



**Research Article**

**EXPLORING DYNAMICS OF PARENTING PRACTICES FOR ADOLSCENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

To understand the dynamics of parenting practices, two factors namely area of living and gender of child were studied in the present investigation. It was hypothesized that parents (both mothers & fathers) from rural area would be lower on involvement, positive parenting and inconsistent discipline and higher on poor monitoring and corporal punishment as compared to parents from urban area. Secondly, parenting practices would differ significantly for male and female children. For this purpose, a total of 300 parents of i.e. male (n=82) & female (n=68) children from rural areas and male (n=73) & female (n=77) from urban areas were selected randomly for the study. All parents were assessed on Alabama parenting questionnaire (Frick, P.J.1991). Obtained scores were subjected to two way analysis of variance. Findings indicate the significant effects of area of living on parenting practices. However, child-rearing practices for male and female children did not differ significantly. The findings have significant implications.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Parenting is the socialization process through which ‘future of nations’ is being skilled to understand societal issues and to become resourceful members of society. It is the route of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children. Parents as a strong pillar of the family play a vital role in the up-bringing of children. They provide supportive environment that allows children to develop their knowledge, values, attitudes and behavior that are essential to become an adult making a productive contribution to self, family and society (Lerner *et al.*, 1995). They transmit the fundamental values e.g. emphasis on family bonds, loyalty, obedience and respect for elders that encourage healthy functioning of children in varied spheres of life. In this regard, Adler (1927) advocates that in order to brought up a brave and social child, parents need to love and support their wards. This will help the child to gain the ability of enterprise and self-esteem. In researches, the associations and interactions between child and parents has been studied widely. However, Baldwin (1948) set the stage to study child-rearing practices. Following his work, various researchers (Baumrind, 1978; Coopersmith, 1967 & Lamborn *et al.*, 1991) analyzed parenting dimensions and their influential role in child rearing extensively. It was emphasized that high level of democracy accompanied with demandingness results in positive outcomes like high self esteem, social responsibility and high grades in academics.

Simultaneously, through modeling children learn from their parents and consequently parents as role model contributes in social, emotional and personal development of adolescents. Similarly Jenni & O’ Corner (2005) suggests that child rearing practices are meant to foster the capacities and healthy growth of children. There are normal variations in parents’ attempt to socialize with children and they identify three ways of upbringing children i.e. authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. These styles of parenting are based on levels of warmth and control used by parents in disciplining the child. In this connection, process model of parenting (Belsky 1984) presumes that parenting styles and their influence on parent-child relationship are determined by the contextual factors such as parental occupation, social network and marital relationships. These have greater effect on parenting both directly and indirectly.

Socio- cultural context in which a child is brought up plays a significant role in the personality and cognitive development of the child. In Indian culture, people live in two contrasting realities i.e. rural and urban set up. These two different cultures have unique set of strengths and weaknesses. Children reared in these two settings develop distinct set of skills and dispositions due to the nature of different kind of socio cultural exposures and available support system for nurturing qualities. Williams (2006) in this regard, suggests that each culture contains an adaptive formula for parenthood, a set of customs evolved historically in response to the most prominent hazards in the locally experienced environment of parents. Researches (Ari, Bayhan P, *et al.*, 1997) suggest that there are difference between the child rearing attitudes of families living in rural areas and urban areas. The families living in rural areas are more repressive than the families living in urban areas. It has

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been shown that rural parents talk less with their children about school programs, attend school meetings rarely, and interact with teachers less frequently relative to their counterparts in suburban and urban schools (Prater *et al.*, 1997). As standards and norms differ in these two platforms, the attitude towards child-rearing would also be different. Hence, the present study focused on to see the effect of area of living on parenting practices.

Gender socialization begins at birth and intensifies during adolescence. Parents are the most primary source of gender socialization. There is a significant variation in the way of rearing children across the globe. Traditionally, parents in India prepared their children for future roles e.g. boys for working outside the home for family income whereas girls were geared up for domestic chores and child rearing. These gender differences in social behavior occur due to societies division in gender roles. This lays foundation for separate strategies to rear boys and girls according to their gender roles in the society.

Researches (Lytton, H. *et al.*, 1991) indicate that parents with traditional attitudes regarding gender roles demonstrate gender- differentiated parenting which encourages gender- role consistent behaviors. For example, harsh or controlling strategies are used for boys and autonomy- supportive strategies for girls. Similarly sons are permitted to work outside the home at an earlier age than daughters, thus providing them with earlier independence. Fathers are found as more encouraging to their sons about participation in competitive sports than they are to their daughters (Lenskyj, H. 1990). On the other hand, a significant change in the preferences of occupations among boys and girls has been observed in the present scenario. In this regard, Freeman (2007) argues that gender roles for females are expanding, while for males are narrowing. Due to rapid changes in the social and economic system men and women are losing their traditional roles. In such type of circumstances, it is important to consider whether gender of a child influence child rearing attitudes of parents. There is a mixed amount of evidence regarding gender specific parenting practices.

