

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

**Adolescent Insecurity and Parental Influence**

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**ABSTRACT**

It requires an extraordinary intellectual exertion to be convinced about the relation of adolescent insecurity with such variables as emotional intelligence, self-concept and parental influence, there is no clear evidence regarding the exact nature of the relation in question. Insecurity is a core issue of human existence which needs special attention during adolescence and the study of factors influencing insecurity will help in developing balanced personality among adolescents. Surprisingly the study of research literature so far accomplished and accumulated in black and white shows that the realm of insecurity in adolescents has remained almost wholly untouched by earlier investigators. A diligent, cognitive incursion into the realms of relevant international abstracts - psychological, sociological and anthropological has also brought to light that there is no clear cut empirical evidence regarding the relationship of adolescent insecurity with emotional intelligence, self-concept and parental influence. The perusal of the other related studies which have not been published so far also leads to the same conclusions. In view of this factual situation, investigations are certainly needed to discover the nature of insecurity faced by adolescents in Nigeria and also about the relationship of insecurity with relevant non organismic and organismic variables. It is the duty of the adolescent to perpetuate his race and develop some usefulness in himself as well as in others. The burden of his family, society and community lies on his shoulders. Only a secure person can perform his duty in a healthy way.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, insecurity, adolescent insecurity, emotional intelligence.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Human development is subjected to different stages of life, i.e., infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood (Lupien *et al.*, 2019; Ushie & Odey 2018). Adolescence is a period which comes in between childhood and adulthood. This period is often divided into two segments - early adolescence and late adolescence. The early adolescence begins at the age of sixteen and the late adolescence ends at the age of eighteen. Then follows the period of adulthood. Adolescence is an especially unstable as well as a vibrant period of life. The great importance of period of adolescence has been clearly emphasized by philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and educationists. The period of adolescence is characterized by rapid physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth period, of growing up. Physically the boys and girls gradually become adults. Intellectual growth moves towards a more abstract and mature mode of thinking. Intelligence reaches its optimum level. Emotionally, the adolescent grows independent of parents and prepares himself for entering into other relationships that are needed in life. Sex consciousness develops and this influences the emotional as well as the social activities of the individual. Adolescence period is marked by several problems, out of which insecurity in adolescents is one of the serious issues which the investigator has chosen for this research.

Bass and Ball (1960) considered adolescence as the transition stage from childhood to maturity, during which new patterns of behaviour have to be developed to meet the demands both of the larger and more diversified likes of his peers and of the adult society which he begins to enter. Hall (1904) is of the opinion that period of adolescence is a particularly stormy and tempestuous in contrast to the supposedly quiescent period of late childhood that precedes it. Hall (1904) regarded adolescence as a “period of great stress and strain, storm and strife”. The age of adolescence is marked by manifestations which have caused it to be described as “an age of crisis and insecurities”. It represents the period of time during which a person is subjected to an array of biological transformations and runs into a number of emotional tribulations.

