



## **Parent-Child Relationship among Adolescents in Aizawl, Mizoram**

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### ***Abstract***

*Ever since the existence of the primary institution, parenting has been recognized as an important contribution to child development. The parent-child relationship plays a crucial role in the development of the personality of any child. The level of the parent-child relationship depends on the stability of the union of parents in marriage, the age of the parents, experiences in life, self-confidence, and the unique characteristics of the child compared with those parents. Adolescence is a period of time in which children have to deal with a variety of emotional, psychological and academic concerns. Family structure, transition in socialization, social status, changed body and religious beliefs play vital roles in adolescent growth and development. Among them, parenting styles have been recognized as important role in nurturing children and adolescents. Hence, the paper attempts to find out the relationship between the parent and the child relationship among adolescents in Aizawl, Mizoram.*

**Keywords:** *Adolescence, Parenting Style, Parent-Child Connectedness, Parent-Child Relationship.*

### **Introduction**

Parenting has been long recognized as an important contribution to child development. Parent-child relation plays, a crucial role in the development of personality. It is a combination of behaviours, emotions and expectations that are essential to a particular parent and child. The relationship between parent and child is among the most important. The parent's age, experience and self-confidence, the stability of the union of parents in marriage and the unique characteristics of the child compared with those parents have a strong implication on the quality of the parent-child relationship. A child who feels accepted experiences feelings of self-respect, confidence, and security, whereas a mother who rejects her child gives the child a bad incentive to identify with the parents, leading to personality

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differences between parents and children. Economic values are positively correlated with parental rejection, while hedonistic values are negatively correlated with it.

Adolescence is the period of human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood. It is a period of preparation for adulthood where developmental changes take place. Moreover, apart from physical and sexual maturation, experiences like the development of identity, the capacity for abstract reasoning and the acquisition of skills needed to carry out adult relationships and roles movement toward social and economic independence (WHO, 2013). Azaiza, F. et. al (2005) opined that the quality of parenting that children receive has an impact on overall child development including social and emotional development. Lack of a warm, positive relationship with parents, insecure attachment, inflexible or inconsistent discipline, inadequate supervision of and involvement with children, marital conflict and break down, and parental psychopathologies such as maternal depression and parenting stress are found to be the emotional and behavioral problems of poor parenting.

Bean et al. (2004) suggested that a high level of connection between a parent and a child (PCC) result in favorable and positive warmth, trust and affection. In this state, parents and children might have a better relationship as they enjoy having activities together and are more likely to communicate openly. They tend to provide emotional support and pay respect to one another as well. This implicates the relationship between high parent-child connectedness (PCC) and the healthier parent-child relationship within the family system. Erikson (1963) stated that the quality of parent-child relationships during adolescence is linked to the quality of these relationships before adolescence and that adolescent adjustment is related to childhood adjustment. In the same way, while adolescence is a time when identity crystallization is the primary developmental challenge, identity development occurs throughout the lifespan. However, adolescence brings with it new dimensions for alteration as well as new opportunities for identifying growth and development in the relationship between parents and children. Kumari, S. (2015) pointed out that the parent-child bond is frequently seen as the longest-lasting and most important one in a person's life. A parent-child relationship is a bond between a caregiver and the child. The connection between a caregiver and his or her child is referred as how parents and children engage with one another physically, emotionally, and socially if we are to comprehend the parent-child relationship.

According to a study by Bagga, and Saini, S (2017) adolescents regarded that their mothers punished them more severely through symbolic representations than their fathers did, but that their mothers were also more loving toward them than their fathers. Sons perceived their parents to be more demanding, and they claimed to have received more objective punishment from them. In comparison to their male counterparts, daughters perceived their fathers to be more protective and mothers to be more loving and symbolic reward-giving. Interaction patterns differ significantly between adolescents and their fathers and adolescents and their mothers. There is a significant difference between how fathers and mothers respond to their children's needs. The findings elicited from the review of literature may be useful in dealing with issues and conflicts between adolescents and their parents, thereby improving

their mutual understanding. This, in turn, will contribute to the enhancement of positive family dynamics, resulting in the better psychological and emotional development of children.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Adolescence is a period in which children have to deal with a variety of emotional, psychological and academic concerns. There are certain aspects such as family structure, transition in socialization, social status, changed body, and religious beliefs that play a significant role in adolescent development. Relationships, or the associations a person has with other people, are an important part of everyone's existence. They can extensively pursue and impact one's life. All relationships that involve an individual can positively or negatively impact the development or quality of his or her life. The relationship between parents and children is essential to personality development. Parenting styles have been accepted as a key factor which could influence child and adolescent development. The purpose of the present study is to assess the parent-child relationship among adolescents in Aizawl, Mizoram. An attempt has been made to describe the demographic characteristics and parent-child relationship of the present study. Thus, the present study examines the parent-child relationship among adolescents in Aizawl, Mizoram.

