



Assessing Rural Youth and Family Bond

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ABSTRACT

Strong family bond or relationship is important for youth to develop his personality and career. Parental involvement can have a lasting impact on the wellbeing of their wards. The involvement of parents has directly proportional relationship with the development and future of the children. Families are the keystones in the foundation of social supports and strengthening family could promote the knowledge and skills of youth through the investment of potential human capital. This descriptive study conducted in Dindigul District of Tamilnadu, India is aimed at assessing the youth and family bond through family bond matrix (FBM) and to understand parental and other adult supportive relationship to youth in terms of career. A structured interview schedule was prepared and translated in Tamil, Pre Tested and finalized. The interview schedule consisted of background characteristic of youth and Family Bond Matrix (FBM). The Family Bond Matrix (FBM) was assessed based on a set of indicators. It has been observed that youth have greater family bond in various spheres and remarkably the nuclear families have lesser bond than joint families. It has been observed that the overall support of parents is at high level and the late youth are lagging behind in terms of getting along with parents. The concern on future career is comparatively more for late youth. Professional career guidance and counselling through professional social workers is suggested.

Keywords : Family Bond, Family Bond Matrix, Parental involvement, Family support

Introduction

Strong family bond or relationship is essential for youth to develop a productive and healthy citizen of the nation. Family strengthening for youth development is an emerging area of research and development concern; aimed at providing a knowledge base and practices to help those who work with youth to strengthen relationships between youth and families. (Youth Development Institute, 2002) Teenagers make their own choices. A healthy and conducive family life can provide a safe passage and thus facilitates youth for overall development. More specifically a kind, warm and solid relationship with parents and other family members who demonstrate respect for their children, an interest in their children's achievements and set firm boundaries for those activities becomes beneficial (Priti Lata G.L. Yadav, 2011).

Parental involvement in their children's wellbeing can have a lasting impact on their development. More involved parents convey either directly or indirectly to their children that they are interested in their development, and this in turn indicates to the child that their future is valued (Darcy Hango, 2005). In recent decades, there has been greater recognition that adolescents are the central actors in their own development (Youth Development Institute, 2002).

Families are the keystones in the foundation of social supports that also include other family members, neighborhoods and schools. As a determinant Parents of high socio-economic status are more involved in their children's education, which provides greater comfort and familiarity with the educational system (Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996; Lareau 1987). There is a positive relationship exists between socioeconomic status and parental involvement (Astone and McLanahan 1991; Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996; Lareau 1987; McNeal 1999,

2001) and between parental education level and time spent with children (Sayer, Gauthier, and Furstenberg 2004). There is evidence in a research conducted by Anuradha J. et al., (2012) that the reciprocally impactful influences of family on the specificity of career choices of youth.

Caring relationships and consistent emotional bonds between families and adolescents are significant protective factors for youth (Youth Development Institute, 2002); which could yield fruits during their adulthood in education (Flouri and Buchanan 2004; Hobcraft 1998), benefit receipt, and social housing (Hobcraft 1998; Sigle-Rushton 2004). The amount of time and activities that parents and children spend together are important for strengthening the parent-child bond, which in turn can increase the chance that children will heed the advice of their parents Darcy Hango (2005).

Positive effects are also noted for more proximate outcomes in adolescence, relationships with parents (Flouri and Buchanan 2002b), educational test scores (Ho Sui-Chu and Willms 1996; McNeal 1999, 2001) and behaviour (Sacker, Schoon, and Bartley 2002). Many practitioners advocate the importance of youth and family integration and try to build communities that bring together young people and adults, adolescents and family members. While adolescence is marked with greater autonomy than in earlier years, most young people still rely on their families. These youth not only benefit from greater parental financial resources but also receive an additional advantage of having parents who know how to negotiate the world of education (Darcy Hango, 2005).

Family strengthening is an approach to providing activities, programs, and services that strengthen relationships within families in ways that bolster adolescent development (Youth

Development Institute, 2002). The relationships between parents and children, coupled with the influence from other resources, go a long way to ensuring future success as proclaimed by Darcy Hango (2005). Hence family is considered as a 'capital'; for the youth to avail the resources and capacities the family owns.

Thus the family strengthening could promote the knowledge and skills of youth through the investment of potential human capital through relationships that has been best conceptualized within the social capital framework (Coleman 1988; Portes, 1998). Further he (Coleman, 1988) identified that social capital to be crucial for educational success and proposed that social capital comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action.

