



Intergenerational Continuity and Transition in Father's Role in Parenting

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ABSTRACT

The present research analyzed intergenerational transitions/ continuity in father's role as parents. The role played by fathers across two generations was compared along with analyzing fathers satisfaction with their own role played as a parent. The sample for the study comprised 75 grandfathers (55-75 years) and 75 fathers (35-55 years) selected from joint families belonging to middle socio-economic strata and residing in urban area of Kathua city of Jammu and Kashmir. All selected fathers/grandfathers were required to have at least one male adolescent child/grandchild. Snow ball sampling technique was used for sample selection. The tools used for investigation/data collection were a standardized Parent-Child Relationship Scale developed by Rao and a self devised Parental Satisfaction Scale. The results of the study reveal that there was significant difference between father's and grandfather's satisfaction with their parental role, with the grandfathers being more satisfied than the fathers. There was significant difference between fathers and grandfathers in six dimension of parent child relationship namely protective, demanding, object punishment, indifferent, love and neglect. Fathers were found to be more protective, loving whereas grandfathers were found to be more punishing, demanding and neglectful. Age as well as educational qualification of fathers had significant influence on the relationship they shared with their children. Some dimensions of parent-child relationship were positively correlated to each other whereas others were negatively correlated. Parental satisfaction with parenting shared positive correlation with symbolic reward and love aspect of parent child relation.

KEYWORDS : Parenting, Fathers, Grandfathers, Satisfaction, Relationship

INTRODUCTION:

The family is the child's first and longest lasting, context for development. The development of children is a slow process which requires years of support and teaching before they are ready to be independent. Families are pervasive and parents are universally important in child's development, but the influence the family exerts is incompatible to any of these factors. The rearing practices and discipline followed by parents provides help children learn communication skills, social and moral values and learn how to live and influence others in the wider world (Capaldi et al, 2008).

Parent-child relationship is unique and unparallel bond which continues to be life long. However, from the agrarian age to the present technological age parenting roles have changed considerably. As societies developed and evolved parenting roles have also be redefined and rearranged. Though the mother continues to be the primary nurturer, provider and role model for the children in the modern times as well, it is in fact the role of the father that has seen a massive transformation (Amato, 1994).

In the traditional model of fatherhood, fathers played a dominant role in the lives of their children, assuming a broad range of responsibilities defining and supervising the children's development. Mother actually looked to their husbands for insight on matters of child rearing. As we moved into industrial age things began to significantly change as parenting roles shifted. Fathers were forced to look for other ways to support their families and entered the market place, finding jobs away from home and having to be gone much of the day, thus giving mothers a more dominant role in raising the children. The father now derived his status from the outside world. His occupational standing, his economic power established not only his authority in the homes, but his worthiness as a husband and father as well (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001).

To change things even further we entered an era of technology, gadgets, toys and the pursuit of living a life of luxury. The role of a father as 'good providers' changed again. Instead of being measured by his ability to nurture, care for, and ability to be a good role model he had new challenges when it came to providing. The pressure on fathers to be this kind of provider takes away even more from their parenting role.

Apart from the other factors, the changing economic role of women has also greatly impacted the role of father for the current generation. In tandem with the growing autonomy of women related trend such as decline fertility, increasing rates of divorce and childbirth outside of marriage have resulted in a transition from traditional to multiple

undefined roles for many fathers. Today's father has started to take on roles vastly different from older generation (Sanchez and Thomas, 1997).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With this as assumption the present research was designed to:

1. Assess the role played by sample fathers in parenting.
2. Compare the roles played by father's across two generation.
3. Assess father's satisfaction with their own role as a parent.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: Methodological framework for the present study is as under

1. Sample Group and Size: -

The sample comprised of 150 parents, out of which 75 were fathers and 75 were grand fathers. The whole sample was divided into two groups:

Group I:

This group included fathers of adolescents living in joint families, where their own fathers were also available.

Group II:

It comprised of grand fathers of adolescents living with their sons and their offspring's under one roof.

2. Locale of the study:

The study was carried out in urban areas of Kathua District namely, Patel Nagar, Shiva Nagar, Krishna colony and Main Bazar, Kathua.