### **Methodology**

The present study was cross-sectional in nature and descriptive in design. In this study, the respondents' were in the age group of 16 years and they were selected by using data maintained in the Youth Christian Fellowship. The study comprised of 100 samples which consist of 57 female and 43 male adolescents. The present study was based on primary data collected through quantitative method. The quantitative data were collected through a field survey with the help of structured questionnaire. The material used for parent-child relationship includes one question asking about the participants' parents' relationship status and a self construct 14 questions asking about the participant spent the most time with, felt closest too while growing up and currently have the most in common with, enjoyed spending time with the most teacher.

The secondary data was collected from books, journals, newspapers, articles etc. The present study was carried out in the selected core and peripheral area of Aizawl. The population consisted of adolescents from the selected area. Stratified disproportionate sampling was used to draw a sample from the population purposively. The data were processed with the help of MS Excel and SPSS and analyzed in terms of simple statistical methods of averages, percentage, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

### **Results and Discussion**

This section deals with the results and discussion of data collected from the respondents. The discussion has been structured into three parts socio-demographic and parent-child relationship characteristics and its correlates of adolescents. The socio-demographic characteristics include profile of the respondents, familial, parental and socio-economic characteristics. The parent child relationships focus on parent child relationship

status and while growing up and nurturing and the inter correlates of parent child relationship.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents by Gender

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N= 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
<b>I</b>	<b>Denomination</b>			
	Presbyterian	39	32	71
		68.4%	74.4%	71.0%
	Salvation Army	18	11	29
		31.6%	25.6%	29.0%
<b>II</b>	<b>Sub-tribe</b>			
	Lusei	9	12	21
		15.8%	27.9%	21.0%
	Ralte	11	8	19
		19.3%	18.6%	19.0%
	Hmar	12	7	19
		21.1%	16.3%	19.0%
	Paihte	4	2	6
		7.0%	4.7%	6.0%
	Sailo	8	4	12
		14.0%	9.3%	12.0%
	Pawi	13	10	23
		22.8%	23.3%	23.0%

Source: Computed

Religion is one of the greatest institutions, which mould the personality of human beings. Table 1 shows the Profile of the Respondents by gender. Two third (71%) belongs to Presbyterian in which male are more (74.4%) and female constitute a little less than one third (68.4%). About one third (29%) follows The Salvation Army in which female are more (31.6%) and the remaining 25.6 percent are male respondents.

In Mizoram, there are different types of tribes such as Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paihte, Sailo, and Pawi. A little more than two fifth (23%) are Pawi where male are more (23.3%) in comparison to their female counter part (22.8%). Around two fifth (21%) are Lusei whereby male respondents are more (27.9%) than female with 15.8 percent. Both Hmar and Ralte comprise of about two fifth (19%). Female respondents are more (19.3%) among Ralte and Hmar tribes with 21.1 percent as compared to the male respondents with 18.6 percent and

16.3 percent respectively. A few (12%) are Sailo in which female are more with 14 percent and male with 9.3 percent. The remaining 6 percent belongs to Paihte tribe in which female are more with 7 percents and male with 4.7 percent.

Table 2: Respondents' Familial Characteristics by Gender

Sl. No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N= 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
I	Type of Family			
	Nuclear	44 77.2%	28 65.1%	72 72.0%
	Joint	13 22.8%	15 34.9%	28 28.0%
II	Form of Family			
	Stable	49 86.0%	41 95.3%	90 90.0%
	Broken	6 10.5%	1 2.3%	7 7.0%
	Reconstituted/stepfamily	2 3.5%	1 2.3%	3 3.0%
III	Size of the Family			
	Small(1-3)	5 8.8%	6 14.0%	11 11.0%
	Medium(4-6)	43 75.4%	29 67.4%	72 72.0%
	Big (7 & above)	9 15.8%	8 18.6%	17 17.0%
IV	Area of Residence			
	Rural	28 49.1%	19 44.2%	47 47.0%
	Semi-urban	29 50.9%	24 55.8%	53 53.0%

Source: Computed

Table 2 shows the Respondents' Familial Characteristics by Gender, among the respondents, the nuclear family elicits more respondents comprising less than three-fourths (72%). The remaining more than one-fourth (28%) of them belong to a joint family. Among the respondents, the vast majority (90%) of them belong to a stable family followed by a broken family (7%). The remaining less than one-tenth (3%) of them belong to the reconstituted/stepfamily. Among the respondents, two-thirds (72%) of them belong to the medium size of family. The least (11%) of them belong to a small size family.

