

# The role of socio-economic variable enhancing self-esteem among adolescence

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■ **ABSTRACT :** 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. The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. All the adolescents studying in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard falling in the age group 15 – 16 years were included in the sample for the study. Self-esteem was taken as dependent variable. Self-Esteem was assessed by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg's (1989). Independent variable was socio-economic variables which included adolescent gender, caste, family type, family size, parental occupation and family income. Result revealed that non-significant differences were obtained in self – esteem mean scores when compared against family structure and annual income. This reflects that family structure and annual income make no significant differences in the scores of self – esteem of adolescents. Non-significant differences were established for self-esteem as per family size, caste, number of siblings and annual income. However comparison of mean scores revealed that adolescents of large families had slightly better self-esteem than adolescents living in medium and small families.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Adolescents, Self-esteem, Gender, Academic achievement, Parental relationship, Family

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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, 1991). Most generally self-esteem refers to an individual's over all positive evaluation to the self (Rosenberg *et al.*, 1995). 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.

Self esteem continues to be one of the most commonly research concept in social psychology (Baumeister, 1993). Teachers, administrators and parents are commonly concerned about student's self-esteem. Its significance is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and

high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning *et al.*, 2006). Self-esteem is associated with depression, anxiety, motivation and general satisfaction with one's life (Rosenberg, 1986).

Since its origin, attachment research has focused primarily on the study of attachment bonds in early childhood (Bowlby, 1982). Lately, however, attachment has been re-conceptualized to include other significant relationships, such as those with peers. From an attachment perspective, adolescence is marked by critical changes in cognitive, behavioural, and emotional systems. Adolescents develop their own points of view and separate them from their parents (Bowlby, 1982). Further, the transition to adolescence implies a modification in the family balance between connectedness and autonomy. Indeed, during this developmental phase, adolescents search greater independence and autonomy from their parents.

Parental relationship plays a very important role in determining high self-esteem of students. The security of the attachment relationship provides the basis for the child's development of independence in conflicts and depression (Allen and Hauser, 1996). Adolescence is understood as a time of increased autonomy and experimentation; a time when peer relationships become increasingly important, and when the risk of engagement in potentially harmful behaviors becomes a salient area of concern (Laible *et al.*, 2004). Throughout this period of development, parent-child relationships change in many important ways. From the outside, it can see as though adolescents and their parents become less close during this time. However, from the perspective of attachment theory, relationships with attachment figures remain one of the most influential factors in nearly every aspect of a person's life into adolescence and beyond. During adolescence, the primary task of separation-individuation occurs, mirroring the differentiation of the individual self-concept during the first year of life and the success of which heavily depends upon the security of the attachment relationship up until the adolescent years. This process has implications for the adolescent's self-esteem (Laible *et al.*, 2004).

Self-esteem is intertwined and contributes to negative effects. There are theoretical reasons to believe that self-esteem 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 :

- To assess the extent of self – esteem among adolescents.
- To study the effects of socio-economic variables on self–esteem.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was planned to investigating 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 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 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. Self-esteem was taken as dependent variable. Self-Esteem was assessed by Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg’s (1989). An independent variable is a variable presumed to affect or influence other variables. Independent variable was socio-economic variables which included adolescent gender, caste, family type, family size, parental occupation and family income.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

**Comparison of self-esteem across socio-economic variables :**

Comparison of self-esteem of adolescents as per socio-economic variables is elucidated in Table 1. Surprisingly non-significant differences were obtained in self – esteem mean scores when compared against family structure ( $z=0.05$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and annual income ( $z=1.06$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This reflects that family structure and annual income make no significant differences in the scores of self – esteem of adolescents. Non-significant differences were established for self-esteem as per family size  $F_{(2,287)} = 1.25$ , caste  $F_{(2,287)} = 0.78$ , number of siblings  $F_{(2,287)} = 0.06$  and annual income  $F_{(3,286)} = 1.06$ .

However comparison of mean scores revealed that adolescents of large families ( $M= 18.73$ ) had slightly better self-esteem than adolescents living in medium ( $M=18.05$ ) and small ( $M=17.38$ ) families.

Moving towards comparative examination mean scores of adolescents on the basis of three categories of caste, non-significant differences were observed in self-esteem scores of adolescents of general caste, backward caste and schedule caste categories. This means that caste did not make differences in level of self-esteem. A cursory look over mean scores of adolescents’ self-esteem as per number of siblings reveals that adolescents who had more number of siblings were slightly better in their self-esteem as compared to their counter parts. Further comparison of means against income reflected that adolescents from lower were slightly better against higher income group adolescents (DuBois *et al.*, 2002).

The results indicated that gender, academic achievement, parent-peer attachment were protective factors for self-esteem as these were positively and significantly, correlated to self-esteem. Gender alone was the highest significant contributor to self-esteem (39%). The role of gender and academic achievement in self-esteem get strength from the results reported by Brookover (1985) and Uba *et al.* (2010) who found a strong positive relationship of these with self-esteem. Dhal *et al.* (2007) also reported a significant association of self-esteem with attachment style.

**Table 1 : Comparison of self-esteem across socio-economic variables**

Sr. No.	Socio-economic variables			
1.	Family structure			Z-value
	Nuclear Mean ± S.D.	Extended Mean ± S.D.		
	18.00±4.46	18.33±4.36		0.05
2.	Annual income			F-value
	Upto Rs. 1,26,666 Mean ± S.D.	Rs. 1,26,667- Rs. 2,43,333 Mean ± S.D.		
	1.86 ± 0.47	1.77 ±0.42		1.06
3.	Family size			F –value
	Small (upto 4) Mean ± S.D.	Medium (5-6) Mean ±S.D.	Large (7 and more) Mean ±S.D.	
	17.38 <sup>a</sup> ±4.73	18.05 <sup>a</sup> ±4.30	18.73 <sup>a</sup> ±4.52	1.25
4.	Caste			F-value
	SC category Mean ± S.D.	BC category Mean ±S.D.	General category Mean ±S.D.	
	18.26 <sup>a</sup> ±4.55	17.67 <sup>a</sup> ±4.20	18.51 <sup>a</sup> ±4.61	0.78
5.	Number of siblings			F-value
	1-2 Mean ±S.D.	3-4 Mean ±S.D.	5-6 Mean ±S.D.	
	17.98 <sup>a</sup> ±4.34	18.17 <sup>a</sup> ±4.41	18.13 <sup>a</sup> ±5.03	0.06

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

Paternal occupation, parent-peer alienation emerged out to be the risk factors in development of self-esteem. Similar findings were reported by Parish and Wiggle (1985) that adolescents who experience poor family support and attachment are likely to have their self-esteem worsen. This is because certain problems stemming from parental divorce may be mediated via a lowered self-esteem. Although, the influence that parents have over their adolescent children wanes as they struggle to attain independence. It appears that parents who are warm and involved in their children's wellbeing, provide firm guidelines and limits, have appropriate developmental expectations, and encourage the adolescent to develop their own beliefs tend to be most effective. These parents tend to use reasoning and persuasion, explain rules, discuss issues, and listen respectfully. Adolescents who come from homes with this style of parenting tend to perform well in school, report less depression and anxiety, higher in measures of self-reliance and self-esteem, and be less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors and drug abuse (Steinberg, 2001).

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