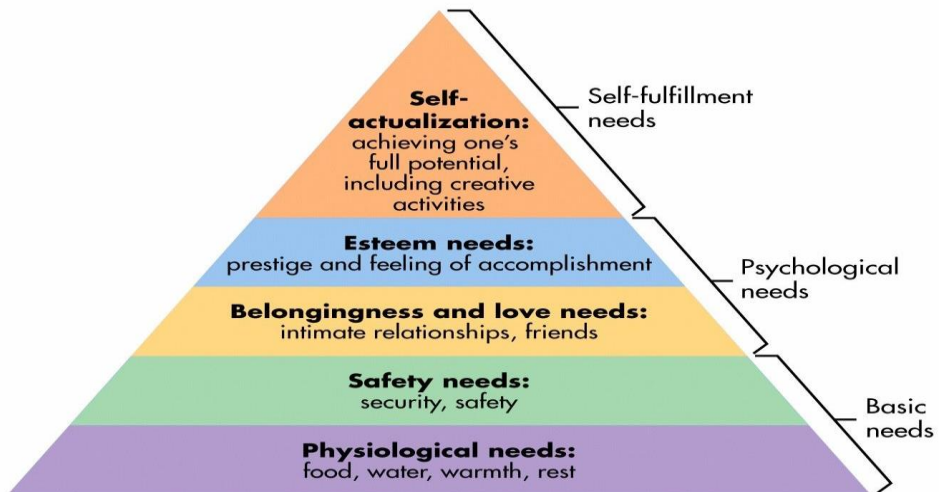
## **INSECURITY IN ADOLESCENTS**

A normal individual always desires and works hard to lead a happy and secure life. One's state of mind is one of the most important determinants of happiness in life. (Igbineweka & Egbai 2017; Odey & Ushie 2018) Psychologically, feeling of security is the most important state of human existence that an individual longs for. Owing to rapid mechanization, globalization and the pressing ambition of upward mobility, more and more people are being exposed to numerous situations in which they tend to feel insecure. As a consequence, insecurity has now become a core

issue of human existence. It is a starkly known fact that the period of adolescence is especially marked by insecurity. The problem of insecurity assumes extraordinary dimensions during this stage of life because it is characterized by stresses and strains, the intensity and frequency of which are neither experienced in the pre adolescent period nor in the post adolescent period. The problem of insecurity becomes particularly acute during the late phase of adolescence because of heightened needs for self-acceptance, personal identity, independence and social acceptance and because the spectre of formidable realities and responsibilities of adult life start staring in the face and because adolescents are yet cognitively, emotionally and conatively ill-equipped to meet the challenges before him.

### **THE CONCEPT OF INSECURITY**

Nobody knows when the concept of insecurity was formally formulated in human history (Ilozobhie & Egu, 2018; Adora, 2019). But everyone would agree that insecurity has always been one of the cardinal characteristics of human existence. It would not be wrong to say that insecurity was born along with the birth of human race on this earthly realm. In the twentieth century, the concept of insecurity seems to have been more or less clearly formulated. The roots of the concept of insecurity date back to the opinion of Maslow (1953). Human desires are arranged in ascending hierarchy of needs and the need of safety and security occupies a crucially significant place as shown in the pyramid of hierarchy (figure 1.1).



**Fig 1.1. Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow (1979) used the term insecurity syndrome to indicate a situation of chronic insecurity covering about fourteen symptoms such as feelings of

rejection, absence of belongingness and isolation, alarm attitude towards life, sense of suspiciousness, jealousy and hatred etc. Insecurity has been defined by Cambridge Paperback Encyclopedia (2000), “Insecurity as a feeling of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence and inability to cope, as well as general uncertainty and anxiety about one’s goal, ability or relationship, which prevents one to reach a goal, feel thwarted and insecure”. According to New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (2002), “Insecurity is either danger that is lack of objective security or an emotion of general unease or nervousness without obvious purpose”.

By way of summing up, it can be said that insecurity denotes feelings of fear and of incompetency in facing the realities of life - realities in the shape of demands and challenges of living. Insecure persons experience waves of helplessness when confronted with difficulties and problems of life.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF INSECURE ADOLESCENTS**

Adolescence is an especially unstable as well as a vibrant period of a person’s life. It represents the period of time during which a person is subjected to an array of biological transformations and runs into a number of emotional tribulations. Various characteristics of insecure adolescents are: They have difficulties in establishing healthy, long lasting relationship. Insecure adolescents become victims of fears that impair their freedom of action or choice. They scare others away from them by their defensive attitude. They are over controlled emotionally; have problems letting others in on their emotions. This can lead others to guess what is going on until the passivity of the insecure person leads to an over-reaction by the others, resulting in conflict or rejection. They face problems in school when they have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do a task efficiently but are told to do it in a different less effective manner. They get so uptight about the task and are fearful of standing up for what they believe that they get angry, hostile and resentful until they either quit or succeed in submerging their emotions. Insecure adolescents get passed over for promotions, advance or honors because they are so quite about what it is they do. This leads the insecure individual to feel more unaccepted, unappreciated, and under-valued. They have problems in meeting people and often can become debilitated socially by chronic shyness. They become so inward that they seek to escape into their fantasy life rather than deal with the reality of their lives.

