



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Retrospects and Prospects

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Impact of Home Environment on Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the importance of home environments on adolescents. The world is passing through a great crisis in almost all spheres of life. Delinquency among adolescents all over the world has reached an alarming proportion as to become a cause of concern. The changes in lifestyles, family patterns and environment as a result of industrialization, urbanization and modernization have contributed to the growth of delinquency rates. Environment includes all the factors, human and others, to which the individual is exposed from his birth –parents, family, friends, surrounding, school, socio-economic conditions. Environments act as a moulding and shaping agency, playing a vital role in nurturing the future life of an individual. Nature tells us one theory, that a tree grows from its roots, its strength depends on how deep the roots have gone. Likewise, the type of environment found at home plays a very important role in determining values, aspiration, problems, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. Home is the first socializing agent, value indicator and the most effective one too. Children will pick up all the desirable social norms and undesirable social norms from their home environment. A child's relationship to the universe can be more meaningful if he develops appropriate moral values, ideals and philosophy of life. No child can grow in a vacuum. He needs all the elements in this environment to help him to grow, to develop, to become complete and, in short, to possess integrity.

Key Words: Home environment, Adolescent, Social development, Good home environment, Bad home environment, Social development, Socialization process, Qualitative and enriching.

INTRODUCTION

Today, globally, a generation of adolescents have shown serious tendencies towards drug abuse, family instability, suicide, crimes, general insecurity, unhappiness, selfishness and other destructive forces. This is a clear indication of the degenerating process of human society. All these can be attributed to the changes that have taken place in the values systems, their aspirations and the problems they face in today's materialistic and highly competitive world as competition has become fierce, abetted by parents, teacher and society. Moreover, of all personality determinants, home environment is the most important as it is the first social group which the child identifies, spends more time with the family group than with any other social group

Hence, there is an urgent need to explore the impact of home environment on adolescents. Such study is vital for healthy development of the society so that great efforts can be made to reform and rejuvenate the foundation of the new civilization through education, training and information to the parents, teachers, peers, the community, the media and the adolescents themselves, who are the future parent, the treasure and the future of the country. Failure to understand such things will only lead to a self-destructive behaviour and one that is harmful to the society. WHO, in its report, also stressed that "individual development and social contribution of adolescents will shape the future of the world".

MEANING OF ADOLESCENCE

The word 'adolescence' comes from the Latin word *adolescere* which means "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". Adolescence is the developmental period in transition from childhood to adulthood. It begins around 10-12 years of age and ends at 18-21 years of age (Santrock, 2007). Papalia and Olds (2007) opined that adolescence is a development transition between childhood and adulthood enacting major physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes. This period carries great risks. In 1916, G. Stanley Hall, the father of adolescent research, proclaimed adolescence as a period of "Sturm and Drang" (Storm and stress). It is a time of considerable changes in physical stature, physiological and endocrine changes, changes in patterns of thinking and moral standard. It is a time of acquiring new skills, attaining mastery over environment, learning to handle new responsibilities and gaining control over emotions and thoughts.

Environment

Environment is what is available to the individual in a particular situation or stage of life. Development is the product of an interaction between the organism and the environment, and can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Environment includes all the factors, human and others, to which the individual is exposed to from his birth -parents, family, friends, surroundings, school, office, food, clothing education, socioeconomic conditions and recreation. Environment also covers the social, moral, economic, political, physical and intellectual factors which influence the development of the individual from time to time. It exerts an influence on an individual every minute of every day.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENT

Environments act as a moulding and shaping agency, playing a vital role in nurturing the future life of an individual. Nature tells us one theory, that a tree grows from its roots, and its strength depends on how deep the roots have gone. Likewise, the type of environment found at home plays a very important role in determining values, aspiration, problems, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. Home is the first socializing agent, value indicator and the most effective one too. Children will pick up

all the desirable and undesirable social norms from their home environment. A child's relationship to the universe can be more meaningful if he develops appropriate moral values, ideals and philosophy of life. No child can grow in a vacuum. He needs all the elements in this environment to help him to grow, to develop, to become complete and, in short, to possess integrity. In a child's life, teachers, and parents have the enormous responsibility of creating wholesome individuals (Daniel, 2005).

IMPACT OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON ADOLESCENTS

Home occupies the most significant place for the all-round development of an adolescent. Inadequate home environment is likely to cripple the personality of a child from the point of his/her abilities and behaviour adjustment. 'Home is where the heart is' — this is a common adage. It is true that the heart is moulded in the home. Parents play a very important role in moulding their children's character, personality, career and advancement in education. The family being the first and major agency of socialization has a great influence and bearing on the development of a child. Parents and individual experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. A child learns his first notions of the world around from his mother and his immediate surroundings.

