



# Gender differences in perception of resilience and parent-child attachment by adolescents belonging to single parent families

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to assess the gender differences in perception of resilience and parent child attachment by adolescents belonging to single parent families Oxford Happiness Inventory, Socio- Economic Status Scale, Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire and Connor- Davidson Resilience Scale was administered on 120 adolescents (13-19 years of age) belonging to single parent families and middle socio-economic group. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample for the study. Statistical analysis included percentages, chi- square and t-test. The results revealed that despite belonging to single parent families, majority of adolescents perceived average level of happiness. Female adolescents perceived significantly more happiness in their life as compared to their male counterparts. Males perceived significantly higher resilience and angry distress whereas females were significantly empathetic towards their parent. Females also significantly perceived their attachment figure to be more available and responsive towards their needs.

## INTRODUCTION

Happiness is a state of inner fulfillment, not the gratification of inexhaustible desires for outward things.

It is something that comes from individuals' action. The growth of happiness is directly proportional to acceptance and inversely to expectations. Acceptance of the things around a person, whether it is good or bad, can make one truly happy. Happiness is characterised by the experience of more frequent positive affective states than negative ones as well as a perception that one is progressing towards important life goals (Lyubomirsky,

2007).

In changing family life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the most dramatic and the far reaching implication is the increase in the rate of divorce. In western countries, near the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only about 5 per cent of first marriages ended in divorce (Manning and Lamb, 2003). In contrast, demographers (Sieh *et al.*, 2012) estimated that about half of the first marriages initiated in recent years will be voluntarily dissolved observers (Barnes, 1999) which have attributed this change to a number of factors, including the increasing economic independence of women, declining earnings among men without college

degrees, rising expectations for personal fulfillment from marriage and greater social acceptance of divorce (Allen and Land, 1999).

Due to the broken family, there may be a change in the perceptions about the other parent (White, 2006). Studies suggest that children who live with stably single mothers and children who live with mothers who experience multiple partnership changes show higher levels of aggression and anxiety/depression than children who live with stably married parents (Olaniyi, 2014). In contrast, it is found that children who live with parents who are stably cohabiting do not differ from children raised by married parents.

The degree of parental conflict is a major stressor and a salient risk factor associated with child's adjustment to parental separation and divorce (Barnes, 1999). It was reported that children have greater psychological problems when their parents were in conflict, either during marriage or following divorce (Kelly and Emery, 2003) and children from divorced but conflict-free homes have been found to have fewer behavioural problems than children remaining in a conflicted marriage (Hetherington, 1999). Children's adjustment improves when conflict declines after.

Although most adolescents report positive levels of happiness in single parent families (Natvig *et al.*, 2003), many adolescents experience stress while developing during this transitional period (Compas and Reeslund, 2009). Experiences of accumulated stress are predictors of psychological problems and distress (Coleman, 2011) and can threaten adolescents' healthy development and well-being (Compas and Reeslund, 2009).

Closely related to stress is resilience, or the collective mechanisms by which a person copes with and recovers from the negative emotions that often accompany stress (Compas and Reeslund, 2009). The focus of resilience is upon positive outcomes and successful adaptations (Seligman *et al.*, 2005), as well as how well people sustain health and psychological well-being during challenging situations posing stress experiences and potential risks of negative outcomes.

#### **Need of the study :**

Happiness is a mental or emotional state of well-being defined by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. The key to happiness is not a thought of feeling happy but actually being happy.

Most of people search happiness into materialistic object which is actually related to their mind. True happiness starts within their conscious which relates to self-esteem, confidence and positive energy. This study was an endeavor to explore the contribution factors such as resilience in the dynamics of happiness among adolescents in spite of belonging to single parent families. The above documented research evidence reveal that single parent families have a significant effect on adolescents' his own ability to bounce back to the normal situation irrespective of any kind of loss a family has suffered. But due to the dearth of research studies in the Indian context made it pertinent that a scientific study in Indian context on happiness among adolescents belonging to single parent families should be carried out. This study considered the gender differences in relation to resilience and parent child attachment of adolescents belonging to single parent families. Thus, this study focused on trying to understand why some adolescents' in spite of belonging to single parent families are happier than others. This study will provide an insight into the adolescents' happiness belonging to urban single parent families.