Adolescents who suffer from insecurity often feel that they have no talents or values and therefore, cannot believe that others truly love them or want the best for them. Often these adolescents feel that happiness or anything positive is only

temporary so they may be constantly on guard that things will again turn sour or go wrong.

## **LIFE STRATEGIES OF INSECURE PERSONS**

Insecurity pursues various life strategies for overcoming it. Whatever the cause of driving fear in a life, human nature is fairly predictable in the strategies it employs to deal with it. Following are some strategies for overcoming insecurity among adolescents:

- 1. Self-protection:** Since fear is a sense of vulnerability based on a real or supposed threat to something we value highly, it is easy to see how self protection can be the motivating force in a life of insecurity. Sometimes, particularly in a situation where a child has been abused in some way, this self-protection is an appropriate and legitimate response. a) However, it's easy for sinful beings to develop self-absorbed habits and thinking patterns that remain years after the abusive situation no longer exists. Self protection can quickly blind the insecure person to opportunities to reach out and minister to others and even when they want to reach out, insecurity can cripple them and leave them feeling powerless to do so.
- 2. Self-degradation:** Sometimes someone who has been put down for years will develop a very unbiblical view of self. Often the person who has been sexually or emotionally abused comes to the place where they believe that they are different from other people that somehow they deserve to be treated the way they were treated. Often this type of person won't even seek relief from the abusive situation because they somehow feel that they don't deserve anything better.
- 3. Self-depreciation:** Here's a person who constantly puts himself down in the hope that others will disagree and affirm him. Self-depreciation may also be an attempt to lower the standard hoping that if others don't expect much, maybe they can live up to the standard. Whatever the case, this person is often surprised to realise that self-depreciation is actually a form of selfishness because it puts the attention on self instead of God and others.
- 4. Self-promotion:** Sometimes insecurity will lead to the opposite extreme of attention-getting antics and "showing off." It is amazing to see a child who wants to be accepted by his friends so badly that he will do almost anything even something dangerous in order to gain it. The problem is that this child, along with a lot of adults, derives his value as a person from how others view him. This person is compensating, desperately looking for affirmation and approval.

- 5. Self-righteousness:** While it's simple to understand that our value is not based on what others think of us, it's not quite as simple to understand how our value is based on what God thinks of us. God's love for us is the basis for all true security, but so often we think that we have to earn that love. The reason insecurity spends great effort trying to earn God's love is because it thinks it can earn God's love.

Insecurity can be highly destructive; especially if one don't understand it. Many insecure people find scapegoats for their problems, never realizing that they are causing the problems themselves (Ude & Oben 2015). In this scenario, it is imperative to develop proper and positive attitude among adolescents.

## **CAUSES OF INSECURITY IN ADOLESCENTS**

Excessive competition, rapidly changing cultural and social values, constant exposures to speed in every aspect of life have made the people in general and young generation in specific, live in urgency and emergency. In the present age of unprecedented challenges and changes, individual's life has become confused and insecure. The following causes lead to insecurity in adolescents:

1. Bringing up in a chaotic, unpredictable, or volatile environment in which they are kept off balance, on guard, or on an edge.
2. Experiencing a major tragedy or loss in their lives and are having a difficult time in accepting this loss and adjusting to the change.
3. Experiencing a major failure in life (e.g. failure in school, losing a friend, lack of acceptance into social or civic groups etc.) that leads them to question their personal competency.
4. A poorly developed self-concept with low self-esteem, lacking belief in their personal goodness, skills and abilities.
5. Never feeling accepted by the others in their life, so much so that they became chronically shy, retiring and withdrawn in their interactions.
6. Unrealistic rules and expectations prescribed for them.
7. A poor body image, making them believe that others see them in a negative light. This makes them self-conscious, tense, and anxious in dealing with others.
8. Never receiving enough positive reinforcement or feedback from others about their talents and abilities, leaving them unclear as to their skills.
9. Receiving very little direction, guidance, or discipline in different phases of their development and thus leaving them unable to cope with the current pressures of life.
10. Always feeling overshadowed or overlooked by the people who are perceived to be more successful.