Table 3: Respondents' Parental Education by Gender

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N = 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
I	Father's Education			
	Middle School	18 31.6%	15 34.9%	33 33.0%
	High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC)	7 12.3%	7 16.3%	14 14.0%
	Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC)	13 22.8%	5 11.6%	18 18.0%
	Graduate	19 33.3%	16 37.2%	35 35.0%
II	Mother's Education			
	Middle School	26 45.6%	24 55.8%	50 50.0%
	High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC)	16 28.1%	13 30.2%	29 29.0%
	Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC)	6 10.5%	0 .0%	6 6.0%
	Graduate	9 15.8%	6 14.0%	15 15.0%

Source: Computed

Table 3 shows the Respondents' Parental Education by Gender. The educational status of the respondents' parents has been categorized into four divisions which are middle, H.S.L.C, H.S.S.L.C and graduate. Regarding the education of the respondents' father, the highest educational level attained was graduate (35%) and H.S.L.C constituted the lowest educational qualification (14%). Regarding the education of mothers, half of the respondents' mothers (50%) attained middle and the lowest (6%) educational qualification was constituted by H.S.S.L.C respectively.

Table 4: Parent-Child Relationship Status by Gender

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N= 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
I	Parents Relationship Status			
	Biological Parents married	42 73.7%	38 88.4%	80 80.0%
	Biological Parents Divorced Each other	10 17.5%	3 7.0%	13 13.0%

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N= 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
	Biological Parents were never Married	1	1	2
		1.8%	2.3%	2.0%
	Mother is Widow	3	1	4
		5.3%	2.3%	4.0%
Father is a Widower	1	0	1	
	1.8%	.0%	1.0%	
II	Live with the Most			
	Biological mother and father equally	35	31	66
		61.4%	72.1%	66.0%
	Biological mother	18	8	26
		31.6%	18.6%	26.0%
	Biological father	2	4	6
3.5%		9.3%	6.0%	
Neither biological parent	2	0	2	
		3.5%	.0%	2.0%
III	Spend the most time			
	Mother	23	13	36
		40.4%	30.2%	36.0%
	Father	7	4	11
		12.3%	9.3%	11.0%
	Both parents equally	24	25	49
42.1%		58.1%	49.0%	
Did not live with either parent	3	1	4	
	5.3%	2.3%	4.0%	

Source: Computed

Table 4 shows the status of the parent's relationship. The majority of the respondents were married (80%) followed by parents divorced from each other (13%). More than half of the children (66%) lived with a biological mother and father equally while (26%) and (6%) lived with a biological mother and the other with a biological father. The children who spent the most time with both parents comprised almost half of the children (49%) followed by spending time with their mother (36%) and father (11%).

Table 5 shows the Respondent's Parent-child relationship while growing up by Gender. Almost half of the children (49%) felt closest to both parents viz., mother and father equally while growing up followed by children (37%) of them felt closest to their mother. Only a few (6%) reports that they felt closest to their father and (8%) of them did not feel at all close to either parent.

Table 5: Respondents' Parent-child relationship while growing up by Gender

Sl. No.	Statements	Gender		Total N = 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
I	Felt Closest too Growing up			
	Mother	26	11	37
		45.6%	25.6%	37.0%
	Father	3	3	6
		5.3%	7.0%	6.0%
Both parents equally	21	28	49	
	36.8%	65.1%	49.0%	
	Did not feel at all close to either parent	7	1	8
		12.3%	2.3%	8.0%
	Chi-square	Value	d.f	Assym sig (2-sided)
		9.813 <sup>a</sup>	3	.020
II	Caretaking to me growing up			
	Mother	30	17	47
		52.6%	39.5%	47.0%
	Father	3	1	4
		5.3%	2.3%	4.0%
Both parents equally	19	23	42	
	33.3%	53.5%	42.0%	
	Neither	5	2	7
		8.8%	4.7%	7.0%
III	Punished Most			
	Mother	14	12	26
		24.6%	27.9%	26.0%
	Father	17	8	25
		29.8%	18.6%	25.0%
Both parent equally	13	16	29	
	22.8%	37.2%	29.0%	
	Neither/does not apply)	13	7	20
		22.8%	16.3%	20.0%

Source: Computed

Mothers spent the most time taking care of children while growing up with the highest percentage (47%) of them while less than half of the children (42%) report that both parents are equal in taking care of them. Only a few (7%) reports that neither spent the most time taking care of children and the lowest percentage of children (4%) report that their father spent in taking care of them. The table also shows that less than one-third of the children



(29%) were being punished the most as a child by both parents followed by mother (26%) and father (25%). Only some children (7%) report that neither punishes them the most as a child.