#### **Objectives :**

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To assess the level of happiness among adolescents belonging to single parent families.
- To find out the gender differences in relation to resilience and parent-child attachment among adolescents belonging to single parent families.

#### **Hypothesis to be tested :**

H1: Females will have higher happiness level as compared to males.

H2 : Males will be highly resilient as compared to females.

H3: Males will possess more amount of anger in the parent- relationship.

H4: Females will be more empathetic in the parent-adolescent relationship.

H5: Females will be more confident in availability and responsiveness towards the attachment figure.

#### **Conceptual framework of the research study (Happiness, resilience, parent-adolescent attachment)**

**and socio- economic status) :**

In this section, the concepts used in the study are being discussed under the following heads:

**Happiness :**

Pursuit of happiness is a priority of every individual. Happiness is very subjective in nature as it varies from one person to another. It is a mental or emotional state wellbeing characterized by positive feelings, affect and emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Happiness is commonly understood how much one likes the life one lives or more formally, the degree to which one evaluates one's life, as a whole positively (Veenhoven, 2005). It has been described as the greatest good and despite striving towards many things which will make people happy. Csikszentmihalyi (2002) argues that happiness is the one intrinsic goal which people strive for in it. He describes happiness as the "bottom line of all desire".

Webster's Dictionary defines happiness as, "an agreeable feeling or condition of the soul arising from good fortune or propitious happening of any kind, the state of being happy, contentment, joyful satisfaction, felicity and blessedness." The term happiness captures a huge variety of positive emotional responses, including such things as cheerfulness, serenity, optimism and joy. Argyle (2001) states that happiness consists of three basic components: "positive affection", "life satisfaction" and "Negative affection". In Aristotle's theory of happiness (2000):

- Happiness is the ultimate end and purpose of human existence
- Happiness is the exercise of virtue
- Happiness cannot be achieved until the end of one's life
- Happiness is the perfection of human nature. Since man is a rational animal, human happiness depends on the exercise of his reason
- Happiness depends on acquiring a moral character, where one displays the virtues of courage, generosity, justice, friendship and citizenship in one's life. These virtues involve striking a balance or "mean" between an excess and a deficiency
- Happiness requires intellectual contemplation, for this is the ultimate realization of our rational capacities (Narrated by White, 2006).

Carr (2004) believes that happiness is

understandable, based upon relevant concepts of positive feelings like happiness and joy. It is obvious that all people could not explain their happiness in a single and special way. It is possible to explain happiness with different experiences like a warm internal feeling, successful feeling, coordination feeling and internal calmness, a joyful experience and reduction or lack of any problem.

**Resilience :**

Resilience is defined as a dynamic process that individuals exhibit positive behavioural adaptation when they encounter significant adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress. It is different from strengths or developmental assets which are a characteristic of an entire population, regardless of the level of adversity they face. Under adversity, assets function differently (a good school, or parental monitoring, for example, have a great deal more influence in the life of a child from a poorly resourced background than one from a wealthy home with other options for support, recreation and self-esteem).

The term 'resilience' is considered to be a two-dimensional construct concerning the exposure of adversity and the positive adjustment outcomes of that adversity. This two-dimensional construct implies two judgments: one about a "positive adaptation" and the other about the significance of risk (or adversity). One point of view about adversity could define it as any risks associated with negative life conditions that are statistically related to adjustment difficulties, such as poverty, adolescents of mothers with schizophrenia or experiences of disasters. Positive adaptation, on the other hand, is considered in a demonstration of manifested behaviour on social competence or success at meeting any particular tasks at a specific life stage (Walsh, 2002).

**Parent-child attachment :**

Living in a single-parent family is a complex human phenomenon. It deserves an inquiry model that considers multiple meanings that women and adolescents may attribute to their functioning within the single-parent family. A deeper, richer understanding of the single-parent family situation can be achieved if respondents' meanings and contexts are grounded in their descriptions of lived experience. Living in a single-parent family system is not limited to a physical reality, a reality that are things

per se, something that is context free; rather, it is a context dependent, situational entity that is socially constructed. Linear models of cause-and-effect will not tap the fullness and depth of the construct (Eagly and Steffen, 1984).