Research studies have proved that a supportive nurturing environment at home and school could enhance a child's all-round development. Family, being the first and major agency of socialization, plays a pivotal role in styling the child's life. It has been shown that most of the children who are successful and well adjusted come from families where wholesome relationships exist between children and their parents. The measures of specific aspects of the child's home environment, such as parental responsibility and availability of stimulating playmates and siblings, are strongly related to child's development status than global measures of environment quality.

According to stage-environment fit theory, the unique transitional nature of adolescent results, in part, from the relation between changes in the development needs of adolescents and changes in the social contexts in which they live. Many of the development changes during adolescence precipitate strained relations within the family that are likely to undermine the adolescents' mental health and behavioural outcomes. Adolescents whose environments change in developmentally regressive ways are more likely to experience difficulties. In contrast, those whose social environments respond to their changing needs are more likely to experience positive outcomes. Adolescents who experience more negative family interactions may engage in more delinquent behaviours, which may increase family negativity, which, in turn, may lead to increased delinquency (Gutman and Eccles, 2007).

HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT AND ADOLESCENTS

When adolescents perceive positive environment and healthy family they.

- Are more likely to be satisfied with their home environment and families.

- Experiences less conflict.
- Have positive self esteem.
- Feel healthier.
- Are happier.
- Feel overall more satisfied with their lives.

Table 1. Impact of Good and Bad Environment on Adolescents

<i>Bad Home Environment</i>	<i>Good Home Environment</i>
Increases anxiety and fear.	Discipline with love, decreasing anxiety and fear.
Hinders the development of empathy and compassion for others.	Focus on development of empathy and compassion for others.
Makes angry in response	Remains calm, listens and communicates effectively.
Heightens aggression towards others.	Encourages the child's cooperation and understanding.
Decreases compliance and increases resistance.	Rewards or praises desirable behaviour.
Harms relationships with others.	Try not to harm or injure others.
Decreases self-esteem.	Enhance self-esteem and creativity
Develops undesirable social and psychological behaviours.	Develop desirable social and acceptable good behaviours.
Poor decision making.	Good decision making.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD AND HEALTHY HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Affection
- Democracy
- Lack of conflict
- Comradeship
- Good personal adjustment on the part of the parents
- Development of the parents
- Interest in the children
- Firm, consistent, fair and disciplined
- Gradual release of responsibilities to the child

MEANING OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Social development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectation. Becoming socialized involves three processes which although they are separate and distinct, are so closely interrelated that failure in any one of them will lower

the individual level of socialization (Hurlock, 2007). These three processes are described in the table below.

Table 2: Processes in Socialisation

1. Learning to behave in socially approved ways.	Every social group has its standards of what is approved behaviour for its members. To become socialized, children must not only know what this approved behaviour is, but they must also model their own behaviour along the approved lines.
2. Playing approved social roles.	Every social group has its own patterns of customary behaviour that are carefully defined and are expected by members of the group. They are approved roles for example, for parents and children and for teachers and pupils.
3. Development of social attitudes.	To become socialized, children must like people and social activities. If they do, they will make good social adjustments and be accepted as members of the social group with which they are identified.

HOME ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS

Relationships with family members affect children's attitudes towards outsiders. If the overall home environments favour the development of good social attitudes, the chances are that children will become social persons. Studies of social adjustment have revealed that personal relationships in the home are highly influential. The social behaviour and attitudes of children will reflect the treatment they receive in the homes. Children who feel that they are rejected by their parents may assume attitudes of martyrdom outside the home and carry these attitudes into adult life. Such children may turn within them and become introverts. By contrast, accepting, loving parents encourage extroversion in their children.

Children who are brought up in democratic homes make the best of social adjustment. They are socially active and outgoing. Those who are indulged, on the other hand, tend to become inactive and withdrawn. Children who are subjected to authoritarian child training method tend to be quiet and non-resistant.

MEASURES FOR QUALITATIVE AND ENRICHING HOME ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

- A parent should give a lot of emotional security to adolescents.
- A child must feel that his home is stable.
- Adolescents must have confidence in parents.
- Parents should make themselves as ideal role models practising what they preach.
- Children must feel that home and parents are a dependable refuge in times of adversity. It is very important to encourage independent behaviour in adolescents.

- A parent should encourage a child to fight his own battles.
- A parent must recognize a child's limitations, and should tap his potentialities helping to bring out the best in him.
- Dwell on a child's positive points and help him overcome his negative qualities.
- Discipline and authority must be within limitations.
- Communication with adolescents is very important and parents should try to develop an effective communication with them.

CONCLUSION

Home environment can complement in moulding youngsters into good, caring human beings. Family can render a very important role in developing potentialities of the child. They can render a very useful service in promoting moral and social education which will not only make the individual and the family happy but they will also stand in good stead to the society as a whole. There is need for improving the environments in which adolescents are placed. The educational system, the home environment and the external forces should be shaped as to develop among the young a liking for eternal values and social upliftment of the society.

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