
Parent-Adolescent Conflict: Indian Context

Parenting has been defined as activities of parents which aim to help their child grow ahead and move forward (Gafoor & Kurukkan, 2014). It is usually considered to be an exciting and adventurous journey, but perceived to be troublesome and stressful as well, especially during the period of the child's development stage of adolescence (Gafoor & Kurukkan, 2014; Kapadia & Miller, 2005). Parenting is also highly influenced by culture, which defines for it the limits of right and wrong (Gafoor & Kurukkan, 2014). Adolescence, on the other hand, is a crucial period of transition, from childhood to adulthood, which is characterized by innumerable biological and emotional changes. According to UNICEF (2011), the term 'adolescent' refers to any individual between the age of 10 and 19. About 243 million, which is approximately 21 per cent of the total population of India, is formed by the adolescents (Sivagurunathan, Umadevi, Rama, & Gopalakrishnan, 2015). However, the concept of teenage seems to be absent in India (Kapadia & Miller, 2005; Sharma, 2012).

A continuance prevails from being a child to an adult and thus, the period of adolescence in India is characterized by no change in role, status, and responsibility as the children continue to remain submissive to parental assertiveness, even after marriage or employment (Segal, 1991; Kapadia, 2017). However, as the child's need for autonomy and self-determination arises throughout adolescence, parents tend to feel isolated and conflicts tend to arise (Sondhi, 2017). Thus, parent-adolescent conflicts, as a consequence of this discrepancy between parents' and adolescents' expectations of each other, have been viewed as an inevitable element of adolescence (Branje, Doorn, Valk, & Meeus, 2009). Hence, it has become necessary to understand the reasons and consequences of such conflicts and consider the coping strategies to strengthen the parent-adolescent relationship. The inevitable conflict among parents and their adolescents, due to their contrasting needs and perspectives, has captured considerable interest of the researchers.

However, the stage of adolescence is distinctly viewed by parents in the Indian culture. Consequently, the parenting practices also differ, but the inherently curious nature of adolescence prevails. Thus, it is important to understand the nature of conflict that arises between the Indian adolescents and their parents, its consequences, and the strategies used to deal with the same. Hence, the purpose of this integrative review is to comprehensively analyze and summarize the past literature of parent-adolescent conflict within the Indian context.

Theoretical Perspectives

The following theories explain the period of adolescence, the challenges it endures, and the

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resultant conflicts that occur among parents and adolescents, in unique perspectives.

Baumrind's Theory of Parenting Styles

The pioneering theory of Diana Baumrind (1971), proposes four types of parenting styles, namely, authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and neglectful, authoritative being the best among all (cited in Santrock, 2014). A review of literature on the effects of parenting styles on adolescents' behaviour, conducted by Baumrind (1966), revealed that too restrictive, demanding and authoritarian parenting breeds rebelliousness among the adolescents. On the contrary, parents who are controlling as well as warm, yield less passive, self-reliant and approach-oriented children. Thus, different parenting styles involve a combination of different degrees of the two factors: warmth & control, which influence the adolescent's behaviour to a great extent.

Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1990) proposed a fundamental theory of attachment, which describes how the attachment pattern between children and caregivers (usually mother) form internal working models for the former (as cited in Dhillon & Kanwar, 2015), which help form thoughts, beliefs, expectations, behaviour and emotions, regarding self and others. Mary Ainsworth (1979) identified three different attachment styles, namely, secure, anxious-ambivalent, anxious-avoidant, and disorganized (as cited in Santrock, 2014). During adolescence, these attachment styles and internal working models influence the adolescents' relationships with peers, other social relationships, and most prominently in dating relationships. If the attachments are weak, then the intense and prolonged parent-adolescent conflicts that arise during this period have been found to make their adjustment difficult (Dhillon & Kanwar, 2015).

Family Therapy Perspective

The family life cycle has been introduced in terms of eight stages through the work of Evelyn Duvall in 1957 (cited in Nichols, 2013), and in terms of six stages including multigenerational viewpoint, by Carter and McGoldrick (2005). The fifth stage 'Families with Teenagers' or the fourth stage 'Families with Adolescents' of different models, proposed by respective authors, characterize the period wherein conflicts among parents and adolescents take place as it presents challenges to the family. The adolescents' desire to acquire independence, flexibility to move in and out of the family, parental loss of power and influence over children, have been identified as the major themes of the conflict with parents (Robin & Foster, 1989). In fact, the physiological, psychological, social transformations that this period yield have been found to disrupt the homeostasis of the family system, which shall be regained by adjustments in the system (Montemayor, 1983). Literature reviewed by Montemayor (1983), also suggested the

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pattern of conflict to be U-shaped, in that it increases during early adolescence, remains stable through middle phase and decreases in the late adolescence.

Self Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan, in 1991, pioneered a need-based theory of motivation, called Self-Determination Theory. When applied to the Indian home environment, the theory postulates that it can promote adaptation of the adolescents who operate in this environment, through socialization processes, which are influenced by the degree to which their psychological needs are satisfied and self determination is promoted (cited in Rapheal & Varghese, 2015). Thus, if psychological needs are thwarted at home, the adolescents' individuation and self determination suffers, indicating a need for 'Autonomy Supportive Parenting' in India, finding of a study conducted upon 69 Indian families by Rapheal and Varghese (2015).