3. Criteria for Sample Selection

To maintain the homogeneity of the sample, following factors were controlled during selection.

- Ecological Setting: Respondents were selected only from urban area of Kathua District.
- Type of family: Sample was selected only from joint families where the three generations i.e.; adolescent, their fathers & grand fathers lived under one roof.
- Gender: Only male's adolescents were selected.
- SES: Only families belong to middle SES families were selected.

4. Sampling Technique:

Snowball sampling technique was used for initial sample identification. Under this technique information about joint families having adolescents fitting the sampling criteria was collected from relatives

and friends. For sample selection contacts were made with those identified families. Finally those families were included in the samples which were joint families, having adolescents with their fathers and grand fathers living in urban settings of Kathua and belonging to middle SES families. The first few selected families became a source of information for further sample groups. The process continued till the desired sample size was obtained

5. Tools for Data Collection:

- a) Parent-Child Relationship Scale (PCRS) developed by Nalini Rao was used. The scale contains 100 items categorized into ten dimensions namely protecting, symbolic punishment, indifferent, symbolic reward, loving, object reward and neglecting.
- b) Parent Satisfaction Scale: It is self devised tool designed was used to know the satisfaction of grandfathers and fathers in parenting their adolescents. It was prepared in the light of available literature and according to the theme of the study. The tool was pre tested on a sample of 20 grand fathers and fathers to ensure its reliability and validity. It is a set of five items rated as "Not Satisfied", "Moderately Satisfied", "Satisfied", and "Highly Satisfied".

6. Data Analysis:

The data was chiefly analyzed quantitatively using various statistical measures. It was supplemented with qualitative method wherever required. Percentage of respondent falling in various categories of each scale were calculated and tabulated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The results of the study are presented as under:

1. Age of fathers and Grand fathers.

Table 1 Age of fathers and grand fathers

Age (in years)	Father (N=75)		Grand Father (N=75)		Total (N=150)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
30-40	15	20	-	-	15	10
40-45	18	24	-	-	18	12
45-50	25	33.3	-	-	25	16.6
50-55	17	22.7	-	-	17	11.3
55-60	-	-	10	13	10	6.6
60-65	-	-	15	20	15	10
65-70	-	-	20	26.7	20	13.3
70-75	-	-	30	40	30	20
Total	75	100	75	100	150	100

\bar{X} Age of fathers=56.50 and SD = 12.84

\bar{X} Age of grandfathers = 68.01 and SD = 6.10

Table 1 reveals that majority of the father (33.3%) were aged between 45-50 years where as majority of the grand-father (40%) were aged between 70-75 years. The mean age of fathers was calculated as 56.50 and that of grandfathers as 68.01 revealing that the fathers as a group were younger than grandfathers.

2. Qualification of fathers and Grand fathers

Table 2 Qualification of fathers and grandfathers

Class	Father (N=75)		Grand Father (N=75)		Total (N=150)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 th -9 th	0	-	35	46.6	35	23.3
10 th	10	13.3	27	36.0	37	24.6

12 th	25	33.3	10	13.3	35	23.3
Graduate	35	46.6	3	4	38	25.3
Post Graduate	5	6.68	0	-	5	3.3
Total	75	100	75	100	150	100

Table 2 reveals that majority of the father (46.6%) were either graduates or higher secondary pass (33.3%). On the other hand majority of the grand fathers had studied upto 5th to 9th class (46.6) or were 10th pass (36.0%). Overall, the fathers were found to be educated to higher levels than the grand fathers.

3. Parental Satisfaction with Parenting

Table 3 Parental satisfaction with parenting

Level	Father (N=75)		Grand Father (N=75)		Total (N=150)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Satisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moderately Satisfied	11	14.6	6	8	17	11.3
Satisfied	48	64	32	42.6	80	53.3
Highly Satisfied	16	21.3	37	49.3	53	35.3
Total	75	100	75	100	150	100

Chi square = 60.34^{*}, df = 3, tabulated value = 7.81, * Significant difference at 0.05%.