Divorce can be a difficult time for a family, especially if children are involved. A mother is someone who most children have a relationship with, but a divorce can affect this relationship in a couple of different ways. The mother-adolescent relationship could be changed due to divorce. The relationship depends on several factors, such as, with whom the adolescent lives, closeness prior to divorce and socio-economic status (Eagly and Steffen, 1984). Research has been done in order to see the affects of the different factors that may affect the relationship between mother and adolescent.

A father is also a very important part to a family. Divorced families have been looked at on how the father responds after the divorce relating to the relationship with the adolescent. In most cases fathers tend to be the parent who leaves. During this time, fathers have little or no contact with their children, according to national surveys (Emery, 1999). Emery (1999) also found one third of divorced fathers had seen their children only once or not at all during the first year of being divorced, four out of ten fathers had seen their children about three times a month and one fourth of fathers had seen them once a week.

### **Previous Research :**

Previous research studies also indicated that children from single parent families have higher poverty rates and lower levels of educational and occupational attainment than children who grow up with both their biological or adoptive parents, (Aseltine, 1996) lower quality adult relationships (Amato, 2000) and lower psychological well-being (Hetherington, 2003).

A large number of studies published during the 1990s found that divorced individuals, compared with married individuals, experience lower levels of psychological wellbeing, including less happiness, more symptoms of psychological distress and poorer self-concepts (Aseltine, 1996).

Research reports that variables related to the parents are associated with the well-being of offspring. For example, children's well-being is associated with parental style, ratings of their relationships with their parents predicted their happiness (Garfinkle and McLanahan,

1986). Similarly, ratings of their closeness to both their fathers and their mothers predicted the adolescents' happiness (Amato, 1994). These issues have become important to study as there was sufficient evidence available in western countries to study about single parent families but there is a dearth of research studies focusing on single parent families in the Indian context. Hence, it was presumed in the present study that the relationship between parental closeness and happiness is affected by divorce.

Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in a single parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life. Those two domains include love and work, which are considered as most essentials to happiness. Needless to say, not all children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage or even holding a steady job (White, 2006).

The degree of parental conflict is a major stressor and a salient risk factor associated with child's adjustment to parental separation and divorce (Barnes, 1999). It was reported that children have greater psychological problems when their parents were in conflict, either during marriage or following divorce (Kelly and Emery, 2003) and children from divorced but conflict-free homes have been found to have fewer behavioural problems than children remaining in a conflicted marriage (Hetherington, 1999). Children's adjustment improves when conflict declines after. Most experts agree children will be better of living in a conflict free divorced family than a conflict ridden married one. Children were also at a higher risk for emotional difficulties when parents were too preoccupied with their own adjustment to carry out parental responsibilities adequately after the divorce (Bonanno, 2004) and when parental interest and investment after the divorce, as well as the parent-child relationship deteriorate (Kelly, 2007).

Although some findings indicated that the tensions may be alleviated over time, especially between children and custodial mothers (Booth, 2000), other findings suggest that problematic parent-child relationships associated with divorce persist throughout the life span

(Amato and Booth, 2000). The acknowledged role of the quality of the parent-child relationship to children's emotional adjustment (Blum and Blum, 2009) makes it important to explore the relationship after divorce and more specifically to try to identify factors that may enhance or impair its quality.

Thus, the conceptual framework of the present study focused on trying to understand why adolescents belonging to single parent families and despite of living in middle income group are happier than others. The present study was undertaken to assess the correlation of happiness, resilience and parent-adolescent attachment among adolescents of single parent families.

