reflected in the religious texts, yet study of peer relations and parent's views about these have not been the focus of research. The present study attempts to do so by using 'Right to know inventory' (Brown, 2005) where both parents and adolescents respond to how much information should be disclosed about peer group and whether parents have a right to know about peer group. There is a need to study the peer relationship as due to modernization and prolonged period of education of the society friends and peers are assuming an important role in Eastern societies too. Study on peer relations in Indian context is not available though we have historical examples of friendship between "Krishna-Sudama". The present research will fill in this gap by studying the peer relations from perspectives of both parents and adolescents of Jammu city.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. Sample

#### Sample Size

- Group I: - The sample for present study consists of 60 adolescents, 30 boys and 30 girls, in the age group of 15-18 years.
- Group II: - Group II for present study consists of either of the parents' of these 60 adolescents. The total sample size of parents was 60.

#### Sampling Technique

Multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. A comprehensive list of schools located in the Jammu city was prepared and then by lottery method three schools were selected. Random sampling was used to get the desired sample. Tool was distributed among 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class adolescents. The parents of these adolescents were also contacted for participation as sample group.

#### Criteria for sample selection

- Age : The age of the adolescents should be between 15-18 years
- Sex: Both adolescent boys and girls were selected in equal numbers.
- Residence: Only school going boys and girls belonging to the urban areas of Jammu were selected.
- Schools: Only students from private schools were selected.
- Parents: Only parents of the adolescents were selected as sample.

### B. Tool used

Right to know inventory (RTKI) - Adolescent Disclosure Inventory (ADI) and Parent Information Seeking Inventory (PISI) By Brown and Lohr (2005) was used to assess adolescent's and parent's opinions about whether parents have a right to know about adolescent's interactions and relationships with friends in four major domains (separate scales for each domain) - activities with friends, relationship features, peers positive behaviors, peer's negative behavior.

Scales have been derived through focus group interviews and piloting with an ethnically diverse sample of American adolescents, age 12-18 years.

### C. Data collection

In this phase the tool was pretested on 10 adolescents (5 boys and 5 girls) in the age group of 15-18 years and their parents to see the appropriateness of the tool. After analyzing the pretested data, tool was finalized and used for data collection. Modifications were not required in the tool. After the selection of the sample and finalization of tool, the data was collected by visiting the selected schools in urban areas of Jammu City. In the initial stage of data collection, researchers took the permission from principals of these schools and randomly selected 20 adolescent from each school. The researcher administered the scale on the adolescents and gave them scales to be filled by their parents which took about 2 days to collect data from each school. Parents clarified their doubts on phone. The total time duration for data collection was 2 months. The administration of the tool with adolescents was done in the class itself which took 2 hours in each school (approximately 10 minutes for each adolescents).

### D. Data analysis

Data obtained by the use of the scale was subjected to quantitative analysis. The percentages were calculated for the majority and minimal responses and statistical techniques like Mean, standard deviation and correlation were calculated using SPSS software (20<sup>th</sup> version).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are based on the information collected from the respondents through administration of the tools used. The findings of the study along with discussion are presented as follows:-

### 1. Background information

**Table No. 1.1 Distribution of sample according to age and type of family**

Age	Sex	Boys (n=30)		Girls (n=30)		Total (n=60)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
15		8	26.7	10	33.3	18	30
16		14	46.7	13	43.3	27	45
17		3	10	3	10	6	10
18		5	16.7	4	13.4	9	15
Type of family							
Nuclear		13	43.3	12	40	25	41.6
Joint		17	56.7	18	60	35	58.4

Table No.1.1 reveals that 45% of the sample adolescents were 16 years of age (47% of the boys and 43% of the girls), 30% of the adolescents were 15 years of age (27% of the boys and 33% of the girls), 15% of the sample adolescents were 18 years of age (17% of the boys and 13% of the girls) and 10% of the sample adolescents were 17 years of age (10% of the boys and 10% of the girls). Majority of the sample adolescents (58%) were from joint families (57% of the boys and 60% of the girls) and 42% of the adolescents were from nuclear families (43% of the boys and 40% of the girls).

