

## Evaluation Of Adolescents In Hindu Families With Special Reference To West Bengal

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### ABSTRACT:

The main aim of the study was to evaluate the sociological study on adolescents in Hindu families with special reference to West Bengal. Single Hindu child family can be seen as a relatively new demographic phenomenon in the context of the downward trend in fertility. The research was conducted in West Bengal State. The hypothesis has been framed based on the objectives of the research. Thus, in general, parenting style was found to be decisive in shaping the behavior pattern of the adolescents in the single child family. Furthermore, the particular reason by which the parents were having the single child was found to be significant in determining the parenting style. In this article, evaluation of adolescents in Hindu families with special reference to West Bengal has been discussed.

Keywords: Adolescents, Hindu, Families, West Bengal.

### INTRODUCTION:

The institution of the family, which serves as the major mechanism for socialisation during adolescence, is extremely important. [1] The nature of interactions and relationships within the family will determine how much of an impact they have on adolescent development. [2] Teenagers' socialisation process and resulting behavioural patterns are greatly impacted by the recent structural, functional, and interactional changes in the modern family. [3] During the extended duration of education away from the home, adolescents are also exposed to a variety of influences from friends, peers, and other communication technology. [4]

In the context of contemporary discourse on adolescence, factors such as fewer children, extended educational periods, increased exposure to friends and communication technologies, the practise of responsible parenthood, etc. may encourage both parents and adolescents to adopt new approaches. [5] New behavioural patterns can be seen in the emerging parent-adolescent relationships brought about by the interaction of altered status, power, and gender definitions. [6] The relationship dynamics of the single-child household may disclose additional dimensions because the solitary child is the parents' only hope. [7] The negotiation of power relations in the single-child family is a complex issue because of the potential for a child-centred normative atmosphere in a West Bengal family to take the form of a "filiocentric family," as well as the contemporary discourse of dichotomous power relations between parents and adolescents. [8] The present study places a lot of emphasis on the enabling and hindering components of power interactions. [9] Additionally, the consequences of practises like "concerted cultivation," "child crafting," etc. that are intended to produce high-quality children in the modern tiny family may open up fresh perspectives on how to analyse the behaviour of teenagers in single-child homes in West Bengal. Numerous studies have been conducted on the breakdown of the conventional joint family in Indian society. [10] However, there are very few studies that truly examine the evolving dynamics of families, their patterns, and the ramifications of these dynamics throughout the post-demographic transition period in general and the single Hindu child family in West Bengal in particular. Families with only one child receive neither public nor academic attention. The current study presents a crucial topic for sociological analysis in this setting. The objectives were framed under the following points with special reference to West Bengal:

- To analyze the behaviour pattern of adolescents in single child Hindu families.
- To analyze the pattern of interaction of adolescents in single child Hindu families.
- To study the parental influence on adolescents of single child Hindu families.

- To ascertain the nature and influence of friendship and peer group relations on the adolescents of single child Hindu families.
- To find the behavior pattern of adolescents of single child Hindu families in relation to exposure to communication technology such as television, films, internet and mobile phones.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

##### **Hypotheses:**

H1: Relationship between adolescent children and parents in single child families vary with respect to gender.

H2: Relationship between adolescents of single child families and friends vary with respect to age and gender.

H3: There is significant difference with respect to age and gender regarding the behavior pattern of adolescents of single child families in relation to exposure to communication technology.

##### **Study Areas:**

The research was conducted in the three districts namely Bankura, Nadia and Howrah of the West Bengal state.

##### **Qualitative Dimension of the Study:**

Analysis of the behavior pattern of adolescents in single child family demand probing on the aspects associated with parent- child interaction. In order to get comprehensive and in-depth details of such interaction, micro-level description was found to be appropriate.

##### **Research Questions:**

- What is the pattern of negotiation of power relations between parents and adolescents in single child families?
- What is the scope of child's agency in single child families?
- How does the parenting style relate with the adolescent behavior pattern in single child family?

##### **Method of Study:**

The study followed mixed method that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches, methods and data to get details of results. Quantitative method was used for the collection and analysis of socio-demographic data as well as specific pattern of behavior of the single child .

#### **Unit of the Study:**

The unit of study was single adolescent (11-18 years) of single child Hindu family studying in the selected categories of educational institutions namely Government schools, Government Aided Schools and Unaided schools with up to Higher Secondary level in Bankura, Nadia and Howrah districts of West Bengal.

#### **Sample:**

Sample of the study constitutes of 230 adolescent single children selected from all the three studied districts of West Bengal namely Bankura, Nadia, Howrah. Data were also collected from both parents in the family i.e., father & mother. Hence separate tools were administered to 230 single children as well as 460 parents. Sampling frame was generated from the selected categories of educational institutions belonging to these categories in each studied district.

#### **Sampling Design:**

Multi stage sampling design was adopted in the study. The present study was focused on the adolescents of the single child families in West Bengal. The three districts namely Bankura, Nadia and Howrah were selected from West Bengal state. From each district Government schools, Government Aided and Unaided schools were selected. Schools from various categories were included to get representation from different socio-economic status. From these three categories in a district three institutions from each category were selected based on disproportionate stratified random sampling method. Thus, nine schools from each of the three districts altogether make 27 institutions were selected for the study. From these, 110 boys and 120 girls' sample were selected.

#### **Sources of Data Collection:**

Both secondary and primary sources of data have been used in this study. The secondary data for the study was collected from census reports, articles, journals, books, newspaper, reports of earlier research studies, reports publication of Central and State Governments and websites. The primary data was collected through interview schedule, observation method.