Marital separation can precipitate intense and complex emotional reactions. Following separation, the couples suffered from separation distress, which encompassed a number of common emotional problems. These emotional problems included pining for the spouse accompanied by feelings of anxiety, fearfulness and intense anger at the spouse, tempered with ambivalence, alternating at times with euphoria and relief. He claimed that separation distress fades with the passage of time; however, when separation distress dissipated, loneliness may set in if no other satisfying relationship took place. Hetherington (2003) agreed that, with time, attachment and conflict decrease, but anger and resentment are sustained longer by mothers compared to fathers. The present study was therefore, to assess the gender differences between the resilience and parent-adolescent attachment of adolescents belonging to single parent families.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A systematic procedure was designed for conducting the investigation, analysis and interpretation of the grouped data. The private schools of Chandigarh were randomly selected. The sample for the present study was drawn from these ten private schools of Chandigarh. The total sample consisted of 120 male and female adolescents. The sample was divided to have equal number of male adolescents ( $n=60$ ) and females ( $n=60$ ).

In each selected school, the investigator approached class teachers of class 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and sought their help to prepare a list of students fulfilling the following criteria:

- Age range of 13-19 years
- Belonging to single parent families

- Belonging to middle income group

These subjects were, then, purposely selected to complete a sample of 120 adolescents. Their socio-economic status was confirmed by using Socio-Economic Status Scale by Dubey and Nigam (2005). The selected subjects were approached in schools to assess their happiness status and resilience.

### Tools/Measures :

- Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle, 2001). This questionnaire was administered to assess the perception of happiness among adolescents. It is a 29 item questionnaire measuring the main components of happiness *i.e.* achievement and satisfaction, enjoyment, vigour and health. The test-retest reliability co-efficient of the scale was 0.90.

- The socio-economic status scale developed by Dubey and Nigam (2005) was used to judge the socio-economic status of the respondents. It is a verbal scale which contains 20 items. It measures various characteristics of the respondents and their family like social position, income, occupation and education. Test retest reliability co-efficient of the scale is 0.81.

- The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2011) (CD-RISC) is a self-report measure comprised of 25 items, each rated on a 5-point scale (0-4), with higher scores reflecting greater resilience. The internal consistency of the CD-RISC is found through a Cronback's alpha to be 0.89.

- Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ) developed by West *et al.* (1998), was used to study the adolescents' perception of attachment with his/ her parent. It is a 5 point likert type scale.

Test-retest reliability with a normative sample ranged from 0.68 to 0.74, indicating temporal stability.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The present study was conducted to assess the level of happiness and resilience as predictors of happiness among adolescents of single parent families. The results of the study are discussed in the light of the happiness profile of adolescents belonging to single parent families, gender differences, perception of resilience and parent-child attachment among adolescents belonging to single parent families.

### Happiness profile of adolescents belonging to single

**parent families :**

Table 1 reveals the distribution of the sample across different levels of happiness as perceived by adolescents belonging to single parent families. In the total sample, major proportion (56.7%) of the adolescents reported happiness at average level followed by 23.3 per cent who perceived high level of happiness. Only 20 per cent of adolescents recorded low happiness. The empirical generalization that adolescents who are raised in single parent families are likely to be less happier than those who are raised in dual parent families or intact families (Lyubomirsky, 2005, McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994) and statistical analysis of research conducted by Manning and Lamb in 2003, also revealed significant negative long term effects on psychological well-being of adolescents belonging to single parent families. But the findings of the present study are not very strongly reaffirmed by the previous researches conducted. The hopeful prospect of this study is that inspite of belonging to single parent families, adolescents perceived average level of happiness. Also, various research studies (Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter, 2003 and Fredrickson, 1998) have concluded that adolescents' perception of happiness can change from year to year, from season to season and from day to day.

Majority of female adolescents (55%) as well as male adolescents (58.3%) reported happiness at average

level. Majority of female adolescents 30 per cent perceived high level of happiness scores whereas 16.7 per cent male adolescents perceived happiness scores in this category. 15 per cent female adolescents recorded low level of happiness scores whereas 25 per cent male adolescents recorded low happiness scores. Chi- square value depicted gender differences to be non- significant as far as distribution of both genders across different levels of happiness as perceived by adolescents, was concerned. Though gender differences in the distribution of gender were non-significant, yet high percentage of male adolescents (58.3%) perceived moderate level of happiness as compared to females (55%).