**Table no 1** Shows means & standard deviations for parental practices (involvement, positive parenting, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline and corporal punishment) adopted by mothers and fathers from rural and urban areas.

		Mothers		Fathers	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Involvement	Boys	Mean=27.76 SD=6.31	Mean=35.45 SD=6.61	Mean=28.40 SD=5.00	Mean=33.58 SD=6.19
	Girls	Mean=29.03 SD=5.14	Mean=36.34 SD=6.92	Mean=28.71 SD=4.54	Mean=35.70 SD=6.87
Positive parenting	Boys	Mean=18.56 SD=4.41	Mean=23.11 SD=4.26	Mean=18.80 SD=4.70	Mean=22.18 SD=4.11
	Girls	Mean=19.09 SD=4.40	Mean=23.45 SD=5.02	Mean=18.10 SD=4.70	Mean=22.75 SD=4.22
Poor monitoring	Boys	Mean=26.02 SD=5.10	Mean=23.32 SD=6.96	Mean=25.57 SD=5.59	Mean=22.37 SD=6.00
	Girls	Mean=26.16 SD=6.02	Mean=21.62 SD=7.41	Mean=25.54 SD=6.14	Mean=21.34 SD=7.12
Inconsistent discipline	Boys	Mean=16.84 SD=3.53	Mean=16.95 SD=4.69	Mean=16.88 SD=4.00	Mean=17.11 SD=4.61
	Girls	Mean=16.26 SD=3.83	Mean=16.61 SD=3.95	Mean=16.16 SD=3.76	Mean=17.30 SD=3.88
Corporal punishment	Boys	Mean=7.73 SD=2.43	Mean=7.30 SD=2.79	Mean=7.55 SD=2.48	Mean=7.53 SD=2.70
	Girls	Mean=8.19 SD=2.55	Mean=7.34 SD=2.14	Mean=7.79 SD=2.61	Mean=6.66 SD=2.55

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01

Ns= Non – significant

**Table 2** Summary of the ANOVA (2×2) for the effect of area of living and gender of child on parenting practices (mothers)

Variables	Source of variation	ss	df	MS	F
Involvement	Area of living	2763.2	1	2463.2	83.905**
	Gender	110.1	1	110.1	3.344ns
	AB	62.0	1	62.0	1.882ns
	Error	9747.8	296	32.9	
Positive parenting	Area of living	1201.4	1	1201.4	60.952**
	Gender	0.3	1	0.3	0.015ns
	AB	30.4	1	30.4	1.544ns
	Error	5834.2	296	19.7	
Poor monitoring	Area of living	1024.6	1	1024.6	26.374**
	Gender	21.0	1	21.0	0.541ns
	AB	18.8	1	18.8	0.483ns
	Error	11499.2	296	38.8	
Inconsistent discipline	Area if living	34.95	1	34.95	2.105ns
	Gender	5.19	1	5.19	0.312ns
	AB	15.30	1	15.30	0.921ns
	Error	4915.25	296	16.61	
Corporal punishment	Area of living	24.52	1	24.52	3.676ns
	Gender	7.33	1	7.33	1.098ns
	AB	23.29	1	23.29	3.491ns
	Error	1974.81	296	6.67	

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01

Ns= Non – significant

Although various studies or theories indicate differential parenting for boys and girls, there is no consensus that which parents do treat their sons and daughters treat differently. Hence, the present study was aimed at analyzing whether the parents from rural area adopt different child rearing practices for boys and girls as compared to parents from urban areas.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Sample:** Sample for the present study comprised of 300 parents (both mothers and fathers) from rural (n=150) and urban (n=150) areas of Patiala and Sangrur districts of Punjab. Further, parents of boys (n=82) & girls (n=68) from rural areas and parents of boys (n=73) & girls (n=77) from urban areas were randomly selected. All the parents were in the age range of 40-45 years (Mean= 42.2, SD= 7.96). Educational background of the parents was above matriculations to graduation levels.

**Tools:** Following self report measure was used to assess the parenting practices.

**Alabama parenting questionnaire (Frick, P.J.1991).** The questionnaire contains 42 statements. Each of the statement is followed by five options like (1) NEVER (2) ALMOST NEVER (3) SOMETIMES (4) OFTEN (5) ALWAYS. All the items were divided under 5 dimensions i.e. (1) Involvement (2) positive parenting (3) poor monitoring/supervision (4) inconsistent discipline (5) corporal punishment. The reliability of the scale is .80 and internal consistency is .68. Parent form was used in the present study. This questionnaire has been used in earlier Indian researches (Fatima, M.A. & Jaya, A.T., 2015) to assess the parenting practices adopted by parents.

**Design & Procedure:** Two way factorial design (2× 2) i.e. area of living (rural and urban) and gender of children (males and females) was adopted in the present study. Total 335 parents (both mothers and fathers) from rural (n=158) and urban (n=177) areas were selected randomly. All the participants were contacted at different parent teacher meetings held in schools.

