

CHAPTER VIII

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Interpersonal Relationship

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8.1. Introduction

The area of group life is already discussed in the previous chapter where no reference was made to parental influences. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss these influences by considering three areas, viz.

(a) autonomy at home, (b) kinds of punishment and (c) the amount of positive affect, negative affect and expertness.

8.2. Autonomy at Home

From a psychological point of view, homes can best be described in terms of various types of relationships that exist between parents, between parents and their offsprings, and between offsprings themselves. The position of home in society at large plays an important role not only in determining the nature of the parent-child relationships within the home but also in determining the status of the child and the problems he will encounter out of home relationships. Some of the important variables

entering parent-child relationships are those relating to the degree to which the child feels accepted and secured; the degree to which the home is not emotionally tense, erratic and dis^Cordant; the degree to which the atmosphere is free and permissive; and the degree to which parents themselves are socially adjusted.¹ Every child, at a certain stage of his development feels the need for breaking away from the family relationships of childhood to a more independent way of doing things and thinking in a way characteristic of adults. The reasons for disagreements between parents and adolescents furnish important clues to the understanding of adolescent yearnings and problems related to home restraint.² The conflict arising out of disagreements between parents and adolescents in India has not been very obvious and marked. This, however, should not be taken to mean that Indian adolescents do not have differences of opinion with their parents. Probably, the strong and rigid family control and traditions of unquestionable compliance to the parental authority are so well accepted that the existing conflict is rarely noticed.

In many cases, parental controls accepted as a part of self-determine in due course the line of thinking and acting. The importance of traditions and conventions are impressed upon them so systematically that a conflict with traditions

is considered undesirable. However, it cannot be inferred that Indian adolescents do not have problems. Several studies in this country have revealed the fact that Indian adolescents do have problems which result from a combination of a variety of factors. Certain problems arise because of too much rigid control exercised by parents. This aspect of parental influence is studied in this investigation by presenting a list of eleven items to adolescent subjects with instruction to indicate how much freedom they enjoy with respect to these items. They were asked to indicate the degree of autonomy by placing a tickmark on a four point scale. Simple numerical weights of 0, 1, 2 and 3 were assigned to 'never', 'sometimes', 'most of the times' and 'always' categories of response. The total score based on the summation of the weights of individual items was computed for each subject. The scores thus obtained were subjected to analysis by means of analysis of variance in a 2 x 2 x 2 factorial design with age, sex and the area of residence as variables each at two levels. The results are presented below:

Table 77. Main Effects and Interaction Effects in the Case of Autonomy

Sources	df	Ss	M.Ss.	f	Remarks
Sex	1	224.70	224.70	4.82	*
Residence	1	471.20	471.20	10.11	**
Age	1	1529.00	1529.00	32.81	**
S x R	1	438.15	438.15	9.40	**
S x A	1	44.25	44.25	-	.
R x A	1	202.10	202.10	4.33	*
S x R x A	1	255.26	255.26	5.47	*
Within	792	36913.74	46.60		
Total	799				

*Significant at .05 level of confidence

**Significant at .01 level of Confidence.

As seen from the table, the main effect of sex is significant at .05 level of confidence. Similarly, the main effects of age and area of residence are also significant beyond .01 level of confidence. Considering interaction effects, the sex X residence interaction is significant at .01 level of confidence, while the Sex X Age interaction is not significant. The significant Sex X Residence interaction indicates that the effect of sex is not independent of the effect of the area of residence. The dependence of sex on area of residence is shown below :

Table 78. The Dependence of Sex on Area of Residence

Area of Residence	Boys	Girls	Difference
Urban	22.40	19.86	2.54
Rural	22.46	22.88	0.42
Difference	00.06	03.02	

The above table contains means of autonomy scores for the combinations of the levels of sex and area of residence. The difference in autonomy scores of boys at the two levels of the residence area is much less compared to the difference in autonomy scores of girls. In relation to the total possible score of 33, the mean scores of 22.40, 22.46 and 22.88 in the case of urban boys, rural boys and

rural girls respectively are quite high. Thus, boys in rural and urban areas enjoy relatively more freedom at home than girls in urban areas. Girls in urban areas enjoy less freedom than girls in rural areas. The interaction of Age X Area of Residence is also significant at .05 level of confidence. This means that the effect of age is not independent of the effect of the area of residence. This interaction effect is shown below :

