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Socioeconomic factors on parents and adolescents perception on parenting: A case study

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Abstract

The current study focuses on relationship between socioeconomic status and perceived parenting style. The study was carried out at Barpeta district of lower Assam, India in 2018. A total of 200 adolescents in the age group of 16 years to 17 years and their biological parents were selected as a sample for the study. Socioeconomic status was measured by using a socioeconomic status (SES) scale developed by Aggrawal (2005). Based on theories of Baumrind (1971) and dimensions of parenting style proposed by Maccoby and Martin (1983) a self developed parenting style questionnaire was developed for studying the parenting style. Home visit was conducted for studying the home environment and interviewing parents of the sample adolescents. Results of the study revealed that authoritarian parenting style perceived by both parents and adolescents had positive relationship with socioeconomic status of the respondent's family. Results also revealed that family income and occupation had positive relationship with authoritative parenting style as perceived by parents and adolescents and negatively associated with parents' education, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the Family.

Keywords: Parents, adolescents, parenting, perception of adolescents on parenting, perception of parents on parenting

Introduction

In the modern world the socioeconomic condition of a country depends on the global market economy. Therefore, the socioeconomic status of a country is unstable and uncertain. Among the developing country like India suffers a lot not only from global market but also from different threshold problems of its own. The percent of people living under poverty are 21.9 per cent (Asian Development Bank, 2017) ^[1]. Parenting is a dependable process on various factors. Material and resources available as well as education, occupation, family income placed a higher level of impact on parenting besides parent's and child's own characteristics. Specially parenting during adolescence demands more resources and capitals in the form of resources and knowledge. Rutter and Madge (1978) ^[31] defined parenting under poverty. According to them, "As well as poverty affecting parenting, parenting may have an effect on poverty, resulting in so called cycles of disadvantage". According to Early and Eccles (1995) ^[12], the relationship between parenting and socioeconomic status was well described by Elder and Caspi (1988) ^[14] and McLoyd (1990) ^[24]. Elders and Caspi (1988) ^[14] revealed that economic pressure and hardship adversely affect parenting. They described that economic loss leads to economic pressure in the family, which in turn leads to parent's psychological distress in the form of depression and hostility. This psychological distress leads to hostility, low warmth and arbitrary discipline towards child. Fathers are reported to be more affected by the adverse economic condition. McLoyd (1990) ^[24] supported Elders' study and wrote that poor parents experience more psychological distress than wealthy parents because they have to deal with frequent negative life events. Parents of such families faced difficulties in maintaining good parenting behaviour like reasoning, explaining family rules and rewarding child for their good behaviour. McLoyd (1990) ^[24] with many evidences proved that poverty and economic loss diminish the capacity for supportive, consistent and involved parenting. Early and Eccles (1995) ^[12], conducted a study to understand links between socioeconomic status and parenting behaviour in African American and European American samples. They conducted the study with 1,398 numbers of seventh grade adolescents and their parents. They utilized secondary data collected by Maryland Adolescent Growth in Context (MAGIC) study. The study observed the relation between socioeconomic status and parents' behaviour with and without controlling of three intermediate variables.

They were psychological distress of parents, parent's perception of neighborhood risk and resources. Parenting behaviour was analysed in terms of positive relationship with child and child's involvement in decision making. When intermediate variable were controlled, result revealed that in both the cultures, higher socioeconomic status parents reported more positive relationship with children and child's involvement in decision making than lower socioeconomic status parents. Higher socioeconomic status parents reported fewer neighbourhood risks than lower socioeconomic status parents. Higher socioeconomic status parents also suffered from less psychological distress than lower socioeconomic status group. When intermediate variable was not controlled similar results was found between higher and lower socioeconomic status group. Only difference was found in African American parents that for both the socioeconomic status groups they found no relation in child involvement in decision making. Higher socioeconomic status parents from both the cultural groups reported fewer neighbourhood risks than lower socioeconomic status group, more neighbourhood resources than lower socioeconomic status group and less psychological distress than lower socioeconomic status parents.

There are also some studies which explained that economic hardship always does not mean a negative parenting. According to Grimm *et al.* (1994) [16], working-class men exhibited more positive and authoritative (authoritative) parenting behaviours when they had more fulfilling professional experiences. Rosier and Corsaro (1993) [30] found that mothers belonging to low socioeconomic status households adopt authoritative parenting. They tend to encourage autonomy, individuality, and self-reliance in their children as a means of teaching their children resiliency. Middleton and Colleagues' (1997) [25] research revealed that half of parents with children living in poverty are not impoverished, confirming the common practise of parents prioritising the needs of their offspring. Mothers are typically more tolerant of making personal sacrifices than fathers, therefore this tendency may vary by gender. Some studies reveal how parents under poverty maintained good parenting practices which result in positive outcome of their child. In spite of their poor and challenging circumstances, Marion Lindblad Goldberg's (1989) [23] study of lone-parent families in the USA showed that they had built functional and well-adjusted households that encouraged their kids' education, resourcefulness, and responsibility. This was accomplished by creating coping strategies, such as a strong family idea that prioritises communication, loyalty, and home-centeredness. Additionally, the families had learned how to emphasise positive events while downplaying the negative parts of stressful situations. Accessing a network of friends and family members who can help you cope with stress was another smart move.

