

Vol 4 Issue 11 Dec 2014

ISSN No : 2230-7850

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International Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal

*Indian Streams  
Research Journal*

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**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2230-7850**

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## DEPRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:-** The present study examined the relationship of depression with family environment among adolescents in Chandigarh. For the collection of data Beck Depression Inventory-II and Family Environment Scale were used. For the analysis of data statistical techniques like t-test, Pearson product moment correlation and stepwise multiple regression were used. Correlation analysis showed that depression was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with cohesion, expressiveness, independence and recreational orientation dimensions of family environment. No significant gender difference was observed on the variable of depression. Boys and girls significantly differed only on organization dimension of family environment. Regression analysis showed that expressiveness, cohesion and independence significantly contributed to depression independently as well as conjointly. This demonstrated that adolescents having families high on expressiveness, cohesion and independence exhibited lower level of depression. Results of the present study demonstrated that congenial family environment is necessary for the overall development of adolescents.

**Keywords:** Depression and family environment.

### INTRODUCTION

Depression is a major cause of disability across the regions and it causes fatigue, suicide, decreased ability to do work and attend school (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2013). Depression disrupts a person's thinking processes, emotional reactions and day-by-day behaviours (Williams, 1984; Farby, 1980). According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), "Depressive disorder is a mood disorder characterized by the presence of sad, empty or irritable mood, accompanied by somatic and cognitive changes that significantly affect the individual's capacity to function" (p. 155).

The adolescents lived in intertwined subsystems and experienced these subsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), namely; family, school, peer and work (Hill, 1983). Family is the most important socializing agent that influences the child's life (Tewari, Morbhatt & Kumar, 1981). The family constituted an interpersonal social system held together by strong bonds of attachment, affection, caring, and yet exercised control, approval and discipline on each other's actions (Harvey & Byrd, 2000; Parke & Buriel, 1998).

Family psychiatric history and parental depression (Birmaher, Ryan, Williamson & Brent, 1996; Downey & Coyne, 1990) have been associated with a child's risk for developing depression (Weissman & Jensen, 2002). The families having higher cohesion and expressiveness and low conflict showed less dependency and fewer psychological illnesses (Singhal, 2004). The adolescents from family environments characterized by warmth, caring, communication, understanding and support showed fewer psychological health symptoms (Seiffge-Krenke, 1995). Families with greater cohesion, greater expressiveness among family members were lower in depression (Zuniga, Jacobo, Rodriguez, Cabrera & Renteria, 2009; Lau & Kwok, 2000; Kuen, 1997) and family disruption, exposure to chronic stressful circumstances within the family, poor family environment in terms of parental hostility, rejection and inconsistencies, family violence, parental psychopathology, parents reported greater levels of expressed emotion, maladaptive levels of cohesion leads to depression (Gate et al., 2013; Sharma, Verma & Malhotra, 2008; Seguin, Manion, Cloutier, McEvov & Cappelli, 2003; Truong, 2003; Rudolph, Kurlakowsky & Conley, 2001; Deb, 1995).

## NEED OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is typically a time of emotional turmoil and mood fluctuations as a result of peer pressure, increasing expectations for adult behaviour and physiological changes (Garber, 1984). There are many factors that contribute to depression such as loneliness, lack of social support from family, parental divorce, low level of cohesiveness and expressiveness in the family, rejection by parents, peers and neighbours, financial strain, stress due to studies etc. Family environment is the most important factor that affects the developmental process of an individual. However, the literature reviewed in the present study showed that adolescents having families with greater cohesion, greater expressiveness among family members were lower in depression but family disruption, poor family environment in terms of parental hostility, rejection and inconsistencies, family violence, maladaptive levels of cohesion were all leads to depression. Although the variables selected in the present study have been studied individually, but not much of work is done in this part of country. Hence, the present study was conducted to fill these research gaps and also to find out the significant predictors of depression from among the various dimensions of family environment.

## OBJECTIVES

**For the present study following objectives were framed:**

1. To find out the gender differences on the variables of depression and family environment.
2. To find out the relationship of depression with family environment among adolescents.
3. To find out the predictors of depression from among the seven dimensions of family environment i. e. Competitive framework (Cf), Cohesion (Co), Expressiveness (Ex), Independence (In), Moral orientation (Mo), Organization (Or) and Recreational orientation (Ro).

## HYPOTHESES

**On the behalf of above stated objectives following hypotheses were formulated:**

1. There are no significant gender differences on the variables of depression and family environment.
2. There is no significant relationship between depression and family environment among adolescents.
3. None of the dimensions of family environment i. e. Competitive framework (Cf), Cohesion (Co), Expressiveness (Ex), Independence (In), Moral orientation (Mo), Organization (Or) and Recreational orientation (Ro) contribute significantly in predicting depression among adolescents conjointly as well as independently.