Table 79. Relation Between Age and Effect of Area of Residence

Age group	Area of Residence		Difference
	Urban	Rural	
Older (College)	23.02	23.55	0.53
Younger (School)	19.25	21.79	2.54
Difference	3.77	1.76	

As seen in the above table, the difference between means of autonomy scores in the case of urban adolescents at the two levels of age is 3.77 and that in the case of rural adolescents is 1.76. As seen from the table, rural adolescents enjoy relatively more freedom than urban adolescents. Urban adolescents, older in age, have more autonomy than urban adolescents younger in age. The difference between

older and younger adolescents in rural areas is small compared to the difference in urban areas.

The significant Sex X Age X Residence interaction indicates that the amount of autonomy at home depends upon the combination of the levels of these three variables. Thus, in determining autonomy, all the three variables in combination exercise their influence.

The degree of autonomy was also studied by determining percentages of subjects falling under each of the three categories of scores used to define high, medium and low degrees of autonomy. The results are shown below :

Table 80. Percentages Falling under High, Medium and Low Autonomy Scores

Group	Low Score (0 to 11) %	Medium Score (12 to 22) %	High Score (23 to 33) %	Total %
Boys	7	40	53	100
Girls	5	41	54	100
Urban	7	42	51	100
Rural	5	39	56	100
Older (College)	5	34	61	100
Younger(School)	7	47	46	100
Total	6	40	54	100

As seen from the table, slightly more than 50 per cent of boys and girls enjoy high autonomy at home and around 40 per cent of boys and girls experience average autonomy. Similarly, slightly more than 50 per cent of urban and rural adolescents have a high degree of autonomy and slightly more than 35 per cent of them have average autonomy at home. As far as high level autonomy is concerned, the difference is in favour of rural adolescents while in the case of average autonomy, the difference is in favour of the urban group. As regards the age of adolescent subjects, 61 per cent of the older and only 46 per cent of the younger adolescents enjoy high degree of autonomy at home. At the average level of autonomy, the difference is slightly in favour of younger adolescents.

Considering all the subgroups together, it is observed that 54 per cent of adolescents enjoy a high degree of autonomy and 40 per cent of them enjoy average degree of autonomy at home. It should be noted here that autonomy scores were derived from activities which are common and familiar to almost all the adolescents. On the whole, it could be said that the home atmosphere is not very restrictive, since more than 50 per cent of adolescents feel free to make decisions about day to day activities with which they are vitally concerned.

8.3. Punishment

To punish in order to insure desired behaviour is a very common means of motivation. It has been regarded as one of the most effective means of controlling behaviour of others. Psychologists, however, have cast a critical eye on punishment as the most effective means of motivating desirable conduct. The fact that it is at best a negative means serves to indicate that there is, in all probability, a more efficacious way of securing the same end. At the same time, the fact that punishment is and always has been an integral part of individual and social motivation cannot be ignored. The dynamics of punishment are based upon the fact that it creates an unpleasant feeling which every individual tries to remove. The inducement of unpleasant feeling can thus be a good means of eliminating undesirable conduct. Physical, moral or mental punishment may thus be used to persuade children to stop undesirable conduct. Punishment then, is useful only to the extent that it causes feeling of unpleasantness by inducing pain, by privation or by withdrawing affection and approval. In case where it is employed simply as a means for check, its usefulness will depend upon the effectiveness of previous punishment, the recency of the experience, and the imaginary ability of the child to recall its effects.³

For these reasons, the relationship between the method of punishment and its possible effects must be known in order to determine its effectiveness. To use this means of motivation to the best advantage, it is also necessary that there be some understanding on the part of the receiver of punishment of both the necessity and the justification of the punishment. Children and adolescents must understand the fairness of the retribution and not be allowed the impression that punishment flows from rage, revenge or the sadistic impulse to inflict pain. For these reasons, punishment seldom should be used with very young children. Strict discipline combined with punishment of a severe nature is likely to interfere with the adolescent's ability to emancipate himself from the home.⁴ Just as autonomy at home was considered to be an important study for understanding parental relationship, the study of punishment can also serve the same purpose. A further insight into the relationship of adolescents with their parents is gained by asking questions pertaining to the types of punishment adolescents receive from their parents for some wrong-doing. Three types of punishments were studied. They are : (1) physical (2) psychological and (3) deprivation of privileges. Five items were selected to define each type of punishment. The subjects were asked to

indicate the extent to which they received each type of punishment by putting a tickmark on a four-point scale. The percentage of cases falling within each category of punishment was calculated separately for each response category.

