

Role of Parenting in Anorexic Vulnerability among Adolescents in Indian Scenario

Indu Nair V. ^{1*}, & Suphala Kotian ^{2**}

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8522-6409 E- mail: indunair188@gmail.com

² Research Professor, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5747-4982 Email: suphalakotian@gmail.com

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Indu Nair V. ^{1*}, & Suphala Kotian ^{2**}

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8522-6409 E- mail: indunair188@gmail.com

² Research Professor, Institute of Social Sciences & Humanities, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5747-4982 Email: suphalakotian@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The present research article explores the challenges faced by parents in today's generation regarding the practice of parenting and its influence on the moral development of children during early childhood. However, with the advent of globalization and societal transformations, modern families are experiencing shifts that result in new parents struggling to find adequate time to spend with their children. This scenario has led to the emergence of various behavioral and psychological issues among today's generation, with vulnerability to anorexia nervosa being one of the notable abnormalities. This article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of parenting practices on moral development while considering the challenges faced by contemporary parents in allocating sufficient time to their children.*

Methodology Adopted: *This article has followed narrative review format to know the subject matter in detail. This review attempts to do an analysis on the role of parenting in anorexic vulnerability among adolescents and the different socio-familial factors that contributes in the development of the disorder. The data is enumerated through electronic search and since the literature on this area is rare in Indian context, all types of research studies have been included. The electronic search included SCOPUS, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, and MEDLINE.*

Findings: *Based on the theoretical framework adopted for the study, it was found that there is a remarkable influence of parental styles and parental bonding on the behavioural issues of adolescents. It was also much evident that Parenting and familial factors have a great impact on the anorexic vulnerability of Indian adolescent girls.*

Originality/ Value: *A new understanding can be built up among Indian parents regarding the behavioural and emotional issues of adolescents with regard to parenting style and parenting attachment patterns.*

Paper Type: *Narrative Review Format*

Keywords: Anorexia nervosa, Eating disorders, Parenting, Parenting styles, Adolescence, Indian scenario

1. INTRODUCTION :

While upbringing children, majority of the parents will be in a dilemma about the practice of parenting especially parents in today's generation. The time period of childhood is critical since this is the stage of life where all concepts of right and wrong will be developing (Ramsewak et al.,2022; Tan & Yasin, 2020. [1-2]). Studies have shown that parenting has an influence in starting to cultivate moral values in children even they are 18 to 24 months (Hammond & Carpendale,2015. [3]). The beliefs and personality of a child begin during early childhood, parents have a significant role in the personality development of a person. But as a result of globalisation in modern families' transformations are happening, and new parents lack time to spend time with their children. Due to this scenario, today's generation is facing different behavioural and psychological issues and being vulnerable to anorexia nervosa is one among these abnormalities.

1.1 Eating Disorders:

The term eating disorders are always go along with the concept of nutrition. It is very crucial to an individual to maintaining proper diet and weight and failing to which will results in various health abnormalities and eating disorders are one of them. Eating disorders can be described as type of psychological disorders with an exceptional way of dietary patterns which has a significant influence on one person's physical and emotional wellbeing. Eating disorders are the category of disorders that has the highest rate of mortality among psychiatric disorders after schizophrenia (Jhansl & Chandrasekhar, 2016; Sharan & Sunder 2015. [4– 5]).

1.2 Anorexia Nervosa:

This classification of eating disorder has received the name only in 19th century (Garner & Garfinkel, 1997. [6]). By the mid of 20th century, the rate of incidence of anorexia nervosa has raised. Anorexia nervosa is a type of eating disorder with deliberate loss of weight, which is induced and sustained by the person. Though this disorder is highly prevalent among adolescent girls, there are chances of adolescent boys also to become the victims. The symptoms of anorexia nervosa include restricted dietary choice, excessive exercises, induced vomiting and high usage of appetite suppressants (World Health Organisation, 2016). [7]).