The present society is booming with speed, competition, rivalries, economic up-



heavens, ecological imbalances, materialistic attitudes, parental expectations; own ambitions etc. and thus adolescents today are insecurity prone.

## **INSECURITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Insecurity is a core issue of human existence which needs special attention during adolescence. The study of factors influencing insecurity has shown emotional intelligence as one of the most important factors in personality development. Singh et al. (2007) studied the mental health status of high and low emotionally intelligent adolescents and observed a significant difference in mental health status indicating better mental health of highly emotional intelligent adolescents.

Emotional intelligence is the product of one's heredity and its interaction with environmental forces and is one of the potent factors affecting insecurity in adolescents. Many problems may arise from low emotional intelligence. Proficiency in emotional management, conflict resolution, communication and interpersonal skills is essential for children to develop inner self-security to be able to effectively deal with the pressures and obstacles that inevitably arise in their lives. Feeling of security is an important motivational factor supposed to exercise immense influence on behaviour and personality of an adolescent. A sense of insecurity tends to make an adolescent emotionally fragile. It is a belief that an insecure person is incompetent to handle emotional perturbations and life's challenges.

### **Emotional intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence relating to emotional side of life, implying the ability to manage one's own and others' emotions, to motivate oneself, to handle interpersonal relationships effectively and to turn negative feelings into positive ones. The most distant roots of emotional intelligence can be traced back to Thorndike (1920) who kept a special place for social intelligence away from other types of intelligence. His references to social intelligence included three elements the individual's attitude towards society, social knowledge such as being well in contemporary issues and general knowledge about society and the individual's capacity for social adjustment such as interpersonal relations and family bonding. Thorndike's definition included everything related to human intelligence ranging from social, psychological and economic dimensions. Wechsler (1940) proposed that emotional abilities are essential to determine one's ability to succeed in life. He found emotional intelligence to be an integral part of an individual's personality development. Ellis (1962) pointed out that human emotion and thinking are not separate processes, but they significantly overlap and can never be viewed completely apart from each other. According to Spinoza (1977), both the emotion and intellect together contribute to the ultimate cognitive tool. He talked about three levels of cognition, i.e.,

emotional cognition, intellectual cognition and a kind of intuition. In 1983, Gardner introduced the idea of multiple intelligences which included both interpersonal intelligence (the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people) and intra personal intelligence (the capacity to understand oneself).

Payne (1985) introduced the term emotional intelligence in his doctoral thesis entitled: *A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence*. However, Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the earliest to suggest the name 'Emotional Intelligence' as a term which refers to the ability of a person to deal with one's emotions. Salovey and Mayer (1990), "Emotional Intelligence is a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action". Goleman (1995), "Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to sense, understand, value and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, trust, creativity and influence". Goleman (1996), "Emotional intelligence consists of five components: knowing our emotions (self-awareness), managing them, motivating ourselves, recognizing emotions in others (empathy), and handling relationships". Bar-On, Reuven's opinion (1997) "Emotional intelligence is an array of non cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". According to Davies et al. (1998), "Emotional intelligence includes four dimensions: appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself; appraisal and recognition of emotion in others; regulation of emotion in oneself and use of emotion to facilitate performance". Mayer and Cobb (2000), "The ability to process emotional information, particularly as it involves the perception, assimilation, understanding, and management of emotion".

Stein and Book (2001) defined emotional intelligence as, "set of skills that enables us to make our way in complex world - the personal, social and survival aspect of overall intelligence, elusive common sense and sensitivity that are essential to effective daily functioning". Caruso et al. (2002), "Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to process emotion laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem solving and to focus energy on required behaviour".

Mangal (2003), "Emotional Intelligence is one's unitary ability (related to, but independent of standard intelligence) helpful in knowing, feeling and judging emotions in close cooperation with one's thinking process to behave in a proper way, for the ultimate realization of the happiness and welfare of the self in tune with others".

