



# Beliefs of Adolescent Girls About Their Parental Separation

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examined beliefs of adolescent girls about their parental separation. This empirical study included 31 girls studying from sixth standard to twelfth standard in the government girl's higher secondary school, Bargur, Krishnagiri Dist. Tamilnadu. This study was done by convenience sampling and girls not having both the parents are exempted from the studies. Lawrence A. Kurdek and Berthold's Child's beliefs' about parental separation scale was administered to know about their beliefs about parental separation. It has six subscales as, peer ridicule and avoidance, paternal blame, fear of abandonment, maternal blame, hope of reunification and self-blame. The data was analyzed through SPSS 20.0 research software. The result showed that most of the adolescent girls have negative beliefs about their parental separation as well as problematic beliefs regarding peer ridicule and avoidance, paternal blame, maternal blame and hope of reunification. The economic status also plays a vital role.

**KEYWORDS**

Adolescents, Separated Parents, Beliefs.

**Introduction**

The love of a family is life's greatest blessing, it makes once life vibrant and meaningful. Development in human life is a part and parcel of family life. The first transition takes place after childhood and before adulthood is adolescence. The most important and crucial stage when family has a major role is adolescents. As per the World Health Organization young people who are between the ages of 10 and 19 are called as adolescence.

Jean Piaget introduced a theory called stages of cognitive developmental in this he speaks about formal operational thinking (ages 11 years and up) where the adolescents start to reason out and critically analyze situations. Plato the Greek philosopher who lived in the fourth century also said, "Reasoning does not belong to childhood, but rather first appears in adolescence". In the similar way Rousseau said, "The reasoning develops in adolescence".

A mother always thinks about her children to give them good life and nurture them physically, psychologically and spiritually. Similarly father of the family is the 'first hero to the son and first love to his daughter'. Being a head of the family he works for the financial support of the family members. In some family both the parents are working round the clock. In recent years the number of separation among the couples are growing in India. A report published by Hindustan Times in 2015 January says, in India "The divorce rate was just 1 in 1,000 ten years ago, and is still a relatively low 13 per 1,000 – as compared to the US average of 500 per 1,000. While India has no central or even state-wise registry of divorce data, family court officials say the number of divorce applications has doubled and even tripled in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Lucknow over the past five years".

As per the census 2011 in India out of total Tamil Nadu population of 72,147,030 the percentage of separation and divorce rate is 1.22 percentage. Tamil Nadu is one among the ten states and holds eighth place. At this juncture this study focused on the beliefs of the adolescents about their parental separation.

**Results and Discussion**

**Demographic Details of the Respondents**

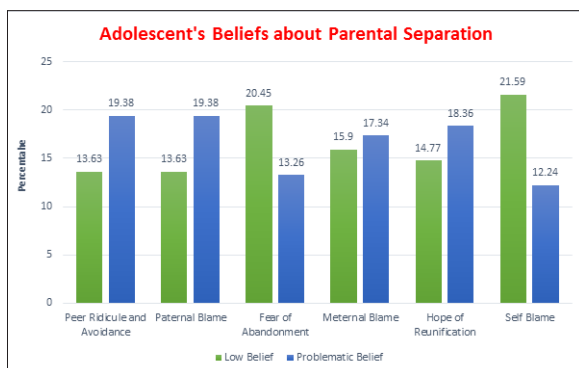
Table 1 reveals, majority 21 (67.7%) of the study respondents belonged to the age group of 16-18 years, 6(19.4%) belonged to the age group of 13-15 years and 4 (12.9%) were from the age group of 10-12 years respectively. Out of 31 adolescent girls, majority 29(93.5%) were Hindus and the rest were Muslims. Majority of adolescent girls were from B.C 14 (45.2) and 10 (32.3%) were from M.B.C. Majority of the adolescent girls were living in rural area 19 (61.3%) and the rest 12 (38.7%) are in urban. Half of the adolescent girls 16 (51.6%) had own house and the other half 15 (48.4 %) didn't have own house. 14 (45.2%) of adolescent girls had terraced house and 10 (32.3%) had thatched house. Majority (41.9%) of the families had a monthly income of 1,000-2,000 rupees, (38.7%) of families earned 4,001-6,000 rupees per month, a few (16.1%) earned 2,001-4,000 and 3.2% earned 8,001-10,000 rupees per month. It is evident that most of the adolescent girls are below the poverty line.

**Table: 1 Demographic Profiles of the Respondent n=31**

S. No	Questions	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	10-12	4	12.9
		13-15	6	19.4
		16-18	21	67.7
2	Religion	Hindu	29	93.5
		Muslim	2	6.5
3	Caste	O.C	1	3.2
		B.C	14	45.2
		M.B.C	10	32.3
		S.C	6	19.4

4	Area	Rural	19	61.3
		Urban	12	38.7
5	Owning House	Yes	16	51.6
		No	15	48.4
6	Type of House	Thatched	4	12.9
		Tiled	14	45.2
		Terraced	10	32.3
		Government Built	3	9.7
7	Monthly Income	1000-2000	13	41.9
		2001-4000	5	16.1
		4001-6000	12	38.7
		8001-10000	1	3.2

**Adolescent's Belief about Parental Separation**



**Figure 1 Adolescent's Belief about Parental Separation**

Figure 1: It is evident from the figure that the adolescent girls of separated parents are having problematic belief regarding 'peer ridicule and avoidance' (19.38%), 'paternal blame' (19.38%), 'maternal blame' (17.34%) and 'hope of reunification' (18.36%), due to that they have negative effects in life.