Fox *et al.* (2002) [15] conducted a pilot study with American families. They broadly took only family's annual income during adolescence period as socioeconomic status. Research revealed no significance correlation between socioeconomic status and authoritative and permissive parenting. They discovered a link between socioeconomic class and authoritarian parenting.

Vellymalay (2012) [33] done a study on Malaysia with forty Indian students and their parents as a sample. He observed that parents from higher socioeconomic status showed a high degree of involvement in most of the involvement strategies

at home to ensure their child's educational success. His study also found that the economic and academic capital among the middle –class parents serve to enhance their understanding and knowledge required for their child's education. As a result, these children gain in terms of good skills, behaviour and values, all of which are crucial to their academic success. Rani and Singh (2013) [29], in their study on comparison of rural and urban children according to home environment and parenting style revealed significant differences for all aspects of home environment measured under the study. The home environment aspects studied under the study consisted of responsiveness, encouragement of maturity, emotional climate, learning material and opportunities, enrichment, family companionship, family integration and physical environment. Regarding parenting styles adopted by rural and urban parents, significant differences observed between authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles of mothers. Fathers under study significantly differ in respect to authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles.

In India every fifth person is an adolescent (10 – 19 years), comprising 19.6 per cent of total population (Census, 2011) [8]. The census data (2011) [8] shows 898 females per 1000 males, literacy for boys is 91.7 per cent and for girls is 88.2 per cent (Census, 2011) [8]. These adolescents are the future of India, they are the future parents and boost the country for growth and prosperity. This is possible only when all concerned bodies of the social system give priorities for their development. The present technological advancement and global – market economy, changes in social system from traditional to modern influences parenting. In India, with limited resources parenting adolescents become an issue for the parents and for the adolescents. Thus studies on parenting adolescents and its relationship with socioeconomic status becomes an urgent need which will benefited all concerned body related to their development.

Objectives

1. To study the socioeconomic status of the respondents' family.
2. To find out the relationship between parents' perception on parenting and family income, family occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status.
3. To find out the relationship between adolescents' perception on parenting and family income, family occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status.

Research Methods

The study was carried out in Barpeta district of Assam. A total sample of 200 adolescents belongs to the age group of 16-17 years and their 200 biological parents were selected for the study. To get a virgin population, adolescents were selected from both urban and rural area's higher secondary schools and colleges of the districts. The socioeconomic status of the respondents were collected by using a socioeconomic status (SES) scale developed by Aggrawal (2005) [2]. The scale consisted of 22 items. The highest possible total score was 100. Six socioeconomic categories— Upper high (combined score of more than 76), High (61-75), Upper Middle (46-60), Lower Middle (31-45), Poor (16-30), and Very Poor—are determined based on the results of the test (combined score less than 15).h Same scale was used for both urban and rural population under the study to measure

the socioeconomic status of the respondents. Home visit was conducted to collect the data. To investigate how parents and teenagers see parenting style, a questionnaire was created. 32 items in four different parenting style categories made up the questionnaire. Authoritarian parenting style, authoritative parenting style, and uninvolved parenting style were the subheads of the parenting style questionnaire. Each parenting style (subscale) had eight statements based on parental dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness and also their outcomes. The responses to each statement were scored

by using 5 point Likert scale. The collected data was organized, consolidated and tabulated by using Microsoft excel sheet and analyzed by using appropriate statistical methods. SPSS was used to analyze the data. Correlation analysis is used to find the degree of relationships and the direction of relationship between two variables. In order to find out the significant difference between two variables independent t test was applied.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to the overall socioeconomic status of the family

Social status	No. of respondents			Independent t-test score
	Rural (N ₁ = 100)	Urban (N ₂ = 100)	Total (N ₁ +N ₂ =200)	
Upper high	0	2 (1)	2 (1)	1.26742E-12 (NS)
High	3 (1.5)	24 (12)	27 (13.5)	
Upper middle	21 (10.5)	36 (18)	57 (28.5)	
Lower middle	57 (28.5)	33 (16.5)	90 (45)	
Poor	19 (9.5)	5 (2.5)	24 (12)	
Very poor	0	0	0	

Figures within parentheses indicate percentages
NS = Not significant

Table 1 reveals that a high percentage of respondents belonged to lower middle class families (45%) followed by upper middle (28.5%), high (13.5%), poor (12%) and upper high (1%) socioeconomic status. Results indicate (Table 1,) that rural and urban respondents' socioeconomic status was not significantly different but it was observed that urban respondents lived in a better neighbourhood than rural respondents. In earlier times the socioeconomic status was measured primarily by income (Prasad, 1970 and Kuppaswami, 1981) [28, 21] and results of the present study reveal that the income of the respondents' families were skewed in both urban and rural areas (Table 1). Again the economy of the Barpeta district is dependent on agriculture and allied sector which is considered as a risk taking business, absence of industries, natural calamities like flood etc. affected in the living standard of the people of the district of both urban and rural areas.