1.3 Indian Scenario:

India is in a transformation period in all spheres of life so as the dietary patterns. These rapid changes are the after effects of urbanisation, economic changes, globalisation, increased participation of women in the workforce as well as targeted advertisements. These changes in society are reflected in the shift from traditional balanced food patterns to Western food habits and the concept of a 'thin body' has started becoming popular among adolescent girls specifically urban adolescent girls. Though the prevalence of eating disorders is comparatively low in the Indian population, surveys from 1995 show clear evidences for the increase in the incidence and prevalence of eating disorders among Indian adolescent girls (Upadhyah et al., 2014. [8]). The scenario of eating disorders in India has two directions, in one hand there is an increasing rate of eating disorders among Indian Young girls, and on the other hand the cultural bound syndrome of eating disorders seems to be alien to Indian culture and beliefs (Mammen et al., 2007. [9]).

2. OBJECTIVES :

- (1) Understanding about eating disorders and specifically anorexia nervosa
- (2) Knowing the importance of parenting in molding adolescents.
- (3) Observing different parenting styles and its influence on adolescents
- (4) Identifying the factors that contribute to anorexic vulnerability among adolescents.

3. METHODOLOGY :

This article has followed a narrative review format to know the subject matter in detail. This review attempts to do an analysis of the role of parenting in anorexic vulnerability among adolescents and the different socio-familial factors that contributes in the development of the disorder. Apart from this, this review paper also tries to know the significance of various parent styles in the personality development of adolescents. Having these as main objectives, the data enumerated through electronic search and since the literature on this area is rare in the Indian context, all types of research studies have been included. The electronic search included SCOPUS, PsycINFO, Google Scholar and MEDLINE. To gather the data different key words such as anorexia nervosa, eating disorders, parenting, parenting styles, adolescence, and Indian scenario have been applied. All these electronically retrieved articles are manually screened and screened as per the objectives of the study.

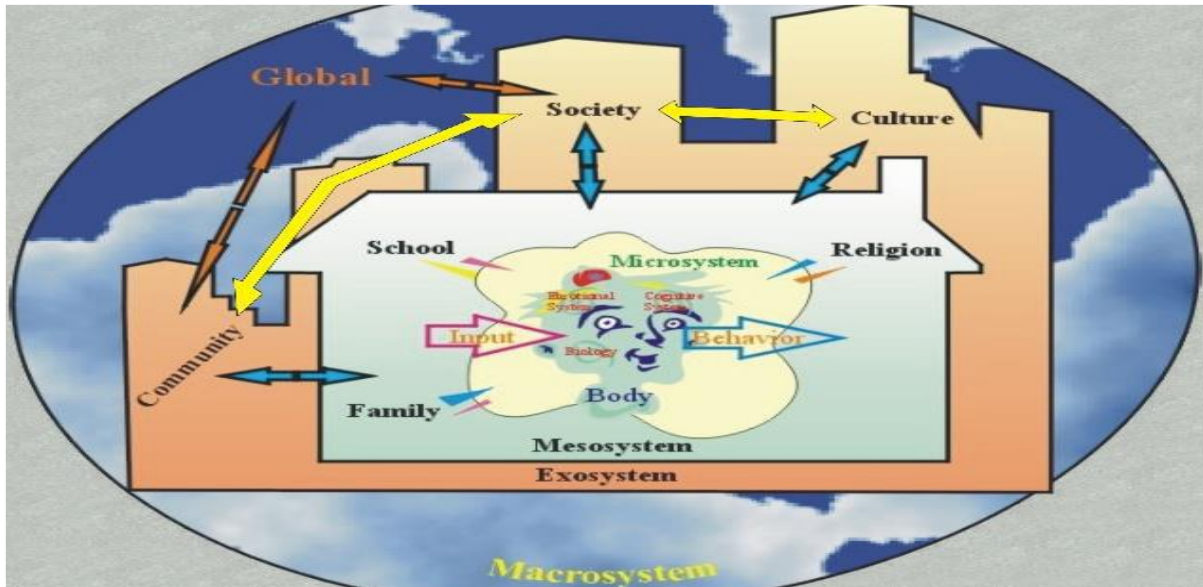
4. RESEARCH AGENDA :

- How parenting styles are helping the personality development of an individual?
- How parenting is contributing in the anorexic vulnerability?