Further to add that supporting strong connections between family members and adolescents, improve the quality of relationships, deepen understanding and communication among family members, increase and sustain the capacity of youth, family members, and other adults to engage in shared activities that are rewarding and enjoyable. Provide families with skills, resources, and services that increase their ability to support their children could further strengthen the family relationship with youth (Darcy Hango, 2005).

There are list of programmes proposed by development professionals that could promote various activities in which youth and adults work side by side to make community improvements. Added to that academic support activities that engage families as research ropes effectiveness of parental warmth and supportiveness in developing secure attachment and intimate parent child relationship in making children autonomous, well adjusted and socially competent (Priti Lata G.L. Yadav, 2011).

Public and private funders and youth organizations can build neighborhood infrastructures that enhance the development of young people by bringing together community programs, schools, peers, neighbors, and, especially, family members (Youth Development Institute, 2002). The transition from home and family to school and peer ecologies entails exposure to a new set of opportunities, demands, rules and relationship that complement and elaborate, social experiences with parents and siblings self regulation, cognitive capacity, and social behavior. It is during adolescence that many changes occur that strongly influence the development of career preferences and aspirations (Priti Lata G.L. & Yadav 2011).

Connecting and focusing these efforts so that they are collective, cumulative, and consistent strengthens the resources available for young people. The age when parental support and involvement occurs is also important for the developmental life course (Bronfenbrenner 1986). As children age and become more exposed to outside influences from school and peers they begin to become more independent. This is born out in research which suggests that over time the level of parents' involvement may decrease (Crosnoe 2001; Muller 1998).

There is a greater disorganization has taken place in the concept and dimensions of family system all over the world and India is no exceptions. Economic stress, the need for parents to work, and loss of funding that bolsters community institutions and families had its adverse effect on youth relationship with family and that have reduced supports for young people (Youth Development Institute, 2002). Greater parental involvement, should, other things being equal, indicate greater interest in the child's future and therefore be positively associated.

There is a greater amount of stress is on promoting social skills among youth to strengthen the family relationship in order to prevent and/or bridge the gap. It is widely believed that the everyday experiences in relationships with their parents are fundamental to children's developing social skills (Cohn,

Patterson, & Christopoulos, 1991; Parke & Ladd, 1992). In particular, parental responsiveness and nurturance are considered to be key factors in the development of children's social competence (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Loving and responsive parenting helps children to see the world in a positive way and to expect that relationships with others will be rewarding. Children who display high levels of social competence typically enjoy parent-child relationships characterized by positive and agreeable interactions, acceptance (Cohn, Patterson, & Christopoulos, 1991; Pettit & Mize, 1993), and sensitive behavioral exchanges in which parent and child respond to one another's cues (Harrist, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 1994). Parents of competent children also minimize the use of physical punishment and coercive discipline (Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994).

Hence the youth need to develop various skills such as interpersonal skills, observational skills, conflict resolution skills, communication skills intimacy skills. Youth with good intimacy skills are better perform in school, achieve academically, well adjusted socially and show stronger relationships with parents and peers than those who lack these skills (Field, T., et.al., 1995). In addition, these teens have higher self-esteem and are less likely to be depressed or to take part in risky behaviors. On the contrary adolescents without intimacy skills are more likely to be anxious, depressed, and isolated (Rubin, K. H., & Mills, R. S., 1988). Interpersonal skills have been found to be successful in improving adolescents' interactions with peers and family members (Berner, M. L et.al., 2001; Openshaw, 1992). Youth who are "pro-social"; behave voluntarily in ways intended to benefit others. They are viewed as good problem solvers, (Marsh, D. T., et.al., 1981) are considerate, and tend not to be aggressive (Eisenberg, N., 1995).

It is to be understood that the youth need to be given warm and supportive relationship by the family, viz., the parents and other family members as this relationship plays a pivotal role for youth development and social competency. The quality of positive relationship and better social skills to be acquired by the youth play a long way in promoting healthy personality development, achievements in academic and career and long lasting for the youth till his/her life time.