#### **Tools of Data Collection:**

Since the study followed Mixed Method, using both quantitative as well as qualitative approaches, tools appropriate to both these methods were used in the study.

#### **Interview schedule:**

Interview Schedule was one of the main tools used in the study. The closed –ended questions used in the schedule provided factual data regarding socio- demographic aspects as well as behavior pattern of the respondents. Through the open- ended questions in the schedule, qualitative data from the respondents were collected. They were useful in eliciting details of information regarding opinions, attitudes, feelings perceptions as well as details regarding the behavior pattern of the respondents.

#### **Variables of the Study:**

Both independent and dependent variables were identified in this study. The independent variables are gender of the child, age of the child, and gender of the parent.

The dependent variables are time spent with parents, occurrence of conflicts with parents, person who exert disciplinary action, chances for receiving information regarding bodily development, inclination to the persuasions of peer group, disclosure of personal matters to friends, time spent for internet, and time spent in mobile phone.

#### **Data Collection Method:**

The researcher met the respondents at their home. Data collection was carried out in three districts namely Bankura, Nadia, Howrah. Interviews were conducted with the help of the finalized schedule. Data collection was carried out mainly on Sundays and other holidays since data from both the parents of the respondents were also to be collected.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:**

### **Findings:**

- Most of the adolescents in the single child family are getting enough opportunities for interacting with both parents and they in general spent considerable time and used to share jokes with both parents irrespective of gender. Thus, free, intense and intimate interaction and emotional attachment between the adolescent and parents especially the mother is one of the characteristic features of the single child family.
- Though the increased role of mother is more obvious, active involvement of both the parents in the caring of the child is another feature in the single child family. Parents are having great care and concern about the academic matters of the single child.
- The adolescents in the single child family in general are not facing any severe kind of parental pressure for excellence. This sort of parental pressure for excellence is somewhat visible in the case of a few urban educated and employed parents who deliberately opted to have single child.
- All pervasive and continuous parental surveillance of the child is another feature of the single child family under study. This supervision is increasing with the age.
- Friendship relationship as well as usage of communication technology of the adolescents is also completely supervised by the parents. The adolescents under the study generally do not have any resentment over this parental supervision and considered this as part of parental care and concern towards them.
- Since almost all activities of adolescents are closely and continuously supervised by the parents, they have practically no time to have left to themselves either at home, outside in the nature or with friends.
- Single child status generally facilitates certain privileged conditions to the adolescents under study.
- The participation in domestic works is neither

mandatory nor demanding to facilitate the development of their social capital. So, these adolescents do not have any pressure to try all the alternatives for survival.

- Further, there is gender variation and gender stereotyping in the behaviour pattern of adolescents in the single child family. Boys in general have more freedom in keeping away from the common activities of the family such as family prayer, dining together etc., increased involvement in friendship relations as well as in the exposure to communication technology than girls.
- The adolescents in general have a friendly and participatory atmosphere in the single child families under study. However, the parents have a major role in shaping the interests and taking the decisions of the adolescents in the single child family.

#### **Conclusion:**

The shrinking of family size is not merely a demographic phenomenon. Any change in the size and structure of the institution of family lead to consequent changes in the interaction dynamics. As the nature of relationship and the corresponding behavior pattern of the members of the family are depended on the interaction dynamics in the family, a sociological analysis of the behavior pattern of the adolescents in the single child family presents a rewarding endeavour.

The behavior pattern of the adolescents of single child families in this study is characterized by close attachment and dependency with the parents. It has been suggested that autonomy, individuation and separation are the crucial elements in the process through which adolescents explore their world and forge an adult identity (Jaffe, 2002). This view implies that feelings of emotional autonomy are adaptive, that adolescents who have these feelings are in some sense more competent and well-adjusted than their peers. In this sense, the high degree of adolescent dependency and attachment upon the parents found in the case of single children under study raises serious questions regarding their independent identity formation.

The continuous surveillance of the adolescents' activities in the context of protective parenting combined with helicopter

parenting as well as parental dependency has been negatively affecting the agency of the adolescents in the single child family.

According to Margaret Mead's perspective also, the early socialization process which is mediated through symbolic modes of communication with parents enables an adolescent to develop a personality structure and behavior pattern corresponding to the particular socio- cultural environment of the single child family. As G.H Mead suggested, understanding and employing of common symbols (significant symbols) involves assuming the perspectives of others (parents, friends/ peers and communication technology), that enable to derive meaning from the interaction by the adolescents in the single child family. The mind and self-development of adolescent is occurring during this process. In this way micro-management of behaviour or disciplinary practices (Foucault) or resultant behavior pattern (Margaret Mead) & (G.H Mead)) of the adolescents in the single child family happen to be unique.

Thus, the Critique / negotiation of the power relations (Foucault) or alternate lines of action (G. H Mead) depend on the social structure or stimulus or need for survival (depend on the parenting style). The reduced agency or culturally determined mechanical dependency of the adolescents in the single child family is quite natural in an atmosphere of continuous parental surveillance. Margaret Mead's recommendation to mitigate the role of parents in children's lives in order to facilitate self-initiatives of children is also relevant in this context. Hence the study concludes that there should be a balance between protecting the adolescents and enabling them to explore the possibilities and shape their life. Let the future generation be equipped to weave new dreams, carve out different paths and aim at the wide horizon.

The study has proven to be very relevant on the following grounds:

- Single child family is a new demographic trend in the context of State sponsored Family Welfare Programme.
- The main activities and engagements of an individual during adolescence are revealed to have permanent impact on the later years.



- Adolescence is a period of rapid physiological and developmental changes.

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