Hein (2003) defines Emotional Intelligence as, "being able to know how to separate healthy feelings from unhealthy ones and how to turn negative feelings, into positive ones." He believes Emotional Intelligence refers to an individual's innate potential, with a core formed by four inborn components: emotional sensitivity,



emotional memory, emotional learning ability and emotional processing.

Singh (2003, p. 74) explains that, “Emotional Intelligence consists of psychological dimensions such as emotional competency, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity which motivate the individual to manage and lead others as well as empathize with them”.

## **INSECURITY AND SELF-CONCEPT**

Within the large array of significant influences, self-concept is an important dominating factor influencing insecurity. Self-concept is a process through which the individual is represented in his or her own awareness and in the setting of those things with which he or she identifies. Adolescents, who have positive and well developed self- concept display good competencies, can recognize their weaknesses and can overcome them, have a good self of well-being and positive development while the adolescents having low self-concept develop a feeling of insecurity. Singh and Ahmed (2004) concluded that adolescents, who have positive and well developed self-concept display good competencies, can recognize their weaknesses and can overcome them, have a good self of well-being and positive development while the adolescents having low self- concept develop a feeling of insecurity. Any experience which is inconsistent with one’s self-concept may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these experiences there are, the more rigidly self concept is organized to maintain and protect itself. When a person is unable to get rid of perceived inconsistencies, emotional insecurities arise. Insecure people have a poorly developed self-concept with low self-esteem, lacking belief in their personal goodness, skills or abilities.

## **SELF-CONCEPT**

Self-concept is the mental and conceptual understanding and persistent regard that sentient beings hold for their own existence. Self-concept may be defined as the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. Components of the self-concept include physical, psychological, and social attributes, which can be influenced by the individual's attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas. A milestone in human reflection about the non-physical inner self came when Descartes (1644) wrote *Principles of Philosophy*. Descartes proposed that doubt was a principal tool of disciplined inquiry, yet he could not doubt that he doubted. He reasoned that if he doubted, he was thinking, and therefore he must exist. Thus, existence depends upon perception.

A second milestone in the development of self-concept theory was the writing of Freud (1900) who gave us new understanding of the importance of internal

mental processes. While Freud and many of his followers hesitated to make self-concept a primary psychological unit in their theories, Freud's daughter Anna (1946) gave central importance to ego development and self-interpretation. Self-concept theory has always had a strong influence on the emerging profession of counselling. Lecky (1945) contributed the notion that self-consistency is a primary motivating force in human behaviour. By far the most influential and eloquent voice in self-concept theory was that of Rogers (1947) who introduced an entire system of helping built around the importance of the self. In Rogers' view, the self is the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment. Rogers described the self as a social product, developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. He maintained that there is a basic human need for positive regard both from others and from oneself. He also believed that in every person there is a tendency towards self-actualization and development so long as this is permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment (Purkey and Schmidt, 1987).

While most self-concept theorists continued to write and conduct research during the 1970's and 1980's, general interest in self-concept declined. Fortunately, there is a new awareness on the part of both the public and professionals that self-concept cannot be ignored if we are to successfully address such nagging problems as drug and alcohol abuse, drop-out rates, dysfunctional families, and other concerns. In addition to this growing awareness, new ways are being developed to strengthen self-concepts. Research by cognitive theorists are demonstrating that negative self-talk leads to irrational thinking regarding oneself and the world.

Rogers (1951) defined self-concept as, "An organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is compared of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities, the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment, the value qualities which are perceived as association with experiences and objects, and the goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence". Fromm (1956) was as beautifully clear as anyone when he described self-concept as "life being aware of itself". Self-concept has been referred by Lowe (1961) as, "one's attitude towards self". Pederson (1965), "Self-concept is an organized configuration of perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual views as a part of characteristics of himself".