With the above deliberations the present research is proposed to assess the 'Rural Youth and Family Bond' so as to understand how family is beneficial in promoting youth as productive and useful citizens for the nation.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To observe the issues and concern of youth in rural areas.
- To assess the youth and family bond through family bond matrix (FBM)
- To understand parental and other adult supportive relationship to youth in terms of career.
- To suggest measures to strengthen youth and family in terms of promoting better relationship for overall development of rural youth.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This descriptive study was carried out in Dindigul District of Tamilnadu. The district has three revenue divisions namely Dindigul, Palani and Kodaikkanal. The sample for the present study was selected from Dindigul division which has four blocks and 15 villages were selected at random from the four blocks and 20 male youth in the age category of 18-30 years were selected from each of the selected villages using systematic random sampling method.

Tools for Data Collection

A structured interview schedule was prepared and translated in Tamil, Pre Tested and finalized. The interview schedule consisted of background characteristic of youth and Family Bond Matrix (FBM).

Measurement Procedure

The Family Bond Matrix (FBM) was assessed based on a set of indicators and placed on a three point scale ranging from 0 to 2. The total score obtained by youth on each of the following set of support factors is classified into Low, Medium and high level of support and the X² test is used to examine the association between the family bond and selected background characteristics of respondents and parents.

PERSONAL PROFILE AND FAMILY BOND

The personal profile is matched with the level of support extended by the family to the youth is analyzed in the following table to assess the family bond.

**Table Number - 1
Personal Profile of Youth and Family Bond**

Personal Profile	N	Levels of Support			Chi Sq	DF	P- Value
		Low	Moderate	High			
All	300	1.3	12.0	86.7			
Age							
18-24	225	75.0	66.7	76.2	1.518	2	0.468
24-30	75	25.0	33.3	23.8			
Religion							
Hindu	184	50.0	63.9	61.2	3.269	4	0.514
Christian	100	25.0	30.6	33.8			
Muslim	16	25.0	5.6	5.0			
Caste							
SC	75	25.0	30.6	24.2	1.686	4	0.793
BC	163	50.0	44.4	55.8			
MBC/OBC/Other	62	25.0	25.0	20.0			
Education							
Illiterate	28	0	16.7	8.5	5.243	6	0.514
Up to Secondary	73	25.0	30.6	23.5			
Up to Hr. Secondary	82	25.0	16.7	28.8			
College & Above	117	50.0	36.1	39.2			
Living Arrangement							
Both Parents	198	75.0	69.4	65.4	4.095	4	0.393
Either Parents	16	0	11.1	4.6			
Grand Parents & others	86	25.0	19.4	30.0			
Occupation							
Students	172	25.0	47.2	59.3	6.126	4	0.190
Unemployed	65	50.0	19.4	21.5			
Employed	63	25.0	33.3	19.2			
Family Type							
Nuclear	189	75.0	69.4	61.9	1.018	2	0.601
Joint	111	25.0	30.6	38.1			
Siblings							
One	25	0	13.9	7.7	4.696	6	0.583
Two	127	25.0	38.9	43.1			
Three	95	25.0	30.6	31.9			
Four & Above	53	50.0	16.7	17.3			

It has been inferred that though the youth have greater family bond in various spheres there is no statistical significant relationship found among the age and family bond.

When the religion is crossed with family bond; it is observed that among Christians more percentage belong to higher level of family bond (33.8%), followed by more Hindu at moderate level (63.9%) and more Muslims at lower level (25.5%). However there is no statistical significance found among religion and family bond.

Remarkably the nuclear families have lesser bond than joint families as the youth enjoy higher level of family bond which would be an asset for their formation. Nevertheless there is no statistical significance found.

Parental characteristics and family support

The parental support is analysed with their profile in the following table.

Table Number - 2 Parental level of support

Parental Characteristics	N	Levels of Support		
		Low	Moderate	High
All	300	1.3	12.0	86.7
Father Education				
Illiterate	107	50.0	38.9	35.0
Primary	71	50.0	22.2	23.5
Middle	69	0	19.4	23.8
Hr. Sec. & Above	53	0	19.4	17.7

Mother Education				
Illiterate	118	50.0	44.4	38.5
Primary	92	50.0	27.8	30.8
Middle	48	0	11.1	16.9
Hr. Sec. & above	42	0	16.7	13.8
Father Occupation				
Coolie	154	75.0	55.6	50.4
Business	39	25.0	5.6	13.8
Agriculture	67	0	25.0	22.3
Salaried Jobs	40	0	13.9	13.5
Mother Occupation				
House Wife	120	50.0	41.7	39.6
Coolies	100	50.0	27.8	33.8
Salaried Jobs	80	0	30.6	26.5
Family Monthly Income				
1000-5000	126	75.0	33.3	42.7
5000-10000	85	25.0	33.3	27.7
10000-15000	52	0	16.7	17.7
15000-20000	14	0	11.1	3.8
20000 and above	23	0	5.6	8.1