Table 2 presents gender differences in the mean scores of happiness as perceived by adolescents belonging to single parent families. It reveals that the female adolescents (mean scores= 121.58) perceived more happiness as compared to male adolescents (mean scores= 112.10) and t- value reveals gender differences to be significant (p< 0.05). A number of studies have revealed significant differences in happiness scores between males and females. The results are in line with the findings by Crossley and Langdrige *et al.* (2005) which documented that findings reported females to be happier than males inspite of belonging to single parent families. On the contrary, empirical findings by Lowery and Setle (1985) have shown that females often report

**Table 1 : Distribution of the sample as per level of happiness perceived by adolescents belonging to single parent families**

Happiness scores	Total (n=120)		Males (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Chi square value	p- value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Low	24	20.0%	15	25.0%	9	15.0%	3.84	0.15*
Average	68	56.7%	35	58.3%	33	55.0%		
High	28	23.3%	10	16.7%	18	30.0%		

Total sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60; \* indicates significance of value at P<0.05

**Table 2 : Gender differences in perception of happiness (Mean ± SD) by adolescents belonging to single parent families**

Variable	Males(n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females(n <sub>2</sub> =60)		t- value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Happiness	112.00	24.25	121.58	25.86	2.09*

Total sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60; \* indicates significance of value at P<0.05

**Table 3 : Gender-wise distribution of the adolescents belonging to single parent families across different levels of resilience**

Resilience	Total (n=120)		Males (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Chi square value	p- value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Low	8	6.7%	2	3.3%	6	10.0%	6.29	0.43*
Average	79	65.8%	36	60.0%	43	71.7%		
High	33	27.5%	22	36.7%	11	18.3%		

Total Sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60 \* indicates significance of value at P<0.05

being unhappier as compared to males. Findings of the study are contrary with the earlier research studies which concluded statistically no gender differences in adolescents' level of happiness (Csikzentmihalyi and Hunter, 2003; Mahon *et al.*, 2003; Natvig *et al.*, 2003 and Van de Wetering *et al.*, 2010). It was hypothesized in the present study that females would perceive higher happiness levels as compared to males. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was proved to be accepted.

**Perception of resilience among adolescents belonging to single parent families :**

Table 3 represents gender-wise distribution of the respondents across different levels of resilience as perceived by them. Resilience refers to the ability of an individual to bounce back to the normal position after being encountered with any adverse situation in life.

Majority of the adolescents (65.8%) belonging to single parent families perceived average levels of resilience whereas 27.5 per cent adolescents perceived high level of resilience. Only 6.7 per cent adolescents felt that it is difficult for them to bounce back after being encountered with any adverse situation. Majority of both males (60%) and females (71.7%) perceived moderate resilience followed by those who recorded high resilience that is, 36.7 per cent male adolescents and 18.3 per cent female adolescents, respectively. Only 8 per cent female adolescents recorded low level of resilience and only 2

per cent male adolescents reported similar results. Gender differences were non- significant in the distribution of male and female adolescents across different levels of resilience. Results are in line with previous research studies conducted which documented the role of resilience on adolescents' happiness. According to the study by Almeida (2005), resilience may have an indirect influence on adolescents' happiness in the way that the protective factors buffer the effect of stress on the health outcomes. Resilience affects individuals' reactivity to daily stressors and their ability to cope with the stress they face (Almeida, 2005) and in turn, their well-being (Almeida, 2005).

**Gender differences in perception of resilience (Mean ± SD) by adolescents belonging to single parent families :**

Table 4 gives the gender differences in mean scores in perception of resilience by adolescents belonging to single parent families. Findings revealed to be significant (p<005). According to the results, male adolescents reported more resilience as compared to female adolescents. Findings are in line with the studies by Park *et al.* (2004) and Yu *et al.* (2011) which documented that adolescent males scored higher in resilience as compared to females. It was hypothesized in the present study that males would be highly resilient as compared to females. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis was

**Table 4 : Gender differences in perception of resilience (Mean ± SD) by adolescents belonging to single parent families**

Variable	Males (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		t –value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Resilience	27.48	7.47	24.25	6.19	0.011*

\* indicates significance of value at P < 0.05\* ; Total sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60

**Table 5 : Gender-wise distribution of the sample in the levels of different subscales of parent- adolescent attachment perceived by adolescents belonging to single parent families**

