Relationship Between Family Environment and Mental Health Status of Tribal Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to know the relationship between family environment and mental health status of tribal adolescents. One hundred and eighthy adolescents who were in the age range of 13 to 15 years constituted the sample. Family Environment scale was used to assess the adolescents perceptions about their family environment. Mental Health Battery was used to assess the mental health status of tribal adolescents. Results of the study was found significant among the relationship between family environment and mental health status of tribal adolescents.

Keywords: *Family environment, Tribal adolescents.*

Adolescence is a stage of development between early childhood and adulthood. It is transitional stage of physical and psychological development. It is the period that requires special attention and protection. At adolescent age; stress, strom & intense moodiness exist. Parent relationship plays a major role in moulding the adolescent personality. Family is the most important support system available to the child. Family is the social group consists of parents and children. Children learn all moral, ethical, emotional, social and intellectual qualities by their family members which help them in overall development.

Mental health is an important determinant of one's integrated personality and balanced behavior identified on the basis of the level of his/her adjustment to own self, others and environment. Mental health as a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life. Healthy parental relations at home are a medium for making children's perceptions, thoughts and behavior into wholesome and adjustable personalities as they play the most important part in laying the foundation of the child's personality (Kaur *et al.,* 2015). Family interaction plays an important role in the development of an individual. The healthy functioning of these interaction patterns enhances mental health. There are some important interactional effects between family and its members at differential stages. It influences the whole life of the adolescents.

Tribe is a group of people that all have common ancestry, or a common ancestor, a common culture and live in their own enclosed society. The tribal adolescents studying in Ashram schools maintain close relationships with their teachers. This type of closeness helps the students not only in sharpening the capacities but also in full personality development. With minimizing background, the present study is taken up with the following objectives.

Objectives

- To study Perceptions of tribal adolescents about their family environment.
- To find out mental health status of tribal adolescents.
- To study relationship if any between family environment and mental health status of tribal adolescents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sample

The sample for the study comprises of 180 tribal adolescents of both genders selected randomly who were in the age range of 13-15 years and studying 7th, 8th and 9th classes.

Tools used

a) Family environment scale by Bhatia & Chadha (2005)

b) Mental Health Battery by Singh and Gupta (2005)

Data collection procedure

Data was collected from the selected 180 adolescents by using general information schedule developed for the study. Prior to data collection,

sufficient rapport was established with the respondents. After obtaining necessary permission from school headmasters, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and subsequently the randomly selected adolescents (13-15) from 7th, 8th and 9th standard students were interviewed personally for collecting the information on different dimensions of family environment and mental health. Necessary instructions were given regarding the answering of the test items.

Statistical analysis used

Frequencies, percentages and correlation were used for analyzing the data.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
General profile of the tribal adolescents

From the general profile of the tribal adolescents it was found that 42 percent of the boys and girls fell under 13 years group followed by 14 and 15 years. Regarding class of study, 36 percent of adolescents boys and girls were studying 8th and 9th classes and remaining were 7th class. Sixty nine percent of the sample both boys and girls were from nuclear families and remaining was in joint families. Regarding to socio-economic status, 56 percent of tribal adolescents both boys and girls were from middle income group followed by low and high income group.

Perception of tribal adolescents about dimensions of family environment

The family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. From the results the data collected on this aspect revealed that tribal adolescents had average perception on dimensions like cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, active recreational orientation and control dimensions of family environment (Table 1). This might be due the reasons that most of the adolescents were from nuclear families where opportunities for emotional togetherness are more and importance is given to express individual feelings. It is interesting to note from the results that majority of the tribal adolescents had high level perceptions about their own independence and organization dimensions of family environment.

Mental Health status of tribal adolescents

Personality is constituted by mental health. Mental health is overall emotional, psychological and social well-being. Good mental health helps us to deal with stress, make proper decisions and to have good relationship with others. From the results (Table 2) it is evident that tribal adolescents had average levels in all dimensions of mental health which includes emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, security insecurity, self-concept and intelligence.

Relationship between eight dimensions of family environment and five dimensions of mental health and total mental health are studied and discussed is under following (Table 3) correlation coefficient were carried out to see the relationship between family environment and mental health.

Cohesion

It is the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another. From the results it is clearly evident that cohesion is positively correlated at 1% level of significance to intelligence dimension of mental health i.e. adolescents who perceived that their families were cohesive were intelligent by possessing mental abilities like thinking rationally, and in behaving purposefully in the environment.

Expressiveness

It is interesting to note that expression dimension of family environment did not show any significant relationship with any of the five dimensions of mental health and total mental health.

Conflict

It is very encouraging to note that the tribal adolescents perception about conflict is positively correlated to two important dimensions of mental health i.e. overall adjustment (5% level of significance) and intelligence and total mental health status.

Acceptance & caring

It is noteworthy to mention from the results that acceptance and caring is positively and significantly correlated (5% level of significant) to one important dimension of mental health i.e. security and insecurity. Adolescents who perceived that family members are unconditionally accepted and the degree to which caring is expressed in the family they feel secure which enhances their overall mental health status.