8.4. Physical Punishment

The physical punishment is studied by calculating percentages for each response category. The results are presented below :

Table 81. Percentages in Each Response Category of Physical Punishment

Group	Never %	Sometime %	Most of the time %	Always %	Total %
Boys	21	70	9	0	100
Girls	28	65	7	0	100
Urban	31	65	3	1	100
Rural	18	70	12	0	100
Older (College)	33	61	5	1	100
Younger (School)	17	73	10	0	100
Total	25	67	8	0	100

Looking to the above table, it is seen that 70 per cent of boys and 65 per cent of girls receive physical punishment only occasionally. Only 9 per cent of boys and 7 per cent of

girls receive this kind of punishment most of the time. At the same time, 65 per cent of urban adolescents and 70 per cent of rural adolescents rarely receive physical punishment. Only 3 per cent of urban and 12 per cent of rural adolescents receive this kind of punishment most of the time. As regards younger and older adolescents, 61 per cent of older and 73 per cent of younger adolescents rarely receive physical punishment from their parents. The percentages of older and younger adolescents receiving physical punishment most of the time are 5 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. On the whole, it is seen that 25 per cent of adolescents never get physical punishment, 67 per cent of them get it rarely and 8 per cent of them get it most of the time. Thus, the results clearly indicate that this form of punishment is rarely resorted to by parents to control adolescent's behaviour.

8.5. Deprivation of Privileges

The second form of punishment viz. deprivation of privileges, was also studied by calculating percentages separately for each response category. The results are shown below :

Table 82. Percentages Falling under each Response Category in the case of Deprivation of Privileges

Group	Never %	Sometime %	Most of the time %	Always %	Total %
Boys	20	62	17	1	100
Girls	24	56	16	4	100
Urban	30	58	10	2	100
Rural	14	59	24	3	100
Older (College)	31	60	9	0	100
Younger (School)	13	58	24	5	100
Total	22	59	17	2	100

The results in the above table, indicate that 62 per cent of boys and 56 per cent of girls are deprived of certain things occasionally and 17 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls are most of the time deprived of these things. Similarly, 58 per cent of urban and 59 per cent of rural adolescents are rarely deprived of privileges. The remaining 10 per cent of urban and 24 per cent of rural adolescents get this kind of punishment most of the time. As far as older and younger adolescents are concerned, 60 per cent of older and 58 per cent of younger adolescents are rarely deprived of certain things, but 9 per cent of older and 24 per cent of younger adolescents are exposed to deprivation of privileges most of the time. The difference between older and younger is slightly more in favour of younger adolescents indicating that younger adolescents suffer from deprivation more than older adolescents. On the whole, 59 per cent of adolescents are rarely, if ever, deprived of privileges and 17 per cent of adolescents suffer from such deprivation to a considerable extent.

8.6. Psychological Punishment

The question of psychological punishment is studied by calculating percentages for each response category. The results are shown below :

Table 83. Percentages in each Response Category of Psychological Punishment

Group	Never %	Sometimes %	Most of the time %	Always %	Total %
Boys	1	32	57	10	100
Girls	1	40	50	9	100
Urban	2	31	57	10	100
Rural	1	39	51	9	100
Older (College)	2	38	52	8	100
Younger (School)	0	34	56	10	100
Total	1	35	54	10	100

As seen from the table, psychological punishment is experienced to a considerable extent by 57 per cent of boys and 50 per cent of girls. Similarly, 51 per cent of the rural and 57 per cent of the urban adolescents have stated that psychological punishment is given to them very frequently. The results are similar in the case of older and younger adolescents. On the whole, it is seen that 54 per cent of adolescents receive psychological punishment most frequently.

At this stage, the three types of punishments deserve some comments. Corporal punishment should be least preferred because of the adverse consequences to which it leads. The results of this investigation indicate that most of the

adolescents do not receive physical punishment. Depriving adolescents of some privileges and thereby making them repent for the misbehaviour may be preferred to physical punishment. Here, adolescent subjects are made to realise that they have behaved in a manner which is not desirable from the point of view of adult standards. This type of punishment though desirable in preference to physical punishment, may not be used with very sensitive adolescents.