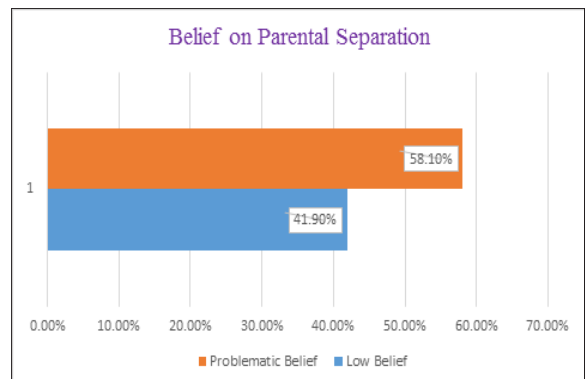
The study of Rohaty Mohd Majzub and Sabkiah Mansor (2012) says, the adolescents felt disappointed when the peers asked about their parents. D. Wayne Matthews writes "pre-adolescent and adolescent children are more at risk over the long-term, because in the short-term their close alignment with their peers represses their feelings regarding their parents' divorce."

Hawthorne et al., (2003); Hogan et al., (2003) say that, "children want to be told what is going on when their parents separate, yet they are often left in the dark and are particularly distressed and confused when parents leave suddenly and without explanation". Dunn and Deater-Deckard, (2001); Dunn, (2002) conducted a study and said communication is also identified as a key factor. A quarter of children in the study whose parents had separated said that no one had talked to them about the separation, and few felt that they had a full explanation, leaving them feeling confused and distressed. In 1984, Walczak and Burns had done a study and said, "Children also report that parents can exacerbate difficulties by poor communication, or help to alleviate unhappiness by keeping them informed about what is happening, and by behaving responsibly." Hawthorne et al., (2003) said in his study that, "some children want to be consulted and involved in decision about their living arrangements". Butler et al., (2003) revealed the findings that, "children who had been consulted and had their wishes taken into consideration

were doing better following a divorce, than those who did not feel they had been consulted". From all these perspectives the children form a belief system about parent's separation and divorce, with this belief they come to a conclusion, not only about their parents but also about their future. In some cases they put the blame on the parents or the society and to the worst situation they blame themselves for everything. Self-blaming hinders them from taking decision, mingling with the friends and neighbors, attending any functions, trusting other, sharing the secrets and working together and so on,.

Rohaty Mohd Majzub and Sabkiah Mansor (2012) in their study said, the mean score for "Scared to be abandoned" was the lowest rank (mean=2.90) in the subscales, while "Hope to meet parents again" had the highest rank (mean=3.48).

**Overall Belief of Adolescent's about Parental Separation**



**Figure 2 Overall Belief of Adolescent's about Parental Separation**

Figure 2 explicitly points out the overall belief pattern of adolescents of separated parents regarding the separation of their parents. There are 58.10% of adolescents of separated parents are having negative beliefs about their parental separation and due to that they have negative effects in life.

Study of Kurdek, Lawrence A.; Berg, Berthold (1987) says, in areas related with parents they had poor self-concepts and they also reported that they had little social support to lead a life. Pryor and Rodgers (2001) gave a view from their studies that, "children differ significantly in their perceptions and reactions to parental separation and divorce". Study of Smith et al., had done a study in New Zealand in the year 1997 and said "forty four percent of children had neutral or mildly positive reactions to the separation". In this study the researcher concluded his research in associating with escaping a family situation marked by parental conflict. Linda J. Skitka and Michele Frazier (1995) came up with the findings that "All children indicated higher levels of depression and lower levels of behavioral academic self-esteem than normative samples of children who do not come from divorced families.

**Monthly income and Overall Belief**

Table 2 gives an overview of relation between the economic status of the family and the parental beliefs of adolescent girls of separated parents. 50% of the adolescent girls those who hail from the family which earns only 1000-2000 per month have negative belief towards parental separation and have negative effects in their life.

It is common for women especially to experience a drop in household income after divorce (Day & Bahr, 1986), and this drop in income often to a less than adequate level, has been found to lead to stress and depression in mothers (Clarke – Stewart & Bailey, 1989) and psychological problems in children. When income level is statistically controlled the detrimental effects of divorce on children's behavior appear substantially less.

**Table: 2 Monthly Income and the Overall Belief  
n=31**

Items	Low Belief	Problematic Belief	Total
1000-2000	4 (30.8%) 30.8%	9 (69.2%) 50%	13 (100%) 41.9%
2001-4000	4 (80%) 30.8%	1 (20%) 5.6%	5 (100%) 16.1%
4001-6000	5 (41.7%) 38.5%	7 (58.9%) 38.9%	12 (100%) 38.7%
80001-10000	-	1 (100%) 5.6%	1 (100%) 3.2%
Total	13 (41.9%) 100%	18 (58.1%) 100%	31 (100%) 100%

### Conclusion

This study has revealed that the adolescent girls of separated parents have negative beliefs towards their parental separation. These adolescent girls during the school hours feel lonely and ridiculed by their own peers. They blame both the parents for the separation at the same time paternal blame takes a primary place than the maternal blame. Economic condition also plays a vital role in forming the negative beliefs towards the parental separation. Those who are leading life below the poverty line have more negative beliefs.

There is an urgent need to concentrate on activities which can help these adolescent girls to understand the parental separation. The school is the best place to offer supportive services to adolescents of separated parents. Counselors can make parents aware of the special needs of their child during and after the separation. The administration must watch the behavior changes of adolescent girls. The orientation programs and counselling sessions surely will comfort the adolescent girls. By counselling them, not to blame on themselves and on others will aid them to have self-confident in life.

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