Parent-child attachment		Total (n= 120)		Males (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		Chi square value	p- value
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Angry distress	Low	23	19.2%	2	3.3%	21	35.0%	19.60	0.001**
	Average	88	73.3%	52	86.7%	36	60.0%		
	High	9	7.5%	6	10.0%	3	5.0%		
Availability	Low	36	30.0%	28	46.7%	8	13.3%	16.41	0.001**
	Average	69	57.5%	25	41.7%	44	73.3%		
	High	15	12.5%	7	11.7%	8	13.3%		
Goal-corrected partnership	Low	35	29.2%	27	45.0%	8	13.3%	14.68	0.001**
	Average	76	63.3%	30	50.0%	46	76.7%		
	High	9	7.5%	3	5.0%	6	10.0%		

Total sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60 \*\* indicates significance of value at P<0.01

proved to be accepted.

### **Perception of parent adolescent attachment belonging to single parent attachment :**

Table 5 shows the distribution of the sample in the levels of different subscales of parent child attachment perceived by adolescents belonging to single parent families.

Availability refers to an adolescents' confidence in terms of availability and responsiveness of the attachment figure. When the data was distributed on different levels of availability, it was interesting to note that major proportion of the adolescents (57.5%) both female (73.3%) and male (41.7%) adolescents perceived the availability of their parent to be average when they needed them and they were reciprocal towards them. Only 13 per cent female adolescents were in low category with relation to parents in availability whereas more number of males that is 46.7 per cent revealed the similar results. Only 13.3 per cent females and 11.7 per cent males perceived their attachment figure to be highly available and reciprocal towards them.

Angry distress refers to an amount of anger in the adolescent- parent relationship. Major section of the adolescents (73.3%) perceived an average amount of anger distress. However, 86.7 per cent male adolescents depicted average level and 60 per cent female adolescents showed similar level in this dimension. 35 per cent females depicted low levels of anger as compared to only 2 per cent male adolescents. More number of male adolescents (10%) reported high levels of anger than females (5%).

Goal-corrected partnership refers to across the extent to which the adolescents consider and is empathetic to the needs and feelings of attachment figure. The largest proportion of the adolescents (63.3%) which included 76.7 per cent females and 50 males consider and were empathetic to the needs and feelings of their empathetic figure. Though 29 per cent adolescents, males (45%) and females (13%) were less empathetic towards the needs and feelings of the attachment figure. Only 7.5 per cent which includes 10 per cent female adolescent and 5 per cent male adolescents were highly empathetic towards their parents.

Gender differences were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) as far as distribution of both the genders across different subscales of parent- adolescent attachment was concerned.

Parent child attachment depends on several factors such as with whom the adolescent lives with and feels close to a particular parent, be a mother or a father Lipman *et al.* (2002). Research studies depicted by Doyle and Markiewicz (2005) documented that mothers who are divorced have a different time providing the same level of emotional support as compared to non- divorced mother. Adolescents are already going through several changes in their lives. Moreover, divorce of the parents can have difficulty and confusion to those changes. In the present study, it was observed that because of irritability, adolescent show their anger more often because their parents are not attached to them anymore and they may also feel that one of the parents whom they lost as a result of divorce or death will not be there available to them. It has been documented in the literature that adolescent who suffer parental separation because of divorce or loss of parent through death (Magrab, 1978) showed short term adjustment which may be good or bad because of the irritability an adolescent may depict more anger.

Results are also in favour of a study by Hetherington (1999) thus depicted that psychological well-being of adolescents from happy married families was slightly higher than adolescents from divorced families. Statistical analysis of various analysis have also revealed significant long term effects on psychological well-being like happiness, satisfaction and excitement among adolescents as a result of single parenting (Greif, 1996).