2002) [17]. Researches elsewhere reveal that parents from different socioeconomic strata rear their children differently partly due to the different circumstances in which they live and partly because they are themselves different sorts of people with different ways of interacting with the world. Educational, occupational and financial factors all work to create SES- related differences in parents' circumstances and characteristics, with educational factors appearing to carry the greatest share of variance (Hoff *et al.*, 2002) [17]. Size of the family has a significant association with parenting. As family size increases, parents become more autocratic (Elder, 1962; Sears, Maccoby and Levin, 1957) [13, 32]. Similarly, family size is positively related to perception of parental punitiveness and rejection and negatively related to perception of parental love and support (Kidwell, 1981; Nye *et al.*, 1970; Peterson and Kunz, 1975) [20, 26, 27]. An attempt has been made to observe whether different variables of socioeconomic status play any role in parents' and adolescents' perception on parenting.

Socioeconomic status (SES) and parenting

Parenting differs across socioeconomic strata (Hoff *et al.*,

Table 2: Relationship of socioeconomic status with perceived parents' parenting style

Parenting style	Co-efficient of correlation				
	Family income	Family occupation	Education	Number of siblings	Overall SES
Authoritative	0.009	0.026	-0.051	-0.021	-0.030
Authoritarian	0.055	0.073	0.016	0.134	0.076
Permissive	0.046	-0.009	0.025	-0.069	-0.012
Uninvolved	-0.008	-0.065	0.017	0.013	-0.104

Table 3: Relationship of socioeconomic status with adolescents' perceived parenting styles

Parenting style	Co-efficient of correlation				
	Family income	Family occupation	Parents' education	Number of siblings	Overall SES
Authoritative	0.002	0.049	-0.115	-0.151	-0.116
Authoritarian	0.181	0.212	0.229	0.181	0.260
Permissive	0.012	-0.018	-0.040	0.049	0.030
Uninvolved	0.049	0.013	0.074	0.117	0.112

To observe the relationship between perceived parenting styles and socioeconomic status coefficient of correlations were computed. Results reveal that family income and

occupation had positive relationship with authoritative parenting style as perceived by parents and adolescents and negatively associated with parents education, number of

siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family (Table 2 and Table 3). Interestingly, perceived authoritarian parenting style by both parents and adolescents showed positive relationship with income, occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. From the results (Table 2, Table 3) it is evident that permissive parenting style of parents was positively associated with income, education and negatively associated with occupation, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. Again results reveal that permissive parenting style as perceived by adolescents was positively associated with income, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. In case of uninvolved parenting style as perceived by adolescents it was found positively associated with income, occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of family. Parents perceived uninvolved parenting style having positive relationship only with education and number of siblings (Table 2, Table. 3).

From the findings (Table 2, Table 3), it is observed that only authoritarian parenting style had significant relationship with different variables of socioeconomic status and overall socioeconomic condition of the respondents' family. Other three types of parenting styles i.e. authoritative parenting style, permissive parenting style and uninvolved parenting style depicted variations in their relationships with variables of socioeconomic status and overall socioeconomic status. This may be due to the fact that a host of other factors also influence parenting (Belsky, 1984)^[5], making it difficult to isolate the variance accounted for by socioeconomic status. Again, present day parenting was considered as social responsibility by different governmental and nongovernmental organizations which directly or indirectly assisted parents by providing both psychological and physical support. Therefore may be due to this reason parents' and adolescent's perceived authoritative parenting style was negatively associated with overall socioeconomic status of the family. However, previous research in the field of parenting styles and its relationship with socioeconomic status revealed a wide range of both positive and negative associations. Joseph and Jhon (2008)^[19] found that parents of Kerala (India) adopted authoritative parenting style irrespective of their social class and socioeconomic status. However, a positive correlation has been found between parenting style with education of the parents. According to analyses of a sizable, diverse sample of Californian teenagers, families with higher parental education tended to have less permissive and authoritarian parenting styles and more authoritative parenting styles than households with lower parental education (Dornbusch *et al.*, 1987)^[11].

Conclusion

After analyzing the data it was observed that most of the respondents were belonged to lower middle class families (45%) followed by upper middle (28.5%), high (13.5%), poor (12%) and upper high (1%) socioeconomic status. Regarding their overall socioeconomic condition, there were no discernible differences between respondents from rural and urban areas. Authoritarian parenting style as perceived by both parents and adolescents was found to be positively related with income, occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. Authoritative parenting style as perceived by parents and adolescents had positive relationship with family income and

occupation but negatively associated with parents' education, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. Permissive parenting style as perceived by parents was positively associated with income, education and negatively associated with occupation, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. Permissive parenting style as perceived by adolescents was positively associated with income, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of the family. Uninvolved parenting style as perceived by parents shows positive relationship with education and number of siblings. In case of adolescents, uninvolved parenting style as perceived by them was positively associated with income, occupation, education of parents, number of siblings and overall socioeconomic status of family.

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