## DELIMITATIONS

**The study under investigation was delimited to the following:**

1. The study was delimited to Government Model Senior Secondary Schools (co-educated) of Chandigarh only.
2. The study was delimited to XI class students only.
3. The study was further delimited to the variables of depression and family environment.

## METHODOLOGY

### Design of the Study

For the present study descriptive survey method was used to find out the relationship between depression and family environment among adolescents.

### Sample

For the present study, a sample of 300 adolescents (150 boys and 150 girls studying in XI class pursuing science, arts and commerce streams) was drawn from Government Model Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh by employing stratified random sampling technique. There was no clinical history of adolescents.

**Tools**

**For the present study following tools were used:**

1. Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II): The Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996) was used to measure depression among adolescents aged 13 year or older. It has 21 items. The test-retest reliability for BDI-II was 0.93.

2. Family Environment Scale (FES): The Family Environment Scale (Vohra, 1997) was used to get information about the family environment in a rapid, objective and standardized manner. It has seven dimensions namely Competitive framework (Cf), Cohesion (Co), Expressiveness (Ex), Independence (In), Moral orientation (Mo), Organization (Or) and Recreational orientation (Ro). It includes 98 statements. Factorial validity coefficients of seven dimensions of Family Environment Scale i.e. Cf, Co, Ex, In, Mo, Or and Ro were found to be 0.84, 0.83, 0.77, 0.82, 0.80, 0.79 and 0.80 respectively. Test-retest reliabilities of seven dimensions are all in acceptable range, varying from a low of 0.78 for Independence to a high of 0.89 for Cohesion. Split-half reliability of seven dimensions varying from 0.81 (Independence) to 0.91 (Cohesion).

**Procedure**

For the collection of data a prior permission was sought from the school principals. Investigator explained the purpose of the present study to adolescents. The subjects were assured that their responses and information given about them will be kept confidential and used for research purpose only. After assurance the Beck Depression Inventory-II and Family Environment Scale were administered to adolescents with a time period of thirty minutes.

**Statistical Techniques to be Used**

Statistical technique t-test was used to check the significant gender differences on the variables under study. Pearson’s product moment method was used to find out the relationship of depression with family environment and stepwise multiple regression analysis was done to find out the predictors of depression from among the seven dimensions of family environment.

**RESULTS**

Interpretation of the results have been done hypothesis wise:

**Table 1: Comparison of Boys (N = 150) and Girls (N = 150) on the Variables of Depression and Family Environment**

Variables	Boys		Girls		t-value
	Mean	S. D.	Mean	S. D.	
<b>Depression</b>	17.03	10.736	18.23	11.034	0.96
<b>Competitive framework</b>	7.33	1.256	7.25	1.372	0.48
<b>Cohesion</b>	7.93	1.191	7.81	1.485	0.77
<b>Expressiveness</b>	7.46	1.721	7.69	2.152	1.04
<b>Independence</b>	5.60	1.614	5.61	1.733	0.07
<b>Moral orientation</b>	8.54	0.872	8.51	0.849	0.27
<b>Organization</b>	7.23	1.499	6.77	1.719	2.47*
<b>Recreational orientation</b>	5.09	1.488	5.15	1.494	0.35

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (2.59), \* Significant at 0.05 level (1.97)

Table 1 represents the comparison of boys and girls on the variables of depression and dimensions of family environment. From the table 1 it was found that boys and girls did not differ significantly on depression (t = 0.96) however girls (M = 18.23) exhibited somewhat more depression as compared to boys (M = 17.03). Thus, the null hypothesis, “There is no significant gender difference on the variable of depression” stands accepted.

Also it was observed from the table 1 that boys and girls significantly differed only on organization dimension (t = 2.47, significant at 0.05 level) except all other dimensions of family environment. This demonstrated

that in the families of boys' there was more emphasis on rules and regulations as compared to girls. Thus, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant gender difference on the variable of family environment" stands rejected only for organization dimension but accepted for all other dimensions of family environment.

**Table 2: 8X8 Intercorrelation Matrix of the Dependent Variable Depression with Independent Variable of Family Environment for Adolescents (N = 300)**

Variables	Depression	Cf	Co	Ex	In	Mo	Or	Ro
Depression	1							
Cf	-0.079	1						
Co	-0.269**	0.165**	1					
Ex	-0.271**	0.124*	0.464**	1				
In	-0.255**	0.223**	0.403**	0.416**	1			
Mo	0.055	0.169**	0.136*	-0.036	0.026	1		
Or	-0.058	0.180**	0.340**	0.117*	0.072	0.238**	1	
Ro	-0.177**	0.202**	0.318**	0.249**	0.272**	0.177**	0.326**	1

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (0.148), \* Significant at 0.05 level (0.113)

Note: Competitive framework (Cf), Cohesion (Co), Expressiveness (Ex), Independence (In), Moral orientation (Mo), Organization (Or) and Recreational orientation (Ro)

Table 2 represents the intercorrelation of dependent variable depression with the dimensions of family environment (independent variable). From the table 2 it is found that depression was significantly and negatively correlated with cohesion ( $r = -0.269$ ), expressiveness ( $r = -0.271$ ), independence ( $r = -0.255$ ) and recreational orientation ( $r = -0.177$ ) dimensions of family environment. This negative relationship indicated that adolescents having high cohesiveness, expressiveness and independence in the family showed low level of depression. Also, adolescents who showed more interest in recreational activities exhibited low level of depression. Thus, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between depression and family environment among adolescents" stands rejected for cohesion, expressiveness, independence and recreational orientation dimensions of family environment except competitive framework, moral orientation and organization dimensions.