### **Gender differences in perception of parent-adolescent attachment (Mean $\pm$ SD) by adolescents belonging to single parent families :**

Table 6 gives the gender differences in mean scores in perception of parent- adolescent attachment by adolescents belonging to single parent families. Findings revealed gender differences to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). According to the results, males perceived higher anger as compared to females, followed by availability which showed that females were more responsive towards their parent as compared to males. The females were more empathetic towards their parent as compared to males. Findings of the studies were not harmonious with the previous researches conducted which documented that there were no gender differences among males and females. In contrary to this previous research by Guidubaldi and Perry (1985) documented that males in



Variable	Males (n <sub>1</sub> =60)		Females (n <sub>2</sub> =60)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Adolescent- attachment					
Angry distress	14.23	3.73	11.90	3.74	3.42**
Availability	11.28	4.92	13.57	4.39	2.68**
Goal-corrected partnership	10.82	4.50	13.32	4.22	3.14**

\*\* indicates significance of value at  $P < 0.01$  \*\* ;

Total Sample (n) = 120; Males (n<sub>1</sub>) = 60; Females (n<sub>2</sub>) = 60

divorced household exhibited more adverse effects than females in terms of inappropriate behaviour and happiness. The findings on gender differences in children's responses to divorce have been contradictory. Some research points to more adjustment problems for boys in divorcing families than for girls (Guidubaldi and Perry, 1985, Kaye, 1989 and Kurdek, 1987) other research finds more negative effects for girls (Farber *et al.*, 1983, Frost and Pakiz, 1990, Slater *et al.*, 1983, Wallerstein and Kelly, 1975) and some research has found no differences in the effects of divorce on boys and girls (Kinard and Reinherz, 1984, Mechanic and Hansell, 1989, Rosen, 1979 and Zill *et al.*, 1993). It was hypothesized in the present study that females perceived to be empathetic in the adolescent- parent attachment. Hence, according to the findings, the hypothesis certified to be rejected. It was also hypothesized in the present study that male perceived higher amount of anger in parent-adolescent attachment as compared to females. Hence, according to the present study, the hypothesis proved to be rejected.

### Salient findings :

- Majority of the adolescents (65%) belonging to single parent families were in the age group 17-19 years followed by 25.8 per cent who were in the age range of 14-16 years. Only 9.2 per cent respondents were distributed in the age range of 10-13 years.
- Despite belonging to single parent families, major proportion (56.7%) of the total sample significantly perceived happiness at average level followed by 23.3 per cent who perceived high level of happiness. Only 20 per cent of adolescents recorded low happiness.
- Female adolescents perceived significantly more happiness as compared to male counterparts.
- Majority of the adolescents belonging to single parent families perceived significantly average levels of resilience.
- Gender differences were significant in favour of male adolescents who reported more resilience as

compared to female adolescents.

- Major proportion of the adolescents significantly perceived the availability of their parent to be average when they needed them and they were reciprocal towards them.
- Major section of the adolescents significantly perceived an average amount of angry distress.
- The largest proportion of the adolescents was empathetic towards the needs and feelings of their attachment figure.
- Gender differences were significant as far as distribution of both the genders across different subscales of parent- adolescent attachment was concerned.
- Males perceived significantly more anger as compared to females, whereas in the subscale of availability, females were significantly more responsive towards their parent as compared to males. The females were also significantly more empathetic towards their parent as compared to their male counterparts.

### Conclusion :

It can be concluded that despite living in single parent families, majority of the adolescents perceived average level of happiness. Female adolescents perceived significantly more happiness as compared to male counterparts. Males manifested more resilience as compared to female adolescents. Angry distress was significantly negatively correlated with happiness whereas availability and goal-corrected partnership were significantly positively correlated with happiness.

### Implications of the study :

- Findings of the study would be useful for parents, psychologists, counselors, social workers, policy makers, educationists and researchers for holistic understanding of happiness.
- The results can provide empirical feedback to the professionals and NGOs to plan and organize intervention strategies and programmes to promote happiness among single parent families.

– The results can be used to improve upon those factors and situations which emerge as risk factors for happiness and to develop and sustain those which act as protract ones to enhance the level of happiness.

– This study can be useful as a reference material for future research in the area of psychological well-being.

– Divorce affects children negatively as it is considered as a social problem. Families, teachers, administrators and counselors should be aware of these problems of single parent children. Immediate action should be done. Adolescents belonging to single parent families are less assertive, more aggressive or submissive so they should join social skills training programmes that are conducted by counselors who are experienced with individual counselling, group counselling, family counselling, play therapy etc. in whole or at least one of them.

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