5. THEORETICAL FARMWORK :

5.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological system theory attempts to view a child's development in the context of the child's relationship system, where his or her living environment. This theory also emphasizes on the primary environment in which the child lives has a vital role in his or her development. This theory explains different layers of child's development as the immediate family, community, and society. All these layers steer the development of a child and conflicts in any of these layers will affect the functioning and relationship with other layers (Ryan & Paquette, 2001 [10]).



(Ryan & Paquette, 2001 [10])

6. RESULTS OF THE STUDY :

6.1 Parenting Styles And Its Impact On Adolescents:

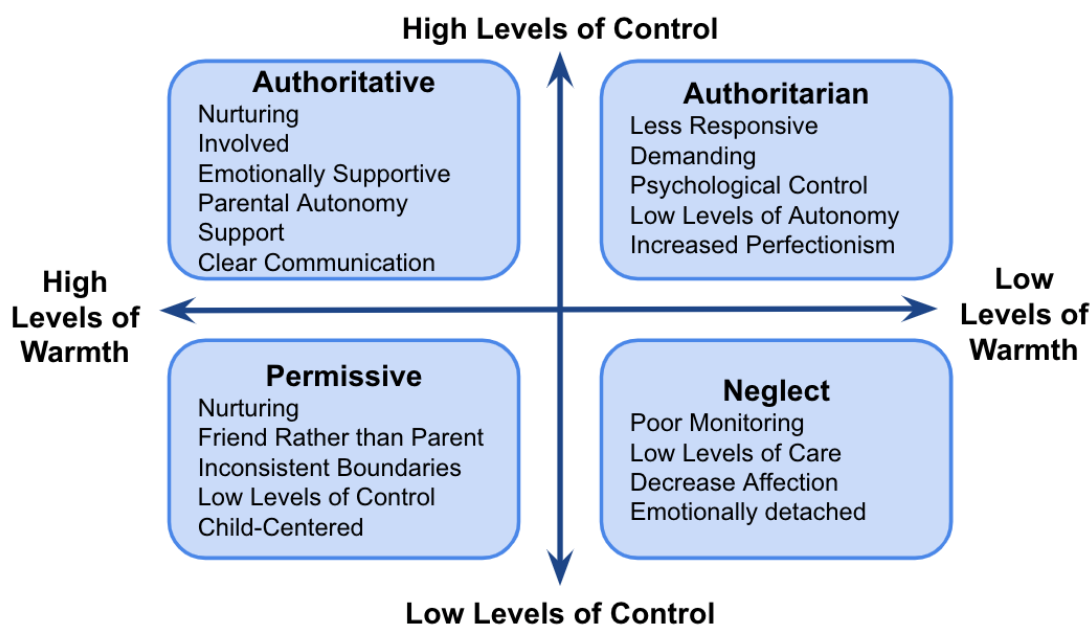
Parenting styles can be described as the strategies and attitudes of parents which are directly observable, that they apply in child rearing process (Diana, 1966 [11]). Diana Baumrind in 1967 classified parenting styles into four such as *Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Neglected or Uninvolved*.

Authoritative Parenting style is the most accepted form of parenting and it is characterised by its high level of responsiveness and control. Logical behaviours of parents and motivating child's autonomy along with the expectation of discipline are the key features of this parenting style. This parenting will always result in positive outcomes for the child like a high level of self-esteem, good self-image and a high level of performance in academic and social roles (Supple, 2019; Kim et al., 2018. [12-13]).

Authoritarian Parenting style has the characteristics of low responsiveness and high control over children. These types of parents never give explanations or opportunities for the strict rules and set of conventions for the child. Therefore, this parenting style is always associated with low-quality of interpersonal relationships, social competence, academic achievements, and high level of aggression. These may result in low self-confidence and feeling of insecurity among children (Jadon & Tripathi, 2017; Muneer & Majeed, 2023. [14-15]).