Prior consent was taken from all the parents and concerned authorities of the schools. All parents were assessed on Alabama parenting questionnaire (Frick, P.J.1991). Some of the parents took the questionnaire at home and returned it back to the concerned teachers. However, available parents were divided into groups and instructed to give the appropriate responses to the questionnaire. After completion of the questionnaire, all the participants were thanked for their participation in the study. Obtained data was scored strictly according to the instructions given in the manual of the test. Data for 300 subjects was subjected to statistical analysis. Rest of the data (n=35) were discarded due to incomplete information in the questionnaire and data from single parents was also excluded.

**RESULTS**

To examine the impact of area of living and gender of the child on parenting practices, two way ANOVA was applied. The results are presented in Table 1 to Table 3.

**DISCUSSION**

Findings of the present study revealed significant differences on involvement, positive parenting, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline and corporal punishment strategies adopted by mothers from rural and urban areas. Similarly, fathers from rural and urban areas were differed significantly on involvement and positive parenting, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline and corporal punishment dimensions of parenting. Mean values (Table No.1) indicate that both parents from rural areas were lower on involvement and positive parenting as compared to parents from urban areas. On the other hand, both mothers and fathers from rural areas were higher on poor monitoring as compared to parents from urban areas. Mothers from rural areas were also higher on corporal punishment as compared to mothers from urban areas whereas fathers did not differ significantly on corporal punishment parenting practices.

**Table 3** Summary of the ANOVA (2×2) for the effect of area of living and gender of child on parenting practices (fathers)

Variables	Source of variation	Ss	df	MS	F
Involvement	Area of living	2763.2	1	2763.2	83.905**
	Gender	110.1	1	110.1	3.344ns
	AB	62.0	1	62.0	1.882ns
	Error	9747.8	296	32.9	
Positive parenting	Area of living	1201.4	1	1201.4	60.952**
	Gender	0.3	1	0.3	0.015ns
	AB	30.4	1	30.4	1.544ns
	Error	5834.2	296	19.7	
Poor monitoring	Area of living	1024.6	1	1024.6	26.374**
	Gender	21.0	1	21.0	0.541ns
	AB	18.8	1	18.8	0.483ns
	Error	11499.2	296	38.8	
Inconsistent discipline	Area if living	34.95	1	34.95	2.105ns
	Gender	5.19	1	5.19	0.312ns
	AB	15.30	1	15.30	0.921ns
	Error	4915.25	296	16.61	
Corporal punishment	Area of living	24.52	1	24.52	3.676ns
	Gender	7.33	1	7.33	1.098ns
	AB	23.29	1	23.29	3.491ns
	Error	1974.81	296	6.67	
Corporal punishment	Area of living	24.52	1	24.52	3.676ns
	Gender	7.33	1	7.33	1.098ns
	AB	23.29	1	23.29	3.491ns
	Error	1974.81	296	6.67	

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01  
Ns= Non - significant

Further, no significant differences were observed on inconsistent discipline among both parents from rural and urban areas. Apart from providing partial support to the hypothesis, the findings validate the previous researches which demonstrate that urban and suburban parents interact more with their wards than their rural counterparts. It has also been found that rural parents interact less with their children, attend school meetings rarely and do not take part in child related school time activities (Doris L. *et al.*, 1997). In another research, it has been shown that children from rural areas felt no pressure to attain higher grades because their parents' expectations toward education were low. (Esterman, K. *et al.*, 1995). This may be due to that in rural sector fundamental occupation is agriculture. Parents of this community are not able to spend quality time with their children. In this context, it has been shown that parents from agrarian set up do not provide stimulating environment at home that result in poor performance on the abstract intelligence and meta cognitive skills of their wards (Sandhu *et al.*, 2016).

Results presented in Table No.2 and 3 indicate that gender of child had no influence on child rearing practices adopted by both parents. This shows that parents treat their children of both sexes similarly. The findings are in consonance with prior researches (Lytton & Romney 1991, as cited in Wharton, 2005) which have shown that parental treatment for boys and girls has become significantly less differentiated. They pay equal attention to them especially in the areas of nurturance, warmth and disciplinary practices. As no significant differences in parenting practices for boys and girls were observed, this means that parents have an egalitarian approach towards children of both sexes. In the recent past, Punjab had emerged as leading state in the female foeticide mortality rates. In this context, the present investigation brings a ray of hope suggesting that the present generation of parents have evolved from the earlier regressive attitude towards the girl child into progressive and healthy attitude by considering both the male and female child as equal recipients of parental love, care and affection.

These findings have pertinent implications for counselors and researchers. Intervention programs on parenting may be planned to bring attitudinal change among rural parents. This will promote healthy functioning of adolescents. As a whole, it can be said that Indian parenting practices mainly in Punjab are moving forward and marching into the realm of favorable form of parenting.

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