The results of this investigation have indicated that very few adolescents receive this type of punishment. Psychological punishment given in the form of scolding in an angry tone, threatening, demanding not to repeat the act, making the subject feel sorry and making the subject apologetic may be preferred in comparison to physical punishment and deprivation of privileges. Most of the adolescents in this investigation have stated that they receive psychological punishment quite frequently for wrongdoing.

8.7. Sources of Affection and Expertness

No human being, during adolescence or in later years has so many resources within himself that he can live happily in emotional isolation from others. Adolescents who are loved and accepted are able to face life situations more realistically than those who are rejected by their parents and other persons. The development of early sense of security

is basic to all adjustment problems which arise from time to time.⁵ A question entitled ' who does it ' was framed so as to obtain information concerning the amount of positive affect, negative affect and expertness the adolescents receive from their parents, teachers and friends. Percentage frequencies were calculated separately for mother, father, teachers and friends. The results are shown below :

8.8. Positive Affection

The items for positive affection include smiling,praising or thanking, playing, and talking or listening. Adolescent subjects were asked to indicate the sources of positive affection by putting tickmarks under appropriate person. The results are shown below :

Table 84. Percentage of Cases receiving Positive Affection from Mother, Father, Teacher and Friends

Group	From Mother	From Father	From Teacher	From Friends	Total
Boys	17	11	15	57	100
Girls	18	13	10	59	100
Urban	17	14	11	58	100
Rural	19	11	13	57	100
Older(College)	19	7	11	63	100
Younger (School)	17	14	15	54	100
Total	18	12	12	58	100

Looking to the above table, it is observed that mother, father and teacher are seen as suppliers of positive affect by slightly more than 10% of boys. Around 55 per cent of boys receive positive affection from their friends. The results are very similarly in the case of girls. Mother, father and teacher from the point of view of the majority of girls do not supply positive affection to them. Around 60 per cent of girls receive positive affection from their friends. Slightly more than 55 per cent of adolescents in rural and urban locality stated that they receive positive affection from their friends. The percentage of rural and urban adolescents receiving positive affection from mother, father and teacher fall within a narrow range from 11 per cent to 19 per cent. Similarly, 63 per cent of older and 54 per cent of younger adolescents receive positive affection from their friends, and a very few receive it from mother, father or teacher. The overall result indicates that 58 per cent of adolescents receive positive affection from their friends, only 18 per cent of them receive it from their mothers, 12 per cent of them from their fathers and 12 per cent from their teachers. Thus, most of the adolescents receive positive affection from their friends and ~~only~~ a very few of them receive it from mother, father or teachers.

8.9. Negative Affection

The items for negative affection include indifference,

refusal, threatening and scolding. Adolescent subjects were asked to indicate the sources of negative affection of this type by putting tickmarks under appropriate categories labelled as mother, father, teacher and friends. The results are shown below :

Table 85. Percentages for Negative affection obtained from Mother, Father, Teacher and Friends

Group	From Mother %	From Father %	From Teacher %	From Friends %	Total %
Boys	10	40	27	23	100
Girls	16	24	42	18	100
Urban	11	23	45	21	100
Rural	15	39	25	21	100
Older (College)	13	40	25	22	100
Younger (School)	13	27	41	19	100
Total	13	32	34	21	100

Observation of the table entries indicates that 10 per cent of boys obtain negative affection from mothers, 40 per cent from fathers, 27 per cent from teachers and 23 per cent from friends. Thus, most of the boys get negative affection from their fathers. In the case of girls 42 per cent of them obtain negative affection from teachers, 16 per cent from mothers, 24 per cent from fathers and 18 per cent