Permissive Parenting style shows low control over children but high responsiveness. These parents are always highly affirmative on child's wishes. They have no strict disciplinary regulations so that better academic performance, high self-esteem are the positive outcomes of this parenting whereas children under this parenting will always face role confusion and decision-making issues (Calafat, 2014. [16]).

Negligent Parenting style is possessing both control and responsiveness at a low level. They are least attentive on expectations and warmth, and these parents rarely involve in child's lives. As a result, the child may have an extreme level of autonomy, and they will face difficulty in self-regulation, and sometimes show impulsive behaviour (Odame & Gyimah, 2018; Llorca-Mestre, 2017; Kopko, 2007. [17-19]).



Adapted from Robertson (2020)

❖ **Parent Adolescent Bonding:**

Adolescence is the critical stage of any individual’s life. In this stage of life people will have the tendency to become independent. This is the period in which they will seek for new relationships, new behaviours and develop new social skills that will remain rest of their life. The family environment has vital role in the behavioural changes of adolescents and family environment is the primary source that provides protection, and personality development (Masten & Palmer, 2019. [20]). Contemporary situations of world have influenced the parenting styles of today’s generation. It can be noted that greater autonomy of children is being given by new generation parents and the unquestionable authoritarian way of parenting is almost diminishing from the culture. But with the changing culture in the technology, particularly influence of social media among both parents and children, an evident change in the communication patterns can be observed. So that parents of adolescents feel isolated which may affect the attachment pattern of adolescent and their parents (Sondhi, 2017. [21]).

❖ **Parenting Beliefs in India:**

Though progressive changes are happening in Indian parenting styles, socio-cultural values have significant role in the parenting bonds between Indian parents and adolescents. These socio-cultural values are not only influenced by the immediate system but also the experience of parents during their own upbringing. In Indian context family is considered as the central unit of an individual’s life and also family plays great role in the socialisation of a child. The Indian parenting system is basically value based, that is values of interdependence and community concern. The central point in the character formation of a child’s personality in Indian culture is learning of self-control. The cultural shift of joint family system in the rural areas to the nuclear family system in the urban areas is reflecting in the parental attitude of Indian parents. This has reflected even in the concepts of fatherhood and motherhood in India (Sahithya, 2019. [22]).

6.2 Familial Factors in Anorexic Vulnerability:

Family is the most accepted form of social institution that plays a crucial role in the socialisation and healthy development of an individual’s overall personality. The incidence of any mental disorders to a family member will change the entire scenario of that family atmosphere. The family’s response to the disturbances of a family member may have direct impact on the onset of any psychological disorder and welfare of that person (Silva, 2003. [23]). are many research studies that stresses the crucial role of family on prevention and management of mental disorders (Leonidas & Santos, 2015. [24]). Eating disorders specifically anorexia nervosa is a psychiatric disorder that is increasing visibly in recent years and this is a psychiatric condition where many pathogenic factors are affecting as a complex system

which is precipitating the psychological condition (Morgan, 2002. [25]). This era is marked with technological boom and with this changing pattern of lifestyle the adjustment pattern of people’s lives is becoming more complex and conflicting day by day. These environmental changes are making our adolescents adjustmental patterns more confusing.

Family environment has a key role in moulding a child’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural development. The way of family interactions and relationship among family members has crucial impact in the adjustment pattern of adolescents (Werner & Silbereisen, 2003. [26]). Majority of the studies that have been reviewed clearly showed that the presence of dysfunctional family functioning in anorexic cases. The overprotection and low warmth are found to be two major reasons for this (Calam, 1990. [27]). Another major reason that found in relation with anorexic vulnerability is the destructed communication between mother and daughter (Lattimore, 2000. [28]). It was also found that among all the risk factors associated with anorexia nervosa family discord and high level of parental demands are the high-risk factors that correlate with anorexia nervosa when compared with any other psychiatric disorders (Pike,2008. [29]).