Hindu (Indian) Model of Human Development

Kapadia (2017) outlines briefly, how the ancient Hindu conceptualization segregated human development into stages, wherein adolescence did not exist explicitly, but its beginning was termed as Brahmacharya, which is the period of learning to read and understand scriptures. The following stage termed Kishorawastha emphasized on preparing the puberty-struck child to practically apply the learnt knowledge and develop a responsible identity. These two stages have been compared to the current education system that builds a child's personality and readies the adolescents to become responsible adults, as they step into the social world (Kapadia, 2017).

Understanding both sides of the coin:

Parents and Adolescents

Parenting adolescents in India

The traditional Indian parenting is characterized by emphatic richness, support, encouragement, increased physical contact, strong emotional bond, and profound emphasis on values, morals, respect, authority, dharma (duties), and self-control (Kulanjiyil, 2010). The Indian parenting style is identified as authoritarian as it includes practice of corporal punishment, which is largely tolerated leaving emotional scars on children, and limits autonomy and independence by emphasizing overprotection and interdependence (Kulanjiyil, 2010). This has increasingly led to increased conflicts among parents and children during the period of adolescence where the latter two aspects are considered necessary by the adolescents. Indian parents often report that their children do not stick to the curfew timings set by them, remain engrossed in social

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networking world, seem to dislike them, and similarly they also don't really approve of their children's social circle (Lakshmi, 2015).

In order to deal with or even prevent such issues, Indian parents, especially mothers have been found to use higher degree of control along with acceptance (Albert, Trommsdorff, & Mishra, 2007). Deeply influenced by the culture, certain aspects unique to traditional Indian parenting are greater physical proximity, expectation of unquestioned obedience (Sondhi, 2017), morals and values, emotional connectedness, interdependence, dharma, authority and support (Kulanjiyil, 2010). However, with changing times, the objectives being the same, the methods of parenting have modified to allowing greater autonomy, obsolete unquestioned obedience, values being given to academics rather than household chores, restriction of independence only outside the home, but freedom of expression inside home as well as expression of defiance towards parents (Sondhi, 2017). Moreover, contribution of fathers in parenthood has been on a rise with increase in active involvement recently (Bhattacharyya & Pradhan, 2015).

Indian Adolescents' Perspective

During this period, the individuals are neither quite adult nor quite a child anymore. They don't know how to deal with the newly acquired liberty and as the Delhi-based counsellor Gitanjali Kapoor posits, 'new technological progress is making them experience an uncertain and confused state of maturity' (Datta, 2011). Teenage life in India has been referred as a persona that is masked under the veil of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity (Sen, 2013). They face issues such as mood swings (Mondal, 2015), love/relationship and similar issues that are considered to be a taboo by their parents (Sen, 2013), hampered self-esteem, not receiving desired independence, and being busy always in competing with others as indirectly taught by parents (Ghosh, 2016). They also sacrifice on their autonomy due to the Indian culture's emphasis on interdependence, which affects the independence of those living in joint families more than those in nuclear families (Bhattacharyya & Pradhan, 2015).

However, astoundingly, the Indian adolescents perceive parental restrictions and regulation as an input for their parenting and report 'no dissatisfaction' with the same (Kapadia & Miller, 2005), even when gendered socialization is highly practiced in terms of imposing behavioural prescriptions more on girls than boys (Kapadia, 2016). They tend to view these prescriptions as a part of parental care and thus, end up learning to expect the same, or their acceptance might also be a manifestation of respect for their parents and elderly, that is considered in high regards in the Indian culture, making it difficult for the adolescents to express their experience (Kapadia, 2016).

METHOD

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Holding emphasis on the parent-adolescent conflict within the Indian context facilitated the stage of literature search. A systematic search of the articles was conducted using key words such as 'parent', 'adolescent', 'conflict', 'in India', and 'intergenerational', using online databases like: ERIC, Academic Search, PubMed, JSTOR, Project MUSE, PsycINFO, Science Direct, Scopus, and Semantic Scholar. The target population was all the relevant studies pertaining to 'parent-adolescent conflict'. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were used for literature search.

Inclusion criteria:

- Topic addressing conflict (or related terms) among parents and adolescents
 - Empirical studies, review papers, dissertations & thesis, news articles
 - Sample included Indian adolescents and/or Indian parents as participants
 - Date of publication was between January 2000 and August 2018
- Exclusion criteria:
- Studies that did not include Indian population in the sample
 - Unpublished work
 - Work published before January 2000 and earlier

The rationale for choosing the literature from the last two decades was to capture the currently prevailing nature of parent-adolescent conflict as well as changes in the concept over the years. The titles and abstracts of all the sixty publications, identified in the initial search, were read. Thereafter, six publications were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria. An ancestry review of the references was conducted to identify additional articles that met the inclusion criteria. However, none were identified.

Thereafter, six publications (see Table 1) were recognized as the final sample for this review, which included three empirical research studies and three dissertations. Further, an extensive reading of each publication was carried out to make sure that the content focused on conflict between adolescents and their parents. The data was analyzed with consideration of the title, sample, and findings of the studies reviewed. Based on commonalities and central issues in the findings, the data is grouped into three categories, patterns and themes of conflicts, reasons of the conflicts, and conflict resolution strategies.

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