**Table No. 1.2 Education of parents of the respondents**

	Boys				Total (n=60)		Girls				Total (n=60)	
	Mother (n=30)		Father (n=30)		f	%	Mother (n=30)		Father (n=30)		f	%
Education	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Primary	0	0	1	3.4	1	1.6	1	3.4	1	3.4	2	3.3
10 <sup>th</sup>	6	20	1	3.4	7	11.6	2	6.6	2	6.6	4	6.66
11 <sup>th</sup>	2	6.6	3	10	5	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 <sup>th</sup>	17	56.7	15	50	32	53.3	6	20	7	23.3	13	21.66
Graduate	4	13.3	10	33.3	14	23.3	19	63.3	12	40	31	51.66
Post-graduate	1	3.4	0	0	1	1.6	1	3.4	7	23.3	8	13.3
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.4	1	3.4	2	3.3

Table No.1.2 reveals that 56.7% mothers and 50% fathers of boys were 12<sup>th</sup> pass whereas 63.3% mothers and 40% fathers of girls were graduates. Parents of girls were more educated than parents of boys.

**Adolescents and parents perceptions about peer relations**

Table No. 2.1 shows the analysis of adolescent disclosure and parent information seeking regarding peers. Among the Adolescents the mean scores of boys on ‘Activity with friends’ is 22.43 ±3.83, on ‘Features of Relationship’ is 19.47 ±5.88, on ‘Negative peer characteristics’ is 25.23 ±9.11 and on ‘Positive peer characteristics’ is 31.77 ±5.63. While on the other hand mean scores of girls on ‘Activity with friends’ is 22.53 ±6.29, on ‘Features of Relationship’ is 20.40 ±6.32, on ‘Negative peer characteristics’ is 25.10 ±9.19 and on ‘Positive peer characteristics’ is 31.23 ±5.70. There are no significant sex differences among adolescents on ‘Right to know inventory’.

On the ‘Parents information seeking inventory’ about peers it is found that the mean scores of mothers on ‘Activity with friends’ is 25 ±4.55, on ‘Features of relationship’ is 22.07 ±5.04, on ‘Negative peer characteristics’ is 20.57 ±8.00 and on ‘Positive peer characteristics’ is 31.23 ±4.03 while on the other hand mean scores of fathers on ‘Activity with friends’ is 19.37 ±7.78, on ‘Features of relationship’ is 19.57 ±8.22, on ‘Negative peer characteristics’ is 24.93 ±11.49 and on ‘Positive peer characteristics’ is 27.50 ±9.90.

The t-scores show significant sex difference among parents on the aspect of ‘Activities with friends’ whereas for other indicators statistical difference is observed. Table No. 2.2 shows significant positive correlation among all the dimensions of ADI, adding to the reliability of the scale whereas relationship of all these dimensions to education of parents is very low and non significant with mothers. With fathers education the relationship is negative and insignificant.

**Table No. 2.1. Adolescent Disclosure and Parent Information Seeking Regarding Peers**

Indicators	Adolescents (ADI)				t-value	Parents (PISI)				t-value
	Boys (N=30)		Girls (N=30)			Mothers (N=36)		Fathers (N=24)		
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Activities with friends	22.43	3.83	22.53	6.29	.074	25	4.55	19.37	7.78	3.42*
Features of relationship	19.47	5.88	20.40	6.32	.59	22.07	5.04	19.57	8.22	1.41
Negative peer characteristics	25.23	9.11	25.10	9.19	.05	20.57	8.00	24.93	11.49	1.70
Positive peer characteristics	31.77	5.63	31.23	5.70	.036	31.23	4.03	27.50	9.90	1.91

\*significant at 0.05% level.