It has been observed that the overall support of parents is at high level as 86.7 percent of parents; cutting across their background, they support their children. When the educational level of father increases the support of youth is at both moderate and high level. When the educational level of mother increases; the level of support for youth stands at moderate and high. The youth gets more support from fathers' who are working as coolies. When the mother is house wife; the support for youth is at moderate and higher level. When income level is compared; low income families give more support for youth, this may be due the reason that every individual in the family is trying to work hard to make both ends meet.

Respondents Family Bond Matrix (FBM)

Family is a social institution where the children are given socialization as well it is the place for children to share love, experimenting and ventilating their happiness and difficulties. Family lay the foundation for better quality of life and citizenship. Table 3 presents the existing family bond of respondents.

**Table Number - 3
Rural Youth and Family Bond**

Family Bond Matrix (FBM)	Early Youth N=225	Late Youth N=75	Total N=300
I get along with my parents and others in my family			
Agree	91.6	85.3	90.0
Unsure	6.2	12.0	7.7
Disagree	2.2	2.7	2.3
When I need support, my parents and others in my family extent their support			
Agree	83.6	73.3	81.0
Unsure	12.9	24.0	15.7
Disagree	3.6	2.7	3.3
I describe my family life as the best			
Agree	82.7	77.3	81.3
Unsure	11.6	14.7	12.3
Disagree	5.8	8.0	6.3
My parents and family members promise that 'they love me.'			
Agree	87.6	78.7	85.3
Unsure	8.9	12.0	9.7
Disagree	3.6	9.3	5.0
I feel useful and important in my family			
Agree	82.7	70.7	79.7
Unsure	12.9	22.7	15.3
Disagree	4.4	6.7	5.0
I have good conversation with my parents and others in my family.			
Agree	79.6	81.3	80.0
Unsure	14.7	14.7	14.7

Disagree	5.8	4.0	5.3
Frequency of your parents and others in the family concern about your future career			
Very often	66.2	72.0	67.7
Often	28.9	26.7	28.3
Unsure	4.9	1.3	4.0
Frequency of parents and other in the family discuss about your occupation			
Very often	60.4	60.0	60.3
Often	35.6	36.0	5.7
Unsure	4.0	4.0	4.0
Frequency of parents and other in the family help you in your carrier			
Very often	59.6	58.7	59.3
Often	32.9	32.0	32.7
Unsure	7.6	9.3	8.0
Frequency of parents and others in the family come and visit you in your assigned place			
Very often	44.0	50.7	45.7
Often	45.8	36.0	43.3
Unsure	10.2	13.3	11.0

When observed very keenly; it is clearly presented that the late youth are lagging behind in terms of getting along with parents (85.3%), extension of family support (73.3%), describing the family as 'best' (77.3%), loved by parents & family members (78.7%), and feeling of usefulness and importance to family (70.7%) than the early youth as they experience more degree of support, recognition and love from the family.

It could be inferred that less exposure to social net work me-

dia and peer pressure the early youth perhaps may compel to side with parents and family members. The variable on concern about the future career by parents is obviously and comparatively more for the late youth (72%) as they may be heading towards employment opportunities.

More or less equal percentage of distribution found among both early and late youth with regard to their parents discuss about their occupation. This could be an encouraging factor for youth as it becomes the source of motivation and help in deciding the career. The parents of late youth are concern about their future life and hence the more percentage (50.7%) is shown than the early youth on the visit by parents in the assigned place of youth.

CONCLUSION

Family bond plays a major role in the upbringing and socialization of the youth. A healthy and conducive family relationship of father, mother and other family members help the youth to shape and design his destiny and ultimately help in molding the personality of the individual. The attitude, aptitude, educational status of father, mother, occupational status of father and mother, income level of the family, career concerns of parents are the immediate and major determinants in making the family bond strong and thus creating a sustainable environment for the youth to grow. It is being recommended that professional career guidance and counselling is to be provided by professional social workers not only for the youth but also for the parents and other adult members in family which could strengthen the family bond and also improve the career options for the rural youth.

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