Parenting styles can be understood at two levels of application that is level of control and level of warmth that parents show to their children. The degree of control and warmth and lack of affection between parents and adolescents are highly associated with the risk factors of adolescents to develop disordered eating behaviour (Bergeet al., 2014; Krug et al., 2016; Zubatsky et al., 2015. [30-32]).

Since the authoritarian parenting style possesses the combination of high control and low warmth, the children of authoritarian parents may have low levels of autonomy, increased levels of perfectionism, and high level of disordered eating behaviours, and all these may create an unhealthy atmosphere for the adolescent’s development (Deas, 2011; Loth, 2014. [33-34]). All these controlling behaviours of authoritarian parenting eliminate healthy eating habits and gradually this results in eating disorders among adolescent girls. In contrast to authoritarian, neglectful parenting style will also serve as a high-risk factor among adolescents to develop disordered eating behaviours as this style lacks with care, attention, involvement and warmth (Martinson, 2016. [35]). Studies have shown that when compared with the other two parenting styles, both authoritative and permissive parenting styles can help adolescent girls from developing disordered eating habits since both of these styles have their own positive outcomes of high levels of warmth and care (Gouveia, 2019. [36]).

It was in the late 19th century the significance of family interaction and attachment in child’s life-threatening eating behaviours were first introduced in accounts with anorexia nervosa. There are many studies that are pointing toward the relationship between anorexia nervosa and psychological and social and emotional factors. It is believed by scientists that anorexia nervosa can be the reaction to the high level of demands of adolescent people for their increased level of freedom and social interaction. This is happening because of the replacement that is done by adolescents with the constant concern of food and control of their own body weight. The reports point out the presence of troubled family relationships among anorexic adolescent girls (Wozniak, 2012. [37]). In summary, it can be explained that the majority of the descriptive studies on anorexic vulnerability suggest the relationship between dysfunctional family functioning, and individual psychopathology of parents and adolescents (Strober & Humphrey, 1987. [38]).

7. SWOT ANALYSIS :

Swot analysis is the effort applying based on the logic that will maximise the strengths and opportunities as well as will help to minimize weakness and threats. Swot analysis will help to recognise different factors systematically to understand that subject matter thoroughly and to find out the possible solutions.

Strengths: This can be the beliefs, skills or knowledge that will allow the researcher to achieve the aim.

Weaknesses: These are the beliefs or behaviours that may prevent the researcher to achieve the targeted group or aim.

Opportunities: Possible ways of applications.

Threats: Possible fields of disagreements.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contributes to the literature knowledge on the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scarcity of literature will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope of new research area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socio-cultural blocks

subject to the future researchers ▪ Paving way to make awareness on the subject among public	result in insufficient data ▪ Lack of awareness of the topic will lead to mis conceptualisation	▪ Possibilities of paradigm shift in the parenting and cultural beliefs on the subject	▪ False beliefs of parenting and lack of proper training and awareness on parenting
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8. SUGGESTIONS :

- A paradigm shift in the relationship pattern of parents and adolescents is the need of the hour
- Proper awareness has to be given to the parents of adolescents in educational institutions.
- Since there is a deficit of literature in this field in the Indian context, future research can be conducted on parenting style and anorexic vulnerability.
- further studies are needed to understand more clearly how intrafamilial risk factors for AN interact with other environmental, personal, and genetic ones

9. CONCLUSION :

There are many risk factors of anorexic vulnerability in relation with the inter family relationships have identified from the articles reviewed and some of the significant factors are perfectionism, higher level of parental demands, emotional imbalances, lower level of family involvement, negative family history, and family history of psychiatric disorders. Apart from these factors there are more complex factors involved with anorexic vulnerability and these are the complex interactions of family and adolescents such as body image issues, social concerns, stress, adjustmental problems, and social prejudice. The different parenting styles have their own influences on the risk of developing eating disorders among adolescents. Both authoritarian and neglectful parenting has negative influence on adolescents and there is high chances of developing disordered eating habits whereas, authoritative and permissive parenting styles have better connection with adolescents for protecting and preventing them from unhealthy disordered eating behaviours.

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