Table 3 reveals significant difference in fathers and grandfathers satisfaction with their parenting role. Most fathers (64%) were satisfied with their role as a parent while maximum grandfathers (49.3%) were highly satisfied. None of the sample fathers or grandfathers was found to be dissatisfied with their parenting roles. Overall, the grandfathers seemed to be more satisfied with fulfillment of their parenting role.

4. Comparative Analysis between fathers and grand fathers on dimensions of parent-child relationship

Table 4 Comparative Analysis between fathers and grand fathers on dimensions of parent-child relationship

Dimension	Father		Grand Father		t-value	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Protective	29.77	4.52	27.86	3.92	2.904*	Significant*
Symbolic Punishment	28.63	4.10	28.64	3.13	0.021	Insignificant
Rejected	30.08	2.7	28.373	3.40	0.527	Insignificant
Object Punishment	24.76	4.57	28.81	5.08	5.907*	Significant*
Demanding	25.00	5.03	29.92	6.18	5.327*	Significant*
Indifferent	27.89	5.10	28.84	4.07	1.189*	Significant*
Symbolic Reward	29.60	4.73	28.35	3.93	1.639	Insignificant
Love	30.05	4.17	28.86	3.57	2.118*	Significant*
Object Reward	26.21	3.77	25.24	6.08	1.307	Insignificant
Neglected	24.98	2.97	26.32	3.48	2.796*	Significant*
Total	75	100	75	100	150	100

***significant at 0.05%**

Table 4 contains data on the mean score of fathers and grandfathers on various dimensions of parent-child relationship scale. The relationship fathers shared with their adolescent children and the grandfathers had shared in the past with their offspring was analyzed on 10 dimensions of parent-child relationship. The results reveal significant difference between fathers and grandfathers in six areas namely protective, object punishment, demanding, love, indifference and neglect. Mean score of fathers on protective dimension is higher than mean score of grandfather. This means that the father had more defending attitude overtly expressed in the acts of guarding, sheltering and shielding the child from situations or experiences perceived to be hostile, oppressing and harmful, than the grandfathers. Also, on the dimension of love, fathers scored higher than grandfathers showing that the current generation fathers were more loving and caring. Mean score of grandfathers on object punishment, demanding, indifference and neglect was higher than mean score of father. The grandfathers believed more in using punishment for disciplining the children, believed in having authority over their children and controlling them. Sometimes, the grandfathers favoured being indifferent and neglectful towards their children for disciplining them.

These results show that the current generation fathers were more protective, loving, caring and attached to their children. On the other hand, the grand fathers were more demanding, commanding and discipline oriented. This implies that across generations the parent child relationship has undergone change.

5. Relationship of age and educational qualification with parenting

CORRELATION MATRIX - I

	Age	Edu. Qual.	PRO	SP	REJ	OP	DEM	IND	SR	LOV	OR	NEG
AGE	1.00		-0.17	-0.22*	0	0.35*	0.35*	0.05	-0.16	-0.04	-0.92*	0.15
Edu. Qual.		1.00	0.18	0.06	-0.05	-0.19*	-0.17	0.03	0.12	-0.03	0.03	-0.19*

***Significant at 0.05%**

Age and educational qualification of fathers and grandfathers was correlated with the various dimensions of parent child relationship. It was found that age shared a significant positive correlation with object punishment and demanding component of parent child relation, meaning that as fathers became older they become more strict and punished their child. The younger fathers are more likely to be less demanding while older fathers tend to have more demands from their children.

At the same time age of fathers shared negative significant relation with symbolic punishment and object reward. This means that older fathers believed in lesser use of punishment and reward in managing their children.

This set of results point towards the influence of age of fathers in shaping their relation with their children.

Educational qualification of fathers was found to have significant negative relation with only two dimensions namely object punishment & neglect. This implies that more educated fathers were less punishing and neglectful towards their children.

Overall, the results reveal that both age as well as educational qualification of fathers had influence in the relationship they shared with their children.