## **INSECURITY AND PARENTAL INFLUENCE**

Insecurity can be a significant problem in life, and it takes root when an adolescent's attachment bond fails to provide the child with sufficient structure, recognition, understanding, safety, and mutual accord. The parents play a vital role in the overall development of adolescents. The parents have a powerful effect on the

behaviour of their children. The adolescents show a feeling of trust and security in their parents by sharing confidence with them while the adolescents who don't have a healthy identification with their parents develop a sense of insecurity. Adolescents who perceive themselves as accepted feel more secured than the adolescents who perceive themselves as rejected or unwanted by their parents. The nature of close affectional bonds leaves an impact on human development across the life span. Kaur (1993) conducted a study on 200 adolescents and found that there exists a significant relationship between security- insecurity and parental attitude.

### **Parental influence**

Parental influence is the influence that parents exercise and exert to bring up their children according to the modes and mores of society and according to their own ideals of earthly life. Parson and Bales (1955) state that, "Parents influence their children by defining their behaviour to early stages and later on children influence their parents and these influences may change substantially with the passage of time. It is the interaction effect that makes it so difficult to identify the variables of child training that are associated with given patterns of child behaviour as a product of parental behaviour." According to Jersild (1957), "The adolescent's relationship with his parents may be viewed as a 3 act drama. In first act, young adolescent continues, as in earlier childhood needs his parents, he is dependent on parents and influenced by them. He begins to become more keenly aware than he was before, of his parents as persons. Increasingly, he is absorbed in the larger world outside home. He begins, in a psychological sense, to leave home to move into this larger world in which he eventually must reside as a self-directing adult. Dinkinmeyer and Mickay (1967) "The family is major environmental influence and remains so throughout the life. It is the most pervasive of all influences.

Cattle (1968) "Good parents produce good students. This means parents play a key role in providing guidance to inspire the children to do fruitful activities related to education. Thompson (1969) writes, "Parents provide reasonably acceptable models by their own behaviour, approval and disapproval used in an intelligent and consistent manner to reflect the personal social values of the home and the larger community, opportunities for the child to participate in the activities of various agencies and institutions designed to transmit social values (school, church, youth groups and the like). Coleman (1973) remarks, "The family carries responsibility for the welfare of its member from cradle to grave". Bloom (1989) says, "The climate of the family may be regarded as providing network of forces and factors which surround, engulf and play on the individual.

Thus, parental influence means capacity or power of parents to produce effects

on adolescents through environment. Divergent configurations of parental influence mean different shapes or aspects of parental influence as perceived by the adolescents.

### **PARENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING ADOLESCENTS**

There are three principal parental factors that pattern the personality development of children. These factors are parents' attitude, parents' personality and parents' behaviour. These parental factors influence the development of adolescents in the following way:

1. **Parents' attitude:** Some parents feel that they must restrict and control the behaviour of their children in order that their growth may be desirable from all points of view. Opposed to this stand, some parents think that their major role in the development of children is to guide and set a proper example for their emulation. These two separate stands lead to the formulation of two types of parental attitude. One pertains to authoritarian tendency and the other is democratic tendency.
2. **Parents' personality:** Parents' personality has its inevitable impact on the development of children. This means that parents' attitudes, character, traits and values of life have their undeniable impact on the developing children. Personality of parents exerts greater influence on their children than their child rearing practices.
3. **Parents' behaviour:** Warmth of the relationship existing between parents and children is of vital importance for the development of children. Parental behaviour is not only important in the individual's development but also important for the future life. The main types of parental behaviour are accepting parental behaviour and rejecting parental behaviour.

Thus, parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific variables that work individually and together to influence child outcomes.

### **PARENTING STYLES**

Parenting style captures two important elements of parenting: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Parental responsiveness refers to the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands (Baumrind, 1991). Parental demandingness refers to the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys (Baumrind, 1991).