Independence

It is encouraging to note from the results that adolescents who perceived that they have independence in their families were intelligent.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of sample based on their level of perception on dimensions of Family Environment (N=180)

S.No	Dimensions of Family Environment	Boys		Girls		Total	
I	Cohesion	frequency		frequency		frequency	
		(n=90)	(%)	(n=90)	(%)	(n=180)	(%)
	Low	37	41	37	41	74	41
	Average	51	57	51	57	102	57
	High	2	2	2	2	4	2
II	Expressiveness						
	Low	28	31	31	35	59	33
	Average	62	69	58	64	120	67
	High	0	0	1	1	0	0
III	Conflict						
	Low	3	3	1	1	4	2
	Average	54	60	38	42	92	51
	High	33	37	51	57	84	47
IV	Acceptance and Caring						
	Low	35	39	37	41	72	40
	Average	52	58	53	59	105	58
	High	3	3	0	0	3	2
V	Independence						
	Low	58	65	63	73	121	67
	Average	31	34	23	27	58	32
	High	1	1	0	0	1	1
VI	Active recreational orientation						
	Low	38	42	39	43	77	43
	Average	44	49	43	48	87	48
	High	8	9	8	9	16	9
VII	Organization						
	Low	52	58	30	42	90	50
	Average	32	35	40	45	72	40
	High	6	7	12	13	18	10
VIII	Control						
	Low	33	37	35	39	68	38
	Average	41	45	44	49	85	47
	High	16	18	11	12	27	15

Active recreational orientation

It is surprising to note that the dimension of active recreational orientation is negatively correlated to self concept at 5% level of significance and positively correlated to intelligence at 1% level of significance that means adolescents who perceived had low self concept compared to their counterparts, higher their perception lesser their self concept. It is interesting to note that adolescents who perceived high about active recreational orientation had higher intellectual levels which means adolescents were excellent in their mental abilities when they are participating in social and recreational activities.

Organization

An important dimension of family environment is organization. From the results, it is clearly evident that organization is positively and significant correlated to security and insecurity dimensions at 1% level of significance. Adolescents who perceived that their families were highly organized were secure. Interestingly, organization

Table 2. Frequency distribution of tribal adolescents on Mental Health status

S.No	Dimensions of Mental Health	Boys		Girls		Total	
I	Emotional stability	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency	
		(n=90)	(%)	(n=90)	(%)	(n=180)	(%)
	Low	6	7	16	18	22	12
	Average	71	79	67	74	138	77
	High	13	14	7	8	20	11
II	Overall adjustment						
	Low	4	4	2	2	6	3
	Average	74	82	76	84	150	83
	High	12	13	12	13	24	13
III	Autonomy						
	Low	2	2	1	1	3	2
	Average	46	51	48	53	94	52
	High	42	47	41	46	83	46
IV	Security- insecurity						
	Low	10	11	2	2	12	7
	Average	67	74	66	73	133	74
	High	13	14	22	24	35	19
V	Self- concept						
	Low	2	2	6	7	8	4
	Average	66	73	59	66	125	69
	High	22	24	25	28	47	26
VI	Intelligence						
	Low	24	27	27	30	51	28
	Average	61	68	57	63	118	66
	High	5	6	6	7	11	6

Table 3. Correlation between family environment and mental health

S.No	Dimensions of mental health	Cohesion	Expressiveness	Conflict	Acceptance & caring	Independence	Active & recreational orientation	Organization	Control
1	Emotional stability	0.106 NS	0.109 NS	0.045 NS	0.048 NS	0.050 NS	0.091 NS	-0.044 NS	-0.052 NS
2	Over-all adjustment	0.078 NS	0.058 NS	0.149*	0.076 NS	0.066 NS	0.013 NS	0.020 NS	-0.011 NS
3	Autonomy	0.012 NS	-0.017 NS	0.044 NS	-0.077 NS	-0.066 NS	-0.102 NS	0.109 NS	0.063 NS
4	Security-Insecurity	0.051 NS	0.033 NS	-0.025 NS	0.154*	-0.065 NS	-0.081 NS	0.197**	0.142 NS
5	Self-concept	-0.100NS	-0.129 NS	-0.028 NS	0.007 NS	-0.123 NS	-0.154*	-0.050 NS	-0.005 NS
6	Intelligence	0.201**	0.104 NS	0.166*	0.136 NS	0.189*	0.210**	0.185*	-0.089 NS
	Total Mental Health	0.180*	0.094 NS	0.191*	0.163*	0.090 NS	0.059 NS	0.170*	-0.018 NS

*p >.05 ; **p >.01 ; NS : Not significant.

dimension is positively and significantly correlated to intelligence dimension of mental health status at 5% level of significance. These results clearly showed the role of organization in enhancing mental health status of tribal adolescents.

Control

It is interesting to note from the results that the control dimension of family environment is not correlated to any five dimensions of mental health and total mental health. From the results, it can be concluded that family environment has significant role in enhancing mental health status of tribal adolescents. Study by Mahalakshmi and Pugalenthy (2015) also found that existence of significant and negative correlation between family environment and mental health of higher secondary school students. Siddique and Arcy in 1984 has confirmed the same; where they found strong association between cohesion, degree of conflict and organization in adolescents mental health

CONCLUSION

From the study it can be concluded that tribal adolescents had average levels of mental health.

Further, family environment has significant relationship with important dimensions of mental health. Hence measures should be taken to enhance the family environment which in turn enhances mental health status.

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