6. Relationship among the dimensions of parent-child relationship

CORRELATION MATRIX - II

	PRO	SP	REJ	OP	DEM	IND	SR	LOV	OR	NEG
PRO	1.00									
SP	0.27*	1.00								
REJ	0.01	-0.07	1.00							
OP	0.05	0.09	0.02	1.00						
DEM	0.1	0.14	0.02	0.75*	1.00					
IND	0.20*	0.33*	0.02	0.31*	0.49*	1.00				
SR	0.23*	0.31*	0.13	0.04	0.13	0.65*	1.00			
LOV	0.18	0.30*	0.11	0.01	0.07	0.31*	0.24*	1.00		
OR	0.17	0.19*	0.01	-0.22*	-0.37*	0	0.25*	0.17	1.00	
NEG	0.13	0.09	0.02	0.20*	0.19*	0.21*	0.18	0.19*	0.05	1.00

***Significant at 5%.**

The correlations between various dimensions of Parent-Child Relationship were also calculated. The results reveal that there were significant relationships between various dimensions of Parent-Child relation.

Protective dimension shared significant positive correlation with symbolic punishment, indifferent and symbolic reward. This implies that as the father became more protective they used more punishment and reward and also became more indifferent. Symbolic punishment was not only significantly correlated with protective dimension but also shared positive significant correlation with indifferent, symbolic reward, love and object reward. This means that fathers who were using more punishment were also using more of reward as well as indifference for dealing with their children. Rejected dimension had no significant relationship with any of the other dimensions.

Object punishment shared positive correlation with demanding, indifference and neglected dimensions, meaning that parents who used more punishment were likely to be more demanding, indifferent and neglectful towards their children. Indifference dimension also have positive correlation with symbolic reward, love and neglect. Similarly positive significant correlation were found between symbolic reward and love, symbolic reward and object reward while there was negative correlation between love and neglected, demanding and object reward.

All these results reveal that various dimension of parent-child relationship shared negative as well as positive correlation among themselves. Increase in one dimension of parent-child relationship may lead to an increase in some allied areas and at the same time decrease in some other areas.

7. Relation of parental satisfaction with parent-child relationship.

CORRELATION MATRIX III

	SAT	PRO	SP	REJ	OP	DEM	IND	SR	LOV	OR	NEG
SAT	1.00	-0.04	0.04	0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0.12	0.17*	0.16*	0.10	0.11

***Significant at 0.05%**

Data was also analyzed by calculating correlation between various dimensions of Parent-Child Relationship and parental satisfaction. Results show that the more satisfied the fathers with their parenting, the more loving they were and also the more they used symbolic reward. More satisfied fathers tend to be more loving and rewarding to their children.

Conclusion:

The findings of the study suggest that fathers play a crucial role in the development of their children. Both fathers as well as grandfathers continue to be important in the lives of their off springs. When the satisfaction with their respective parental role were analyzed significant differences were noted to exist between father's and grandfather's satisfaction with their parental role. Grandfathers were found to be more satisfied with their parental role than fathers, highlighting the desire in the current generation fathers to improve their parenting. Similar findings were reported by LeMonda and Cabrera (1999), who also noted higher satisfaction among grandfathers.

There was significant difference between fathers and grandfathers on six dimensions of Parent Child Relationship namely protective, object punishment, demanding, indifferent, love and neglected. Fathers were found to be more protective and more loving than grandfathers while on the other hand grandfathers were found to be more punishing, demanding, indifferent, and neglectful towards their children. This indicates that parent child relationship across generation has undergone change. The current generation fathers are more involved with their children and tend to display their affection more openly as compared to the earlier generation. Earlier reported results of Campbell and Gilmore (2007) and Capaldi et al (2008) had also mentioned significant changes in the fathers parenting from one generation to another. Also, the various dimension of parent child relationship shared positive as well as negative correlation among them.

Demographic characteristics such as age and educational qualification of fathers had significant influence on the relationship they shared with their children.

Parental satisfaction was also significantly and positively correlated with symbolic reward and love dimension of parent child relationship showing that more satisfied parent were more loving and rewarding towards their children. Grossman et al (1988) had also reported that parental satisfaction has an influence on parent-child relationship.

In sum the present research points out that parent-child relationship has undergone significant changes from the older to the current generation fathers. The relationship of today's father is more open and protection based rather than being indifferent and discipline oriented. Also, the current generation fathers felt less satisfied with their parental role and hence were more likely to update their parenting according to the needs and demands of their children.

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