from friends. Thus, most of the girls obtain negative affection from teachers and a very few obtain it from mother, father and friends. Most of the urban adolescents (45 per cent) obtain negative affection from their teachers. The percentages for mother, father and friends are 11, 23 and 21 respectively. Father has been regarded as the source of negative affection by 39 per cent of rural adolescents, and mother, teacher and friends have been considered as the sources of negative affection by 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 21 per cent of rural adolescents respectively. Thus, teacher and father are considered to be the sources of negative affection by the majority of rural and urban adolescents. Again, father is perceived as the source of negative affection by 40 per cent of older adolescents, and mother, teacher and friends by 13 per cent, 25 per cent and 22 per cent of them respectively. Teacher is the source of negative affection in the opinion of 41 per cent of younger adolescents. The percentages for mother, father and friends as suppliers of negative affection are 13 per cent, 27 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. Thus, father and teacher are considered as sources of negative affection by a considerable proportion of adolescents. Friends are considered to be the suppliers of positive affection by a majority of adolescents. Father and teacher who assume greater responsibilities for the development of adolescents in our society are reacted to

negatively by most of the adolescents. Mother is considered to be the source of positive affection as well as the source of negative affection by slightly less than 20 per cent of adolescents.

8.10. Expertness

The items for measuring expertness include teaching, explaining, helping in difficulties and giving advice. The question entitled " who does it " was asked to the subjects who indicated their answers by placing tickmarks below the appropriate categories labelled as mother, father, teacher and friends. Here also, as in the above, percentages were calculated separately for the response categories for each sub-group of adolescents. The results are presented below :

Table 86. Percentages for Expertness obtained from
Mother, Father, Teacher and Friends

Group	From Mother %	From Father %	From Teacher %	From Friends %	Total %
Boys	17	28	32	23	100
Girls	31	19	27	23	100
Urban	28	29	24	19	100
Rural	25	15	35	25	100
Older (College)	25	15	31	29	100
Younger (School)	28	26	29	17	100
Total	26	22	29	23	100

The results in the above table show that mother, father, teacher and friends are all considered to be experts in varying proportions, Teacher is perceived to be the source of expertness by 32 per cent of boys. Mother, father and friends are also considered as sources of expertness by slightly more than 15% of boys. In the case of girls, mother is considered to be the source of expertness by 31 per cent, father by 19 per cent, teacher by 27 per cent and friends by 23 per cent of them. Thus, teacher serves as a source of information and knowledge for the majority of boys, while mother serves as a similar source for the majority of girls. In the case of urban adolescents, mother and father serve as sources of expertness for a very small number of subjects. Similarly, teacher and father are regarded as sources of expertness by 24 per cent and 29 per cent of urban adolescents respectively. In the case of rural adolescents, mother, father, teacher and friends are perceived as experts by less than 40% of the subjects. In the case of older and younger adolescents, teacher is regarded as a source of information by around 30 per cent of the subjects. Mother, father and friends, are considered to be experts by slightly less than 30 per cent of older and younger adolescents. The overall results indicate that mother, father, teacher and friends are perceived as sources of information and knowledge by less than 30 per cent of the subjects. Considering these

results, it could be said that most of the adolescents do not obtain expert advice from any one source. Considering all the three areas viz. positive affection, negative affection and expertness, it could be inferred that the peer group serves as the source of positive affection for more than 50 per cent of adolescents, father and teacher serve as sources of negative affection for slightly more than 30% of the subjects. Mother, father, and teacher and friends, all serve as sources of expertness for slightly more than 20 per cent of adolescents.

8.1i. Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss parental influences with reference to three questions pertaining to autonomy at home; kinds of punishment; and amount of positive affect, negative affect and expertness. In order to study autonomy at home a list of eleven items was given to the subjects with instructions to indicate the amount of freedom they enjoy with respect to these items. Autonomy scores derived by summing the numerical weights of individual items were subjected to analysis in a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial design with age, sex and residential area as variables each at two levels. The results showed that the degree of autonomy was influenced jointly by the three variables and not by any one variable taken individually. When the data were analysed in terms of percentage, it was found that more than 50% of adolescents enjoyed relatively greater amount of freedom at home.

To punish in order to ensure desired behaviour is a very common means of motivation. With regard to punishment it was found that very few adolescents receive either physical punishment or punishment in the form of deprivation of privileges. Most of the adolescents were found to be receiving psychological punishment.

A question entitled " who does it " was framed in order to obtain information concerning the amount of positive or negative affect and expertness. It was found that the peer group served as the source of positive affection for more than 50% of adolescents, father and teacher served as sources of negative affection for slightly more than 30% of the subjects. It is thus evident that the peer group exerts a good deal of influence on the life of adolescents.

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