Psychologist Baumrind (1991) identifies three types of parents: authoritarian,

permissive and authoritative. Authoritarian parents lay down hard-and-fast rules and expect their children to always do as they are told. Permissive parents have very few rules or regulations and give their children too much freedom are most likely to have the most difficult time as parents. Their children are at risk for a range of negative behavioural and emotional consequences. However, authoritative parents, set limits that are clear and come with explanations, tend to struggle less with their adolescents. Various other parenting styles are:

1. **Accepting and democratic:** Parents' accept child's uniqueness and provide love, respect and feeling of equality to their children. Adolescents feel security of love and acceptance, and experience own strength by conquering difficulties.
2. **Over-indulgent:** Parents shower the adolescent with presents, privileges and services, with little regard for the child's actual needs. Child feels bored and indifferent. He loses initiative and spontaneity and expects everything to come to him.
3. **Over-submissive:** Parents' submit to adolescent's demands, temper and impulsiveness. This makes children the boss and parents become a slave or servant.
4. **Over-coercive:** Parents are overly strict and give constant direction, endless instructions to adolescents. This kind of supervision results in verbal refusal, daydreaming, forgetting etc.
5. **Perfectionistic:** Parents set very high standards for adolescents. They accept child only when performance is exceptional. There is excessive striving and preoccupation with performance on the behalf of the adolescents but they cannot meet standards, feels unworthy and also may give up.
6. **Excessively responsible:** Parents may heap excessive household, childcare or companionship responsibilities on the adolescent because of economic circumstances, personal problems, death or illness of a parent. Adolescent may carry out burden resentfully.
7. **Neglecting:** Parents are frequently absent or busily pre-occupied with work, poverty, wealth, alcoholism, divorce or illness. Adolescents lack ability to form close relationships and never has the feeling that someone cares about him, is on his side.
8. **Rejecting:** Parents deny the acceptance of adolescents and treat them as a nuisance or a burden. Parents may have also been rejected as children and it could result from forced marriage or deformed child.
9. **Punitive:** This is often combined with over-coercion and perfectionism. Physical punishment is often considered necessary for discipline or training. Parents may vent personal hostility and aggression on child. Adolescent feels injustice, helplessness and longs for retaliation.
10. **Hypochondriacal:** This is characterized with anxious, fearful, sick-room

atmosphere. Adolescents may be kept home a lot from school for minor problems and they are excused from chores and school work. Adolescents exaggerate symptoms for benefits and gain sympathy and indulgence from parents.

11. **Sexually stimulating:** Parent may be seductive. Adolescent is forced into secrecy and made to feel guilty by provoking a premature preoccupation with sex. This often results in confusion and hostility. Thus, divergent configurations of parental influence means different shapes or aspects of parental influence as perceived by the adolescents like accepting, over-indulgent, over-submissive, over-coercive, perfectionistic, excessively responsible, neglecting, rejecting, punitive etc. Out of which the investigator has selected accepting parental influence and rejecting parental influence for the present study.
12. **Accepting parental influence:** It is exemplified by parents who, in their relations with their children, are basically reasonable, friendly, affectionate, approving and emotionally warm.
13. **Rejecting parental influence:** It is exemplified by parents who, in their relations with their sons or daughters, are consistently hostile, unaffectionate, disapproving and emotionally distant.

### **Parental Acceptance**

Parental acceptance of children is perceived to be one of the essential elements underlying the whole gamut of the parent-child relationship. An accepting parent is one who accepts the child as a significant member of the family and who cares and loves him always functioning, as far as possible, positively for him and in his best interests as these may happen to be conceived by him. The loving and accepting parents provide a healthy atmosphere for the child to develop his capabilities into proper channels. They help him to exercise his potentials to the maximum so that the child becomes a productive member of the society in which he is to live. Accepting parents give due importance to the child in home, trust him and develop a warm emotional relationship with him. This, in turn, helps the child to develop a basic trust in the parents, in other people and most of all, in his own self. Such early acceptance by parents brings a sense of security, self-acceptance and self-esteem in the child.

The accepting parents not only want the child but in many ways they plan for him. They do not find child care a trying or difficult job. Parental acceptance is expressed in different ways depending upon emotional maturity of the parents and the development of an independent individual and all that they can do to achieve this goal. In homes where there is free flow of love, there is good adjustment without undue attention of members of the family. The policy is one of freedom in which parents respect the individuality of each other. Emotionally the parents tend to be objective,



but above average in affection and rapport.

