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## A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON DEPRESSION ACROSS MATERNAL ATTACHMENT

Sunita and Pinki Rani

Ph. D Scholar ,

Human Development and Family Studies ,  
COHS, CCS HAU Hisar.



### ABSTRACT:

**A**ttachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. Attachments greatly impact social, emotional and cognitive development. Depression among adolescents has emerged as a major mental health problem. Depression might be particularly strongly linked during adolescence and young adulthood. The study was conducted in Hisar District of Haryana state. All the adolescents studying in 9th and 10th standard falling in the age group 15 – 16 years were included in the sample for the study. Maternal attachment was taken as dependent variable. Inventory of parent-peer attachment (IPPA) by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) was used to assess the maternal attachment. Depression was taken as independent variables. Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) by Beck, Steer and Garbin (1988) was used to assess the depression. Result revealed that significant differences in depression on the basis of trust, communication and alienation were observed. This elaborated that relationship with mothers makes a significant impact on mental health of adolescents. Mean scores reflected that the adolescents reporting high trust on mothers was significantly less depressed than adolescents perceiving low trust on mothers. Further, mean scores of depression of adolescents reporting high communication with mothers was significantly less than adolescents reporting below average and average level of communication with mothers respectively. This shows that adolescents who communicate more with their mothers were less depressed. Significant differences were further observed in the mean scores of depression of adolescents categorized under low alienation from mothers and significantly different from adolescents perceiving average and high alienation relationship with mothers. Statistically significant differences in depression scores on the basis of maternal attachment were observed. Mean scores reflected that adolescents reporting strongly secure attachment with their mothers were significantly less depressed than adolescents perceiving strongly insecure attachment with their mothers.

**KEYWORDS:** Adolescents, self-esteem, depression, communication, trust and peer alienation.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Attachments greatly impact social, emotional and cognitive development. Attachment is characterized by specific behaviors in children, such as seeking proximity with the attachment figure when upset or threatened. Attachment behavior in adults towards the child includes responding sensitively and appropriately to the child's needs. Attachment theory provides an explanation of how the parent-child relationship emerges and influences subsequent development.

Self-esteem can be defined as an individual's attitude about him or herself, involving self-evaluation

along a positive- negative dimension (Baron and Byrne, 2011). Most generally self-esteem refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation to the self (Rosenberg et al., 2005). Reasoner (2005) has defined self-esteem as the experience of capable of meeting life challenge and being worthy of happiness. In today's world self-esteem has been viewed as an important tool to face the competitive life. Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now a day's everyone talks about stress. It is cutting across all socio economic groups of population and becomes the great leveler and continuous stress over a period of time takes the form of depression.

Depression among adolescents has emerged as a major mental health problem in the last two decades. In India, adolescent depression is an under researched area. There is limited knowledge in factors associated with depression among adolescents in India. It is important that adolescents with depression need to be identified as there is an increasing evidence of suicidal behaviour among the young in India. Unfortunately, many a times, only a few adolescents with depression are diagnosed and only a few get treated. Bronfenbrenner (1979) in his ecological theory proposed that adolescent development occurs in realms of family attachment, peer support and the school. So it is important variables that reflect adolescents experience in these realms to measure mental health are included in the study. In line with this theory, the present study aims to examine the relationship of parental attachment, and self – esteem to depressive symptoms in adolescents.

Depression and self-esteem are intertwined and contribute to negative effects. Research has shown how self-esteem influences depression, and some studies have suggested that depression works negatively to decrease self-esteem. Understanding how each of these conditions affects the other is essential in order to effectively treat depression and other conditions that co-occur such as anxiety. Many theories of depression postulate that low self-esteem is a defining feature of depression (Brown and Harris, 2008). Indeed, numerous studies have documented strong concurrent relations between low self-esteem and depression (Joiner et al., 2009). However, the nature of this relation specifically, the temporal order remains unclear. Does low self-esteem lead to depression, does depression contribute to the development of low self-esteem, or are they reciprocally related?

There are theoretical reasons to believe that self-esteem and depression might be particularly strongly linked during adolescence and young adulthood. The confluences of changes that occur during this developmental stage are likely to tax the individual's psychological resources, and previous research has suggested that the link between self-esteem and depression might be stronger during stressful events. Moreover, one of the core developmental tasks of this stage of life centers on developing a sense of mastery and competence (Galambos et al., 2006), which are closely linked to self-esteem. Thus, it seems plausible that all aspects of adjustment and adaptation, including indicators of well being such as depression, would be particularly linked to success in achieving the salient developmental task of this period, establishing a sense of competence and self-worth. Research conducted in the Indian context suggests that socio-emotional problems like attachment difficulties with parents and interpersonal conflicts with peers are relatively common in adolescence, and may contribute to impaired feelings of self-esteem. Thus the present study was carried out with the following objectives.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To compare the depression across maternal attachment.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The study was planned to investigate levels of Self-Esteem among adolescents living in rural and urban areas. To understand the features of adolescents, comparative rural and urban area study is an essential tool. As per objectives, the study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state purposively selected due to easy accessibility. To draw the rural sample, list of villages having Government schools with 9th and 10th classes was obtained from the Education Department, Hisar. Out of the list, three villages namely Neoli Kala, Behbalpur and Mangali were randomly selected and Government Senior Secondary Schools of these villages were taken to draw the rural sample. Whereas, to draw urban sample Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Hisar and

Government Senior Secondary School, Hisar (Patel Nagar) were randomly selected. All the adolescents studying in 9th and 10th standard falling in the age group 15 – 16 years were included in the sample for the study.