**Table No. 2.2 Correlations among Dimensions of Adolescent Disclosure Inventory (ADI) and Education of Parents**

ADI	Education of mothers	Education of fathers	Activities with friends scale	Features of relationship scale	Negative peer characteristics scale	Positive peer characteristics scale
ADI						
Activities with friends scale	.022	-.118	1			
Features of relationship scale	.057	-.102	.567**	1		
Negative peer characteristics scale	.054	-.185	.582**	.664**	1	
Positive peer characteristics scale	-.046	-.161	.388**	.549**	.526**	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01% level.

**Table No. 2.3 Correlations among dimensions of Parent’s Information Seeking Inventory and Education of Parents**

PISI	Education of mothers	Education of fathers	Activities with friends scale	Features of relationship scale	Negative peer characteristics scale	Positive peer characteristics scale
PISI						
Activities with friends scale	.054	.195	1			
Features of relationship scale	-.061	-.111	.627**	1		
Negative peer characteristics scale	-.004	.016	.645**	.682**	1	
Positive peer characteristics scale	.046	.097	.725**	.682**	.639**	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01% level.

Table No. 2.4. Relationship between parents and adolescents perception about peer relations

ADI \ PISI	Activities with friends scale	Features of relationship scale	Negative peer characteristics scale	Positive peer characteristics scale
Activities with friends scale	.528**	.303*	.261*	.546**
Features of relationship scale	.553**	.619**	.526**	.646**
Negative peer characteristics scale	.344**	.376**	.548**	.515**
Positive peer characteristics scale	.313*	.320*	.272*	.712**

\*significant at 0.05% level \*\*significant at 0.01% level.

Table No. 2.3 show correlation among the dimensions of 'Parent information seeking inventory' with education of parents. Results show a significant correlation among all the dimensions of PISI, again adding to the reliability of the scale whereas no relationship has been found with their education.

### Relationship Between Adolescent Disclosure Inventory (ADI) and Parent Information Seeking Inventory (PISI)

Table No. 2.4 reveals the correlations between dimensions of 'Parent information seeking' and 'Adolescent disclosure' in 'Right to know inventory'. The table shows that all the dimensions of Adolescent disclosure inventory are significantly correlated with the dimensions of Parent information seeking inventory. The direction of adolescent perception and parental perception regarding peer relations is positive.

### Conclusion

Parents education doesn't have any relation to their information seeking and adolescents disclosure about peers. Results of 'Right to Know Inventory' show that there is no significant sex difference in perception of adolescents about their peer relations in aspects of 'Activity with friends', 'Features of relationship', 'Negative peer characteristics' and 'Positive peer characteristics'. Regarding peer relations significant sex difference were found among parents on the aspect of 'Activities with friends' whereas other indicators did not show any statistical differences about peer relations of their adolescents.

A positive relationship was found between parents' information seeking about peer interactions and adolescents' disclosure of this information in Jammu and a study by Montemayor *et al.* (1997) also shows that the quality of the adolescents' peer relations yielded similar results for both fathers and mothers. A study by Dekovic *et al.* (1997) examined the link between the parent-adolescent relationships with peers, their results suggest that the quality of adolescent's peer relations yielded similar results for both mothers and fathers. From the present study it can be concluded that there is no difference of opinion among parents and adolescents regarding peer relations.

### Few suggestions for parents to put a positive influence on their child

As we all know friends play bigger and bigger roles in adolescents lives, parents need to maintain a positive relationship with their child so that they can disclose their peer relationships more freely to them and can easily talk about their

activities. A positive parent-child relationship is one that is warm, caring and emotionally open while also setting boundaries and having high expectations, encourage them to have a positive friendship, teach friendship skills to them, express concerns, ask questions and set limits when necessary. Parents should not jump to conclusions based on appearances, pay attention to warning signs, connect with child's friends parents, share your perspectives with your child and set few boundaries if necessary.

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