Table 6: Parents working while nurturing by Gender

Sl.No.	Characteristics	Gender		Total N = 100
		Female n = 57	Male n = 43	
I	Mother			
	No	17	9	26
		29.8%	20.9%	26.0%
	Yes, full time	18	12	30
		31.6%	27.9%	30.0%
	Yes, part-time	18	21	39
		31.6%	48.8%	39.0%
	Does not apply (lived with father or other family members)	4	1	5
		7.0%	2.3%	5.0%
II	Father			
	No	6	3	9
		10.5%	7.0%	9.0%
	Yes, full time	23	20	43
		40.4%	46.5%	43.0%
	Yes, part-time	25	20	45
		43.9%	46.5%	45.0%
	Does not apply (lived with mother or other family members)	3	0	3
		5.3%	.0%	3.0%

Source: Computed

Table 6 shows the working time of the parents taking care of their children while growing up. The majority of the children's mothers (39%) and the majority of the children's fathers (45%) worked part-time while taking care of them. A maximum of the children's mothers (30%) and fathers (43%) worked full-time while they were growing up. The findings indicated that more than one-fourth of the children (26%) report that their mother did not work while they were growing up while little less than one-tenth of the children (9%) report that their father did not work while they were growing up. The minimum number of children who lived with their father or other family member consisted of (5%) while the minimum number consisted of the children who lived with their mother or other family members (3%) respectively.

Table 7: Correlates of Parent-Child Relationship by Gender

Variables	Playing	Quality time	Felt Closest to growing up	Talk to or see the most day	Have more in common
Playing	1				
Quality time	.499**	1			
Feel Closest to growing up	.293**	.346**	1		
Talk to or see the most day	.179	.299**	.337**	1	
Have relationship more in common	.153	.295**	.410**	.114	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7 shows the correlation of the parent-child relationship by gender. There is a relationship between playing and quality time at 0.01 level of significance (.499\*\*). Also, there is a strong positive relationship at 0.01 level of significance between the perception of feeling too closest today with playing (.293\*\*) and quality time (.346\*\*). There is a strong positive relationship at 0.01 level of significance between perception in talking to or seeing the most today with quality time (.299\*\*) and feeling too closest today (.337\*\*). Moreover, there is also a relationship having something more in common a 0.01 level of significance between quality time (.29\*\*) and felt the closest today (.410\*\*). Hence, the table shows that there is a positive relationship between parent and child by gender.

### Conclusion

The present study analyzed the parent-child relationship among adolescents in Aizawl. The adolescents were selected from the Aizawl area for the study. The discussion has been structured into three parts socio-demographic and parent-child relationship characteristics and its correlates of adolescents. From the discussion, all of the respondents belong to the age of 16 years in which more than half (57%) of the respondents are females. A little more than two-fifth (21%) belonged to the Lusei sub-tribe. Among the respondents, more than two-thirds (71%) of them belong to the Presbyterian denomination. Nuclear family elicits more respondents comprising less than three-fourths (72%). Two-thirds (72%) of respondents belong to the medium size of family. Regarding the education of the respondents' fathers, the majority educational level attained was graduation (35%). Among the respondents' mothers, the majority educational level attained was middle (50%). Among the respondents, less than half (45%) lived in semi-pucca houses and more than half of the children (64%) reported that overprotection is high from their mothers and also high from their fathers (53%).

With regards to the comparison between gender and the parent-child relationship among adolescents, there are gender differences. Females are found to have better parent-

child relationships compared to males. The majority of the youth population in the study is brought up in the traditional parenting system and experience bonding towards their mothers. In general, mothers spent more time with their children, spent more time taking care of their children, were seen as more overprotective and more caring, and spent the most quality time with their children contrary to the fathers. Therefore, stronger parental bonding enhances a favourable and better parent-child relationship. In order to develop a strong parent-child relationship among adolescents, the below suggestions would be helpful to enrich both the parents and the child. Instead of having control over their children, parents can generate an atmosphere of caring and guiding their children.

Parents must take responsibility for improving the situation other than making futile attempts to make children behave. Adolescents are the forerunners of social change and development in modern society. Educational exposure, willingness to shoulder adult roles and responsibilities and the support received from their families will determine their future and the future of the country as well. Awareness of the importance of parenting can be created by the social work institutions and social welfare departments regarding the typology, parenting styles and parenting practices stressing parental bonding. Parents are more likely to have positive relationships with their children when they have warm, trusting and reliable relationships with peers, family, community members, and service providers. PFCE (Positive Family and Community Engagement) can be implemented which can improve emotional and concrete support to parents to respect diverse parenting styles. This will further help in reinforcement of the need and significance of fathers and other co-parents as well.

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