Variable is a set of value that forms a classification. A value is anything which can be predicted. For the present study, the variables have been grouped into two types the dependent and independent variables. A dependent variable is a variable presumed to be affected by one or more independent variables. Maternal attachment was taken as dependent variable and depression was taken as independent variables. Inventory of parent-peer attachment (IPPA) by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) was used to assess the maternal attachment and Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI) by Beck, Steer and Garbin (1988) was used to assess the depression.

Results:

**Comparison of depression across maternal attachment**

Data with regard to comparison of depression among adolescents against perceived mother attachment categories is displayed in table 1. Statistically significant differences in depression on the basis of trust  $F(2,287) = 9.26, p < 0.05$ , communication  $F(2,287) = 9.16, p < 0.05$  and alienation  $F(2,287) = 3.31, p < 0.05$  were observed. This elaborated that relationship with mothers makes a significant impact on mental health of adolescents. Mean scores reflected that the adolescents reporting high trust on mothers ( $M=12.85$ ) were significantly less depressed than adolescents perceiving low ( $M=18.66$ ) trust on mothers. Further, mean scores of depression of adolescents reporting high communication with mothers ( $M=12.16$ ) was significantly less than adolescents reporting below average ( $M=17.25$ ) and average ( $M=15.10$ ) level of communication with mothers respectively. This shows that adolescents who communicate more with their mothers were less depressed. Significant differences were further observed in the mean scores of depression of adolescents categorized under low alienation from mothers ( $M=12.84$ ) and significantly different from adolescents perceiving average ( $M=14.90$ ) and high ( $M=17.00$ ) alienation relationship with mothers. Statistically significant differences in depression scores on the basis of maternal attachment  $F(4,204) = 2.95, p < 0.05$  were observed. Mean scores reflected that adolescents reporting strongly secure attachment with their mothers were significantly less depressed than adolescents perceiving strongly insecure attachment with their mothers.

**Table 1: Comparison of depression across maternal attachment**

Sr No.	Maternal attachment					
1.	Trust					
	Low Mean ± S.D.	Average Mean ± S.D.	High Mean ± S.D.	F-value		
	18.66 <sup>b</sup> ± 7.60	17.56 <sup>ab</sup> ± 8.25	12.85 <sup>a</sup> ± 8.06	9.26*		
2.	Communication					
	Low Mean ± S.D.	Average Mean ± S.D.	High Mean ± S.D.			
	17.25 <sup>b</sup> ± 9.60	15 <sup>b</sup> .10 ± 7.81	12.16 <sup>a</sup> ± 8.04	9.16*		
3.	Alienation					
	Low Mean ± S.D.	Average Mean ± S.D.	High Mean ± S.D.			
	12.84 <sup>a</sup> ± 7.80	14.90 <sup>b</sup> ± 8.73	17.00 <sup>c</sup> ± 8.80	3.31*		
4.	Maternal attachment					
	Strongly insecure Mean ± S.D.	Insecure Mean ± S.D	Moderately secure Mean ± S.D.	Secure Mean ± S.D.	Strongly secure Mean ± S.D.	
	7.00 <sup>a</sup> ± 6.08	15.50 <sup>ab</sup> ± 2.21	12.40 <sup>ab</sup> ± 7.4	18.08 <sup>b</sup> ± 9.66	12.95 <sup>ab</sup> ± 8.79	2.95*

**Note:** Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at  $p < 0.05$  using Duncan multiple difference comparison

## DISCUSSION:

The protective and highly contributing factors to depression in the present study were academic achievement, parent-peer attachment and self-esteem. It means as the adolescent performed better in academics the depression goes down. The research by Busari (2012) also indicated a negative relationship between academics and depression. Secure parent peer attachment and self-esteem also lead to a non-depressive behavior which gets support from the study by Sharma and Agarwala, (2013). Peer alienation was the significant contributor to depression and the results get support from the study by Phillips (2001) who reported that those who have greater difficulties in negotiating conflicts with close friends tend to report more depression over a time. Similarly, a recent study by Allen et al. (2007) revealed that secure attachment in early adolescence is associated with successful autonomy and good peer relations. Additionally, authoritative paternal and maternal parenting, which are characterized by increased responsiveness, were found to be positively related to pro-social behavior in children (Hastings et al., 2007).

Present study further revealed that depression was positively and significantly correlated with parent and peer detachment in adolescents. Previous research findings also showed that less secure attachment led to higher level of internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems (Buist et al., 2004).

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