Parental stimuli profoundly influence the adolescents' mind. When parents are able to manage personal stress, communicate through emotion, share joy and experience no difficulty in forgiving, the adolescent feels comfortably secured. Accepting parental influence shapes adolescents' abilities to: feel safe, develop meaningful connections with others, explore the world, deal with stress, balance emotions, experience comfort and security, make sense of their lives, and create positive memories and expectations of relationships.

Traits such as co-operation, honesty, good social relationships, good physique, good control over emotions and feelings of security are largely the outcome of the influences exercised by parents on their children.

### **Parental Rejection**

Parental rejection is the antithesis of the positive relationship between parents and their children. Parental rejection does not always mean external rejection. It may imply actions of parents such as dominance, excessive demands and conspicuous hostility. In the family, an impression tends to be created that the child is unwanted or is proceeding on lines not conducive to his healthy development. Parents may start feeling that their child is unworthy of their love and care and nothing more than a burden for them. Parental rejection weakens normal feelings of security, undermines the child's self-concept and creates the feelings of helplessness and frustrations which may permanently disable the child in his adjustment to life.

According to Symonds (1939), worry overtakes those children who are denied parental affection. They create nuisance in school and become back benchers. They develop anti-social elements. Most of the adolescents who are emotionally disturbed become delinquent and fail at school. Acceptance (positive) or rejective (negative) behaviour of parents is the backbone of development of different traits of personality. This is deemed to be related to the present as well as to the future life of the adolescent. According to Sears *et al.* (1957), "Deprivation of love interferes with physical, mental and emotional growth of the child. In addition to the influence on the personal life, the rejected child also lacks concentration in school and becomes indifferent to school work (Bergum, 1940). He also tends to become antagonistic towards the society and may lack the qualities which enable people to live together in harmony (Bowlby, 1957).

There can no doubt about the close relationship between parental influence and insecurity of children and adolescents. Parents are the persons with whom the child begins his life and in whose associations and direct face-to-face relations he grows and develops into a personality. All the aspects of his life: cognitive, affective and conative are profoundly influenced and shaped by the home

environment. For the growing individual, this environment is primarily what parents make it to be. Since human qualities and characteristics are largely an environmental product, it necessarily follows that there must be a close relationship between insecurity and parental influence whatever be its pattern or configuration. Insecurity can be a significant problem in life, and it takes root when an adolescent's attachment bond fails to provide the child with sufficient structure, recognition, understanding, safety, and mutual accord. These insecurities may lead to:

1. **Tune out and turn off:** If the parent is unavailable and self-absorbed, children get lost in their own inner world, avoiding any close, emotional connections. As adults, they may become physically and emotionally distant in relationships.
2. **Remain insecure:** If parents are intrusive adolescents tend to become anxious and fearful.
3. **Become disorganized, aggressive and angry:** When adolescents' early needs for emotional closeness go unfulfilled, problems are sure to follow.
4. **Develop slowly:** The unfulfilment of the early needs tends to create physical and mental health problems, and social and learning disabilities.

## CONCLUSION

From whatever has been said in the immediate preceding pages of this work, the conclusion is inevitably seems to follow that parents have powerful effects on the behaviour of the children. Adolescents who perceive themselves as accepted feel more secured than the adolescents who perceive themselves as rejected or unwanted by their parents. The nature of close affectional bonds leaves as impact on human development across the life span. In the end, we can conclude that, in this modern age, where the parents are too busy to give due attention, adolescent often feels rejected or neglected. This inculcates feeling of insecurity in them which makes them aimless, destructive and drifting.

Families, in their structure and function, influence virtually all facets of the youth's psychological and social functioning. This influence may be associated with both positive and negative characteristics of adolescent behaviour and development. Although family influences are not the only source of problems in adolescence, they co vary with these other sources in affecting the incidence of problem behaviour; at the same time family of origin influences can protect youth from the occurrence of problem behaviours.

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