**Table 3: Stepwise Multiple Regression Equations for Dependent Variable Depression and Independent Variable of Dimensions of Family Environment (N = 300)**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Beta Value
1	0.271 <sup>a</sup>	0.074	0.070	10.494	0.074	23.66**	1	298	-0.271
2	0.316 <sup>b</sup>	0.100	0.094	10.362	0.026	8.64**	1	297	-0.183
3	0.337 <sup>c</sup>	0.114	0.105	10.299	0.014	4.64*	1	296	-0.134

a. Predictors: (Constant), Expressiveness  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Expressiveness, Cohesion  
 c. Predictors: (Constant), Expressiveness, Cohesion, Independence  
 d. Dependent Variable: Depression

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (F = 6.72), \* Significant at 0.05 level (F = 3.87)

Table 3 presents the stepwise multiple regression equations for depression and (criterion variable) and

dimensions of family environment (independent variables).

At the first step, expressiveness was entered for prediction. The value of adjusted R<sup>2</sup> was observed as 0.070 which indicated that 7% of variance in the dependent variable was caused by expressiveness. The F-value at this step was 23.66, significant at 0.01 level. This showed that expressiveness was significant predictor of depression. Also, Beta-value for this step was -0.271 which showed inverse relationship between depression and expressiveness i. e. high expressiveness in families' leads to low level of depression among family members and vice-versa.

At the next step, cohesion was entered with expressiveness. The variance contributed by cohesion was 2.6% of the total variance (9.4%). The F-value was 8.64, significant at 0.01 level and showed that cohesion was significant predictor of depression. Beta value for this step was -0.183 which indicated negative relationship between depression and cohesion. This demonstrated that high cohesiveness in the families leads to low level of depression among adolescents and vice-versa.

At the next step, independence was introduced with expressiveness and cohesion. The variance contributed by independence was 1.4% of the total variance (10.5%). The F-value was found to be 4.64, significant at 0.05 level and Beta value was -0.134 which demonstrated that independence was significant predictor of depression and high level of independence in the family leads to low level of depression and vice-versa.

Above discussion demonstrated that expressiveness, cohesion and independence significantly contributed to depression independently as well as conjointly. Thus, the null hypothesis, "None of the dimensions of family environment i. e. Competitive framework (Cf), Cohesion (Co), Expressiveness (Ex), Independence (In), Moral orientation (Mo), Organization (Or) and Recreational orientation (Ro) contribute significantly in predicting depression among adolescents conjointly as well as independently" stands rejected for expressiveness, cohesion and independence dimensions of family environment and it was accepted for all other dimensions of family environment.

## DISCUSSION

The results of present study demonstrated that depression was significantly and negatively correlated with cohesion, expressiveness, independence and recreational orientation dimensions of family environment. Also, it was observed that expressiveness, cohesion and independence were the significant predictors of depression which demonstrated that high expressiveness, cohesion and independence in the families leads to lower level of depression. Similar results have been reported by Zuniga et al. (2009), Singhal (2004), Lau and Kwok (2000), and Kuen (1997). Also it was found that no significant gender difference was observed on depression and this result was favoured by the findings of Kaur and Sharma (2013), Mohanraj and Subbaiah (2010), Jaggi (2008), Upadhyay (2007) and McLean (2003). Also, significant gender difference was observed on organization dimension of family environment and it was favoured by Sharma (2014).

## MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 1.No significant gender difference was observed on depression.
- 2.Boys and girls significantly differed only on organization dimension except all other dimensions of family environment.
- 3.Depression was significantly and negatively correlated with cohesion, expressiveness, independence and recreational orientation dimensions of family environment.
- 4.Expressiveness, cohesion and independence dimensions of family environment significantly contributed to depression independently as well as conjointly.

## CONCLUSION

Results of the present study showed that family environment plays an important role in decreasing the depression level among adolescents. High cohesiveness, expressiveness and independence in the family contribute to lower level of depression among adolescents. Also those adolescents who take more interest in social, political, intellectual and cultural activities showed lower level of depression. All round development of adolescents depend upon the environment in which they live, so congenial environment should be provided to adolescents for their wellbeing. Findings of the study have important implications for all those who play more assertive role in the overall development of adolescents' i.e. family members, teachers, school administrators, counselors and psychologists.

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