

# Deteriorating Bonds of Relationships: A few Concerns

Dr. Amita Nigam\*

Department of Psychology, BDKMV, Agra

**Abstract - The present study was aimed at investigating the causes of deteriorating bonds of relationships in Indian society and its impact on the life of the individual and society at large. The main factors found to be important were the family experiences of childhood, especially the attachment patterns, the relationship of child with parents and with other family members, change in family structure from joint to nuclear, the changed status of women from home makers to working and bearing the dual responsibility of both home and professional life, erosion of ancient Indian cultural values due to globalisation, the effect of media, were a few factors which emerged to be related with degradation in human relations. The socialization process and the caring relationship among the family members stemmed out to be the most important factors as the solution to the problem.**

**Keywords - Relationship bonds, Erosion of values, Globalization.**

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's world there is abundance of knowledge, technological development, power and money, but what is depleting, is a caring relationship. Relationship bond is psychological, evolutionary and ethological phenomenon concerning relationship between humans. The relationship involves affiliation, association and rapport between members of a family or a couple, employees and employers in a work place, or between a professional and client etc. The biological aim of relationship is survival and the psychological aim is security. If we ask a number of people about what matters the most in their lives or what is the most important aspect of their life, different people will have different answers to such questions, but their response will usually include a close relationship of some sort- with parents, children, friends, co-workers, a lover, a spouse. Caring about others and being cared about by them are central concerns in people's lives. An intimate relationship is very important in one's life and it involves at least one of the three basic components:

- Emotional attachment, feeling of affection and love
- Fulfilment of psychological needs of partners
- Interdependence between the individuals

Aristotle called the man a 'social animal' who has a natural desire for society because in the absence of it, it is impossible to realise one's potential in full. According to some psychologists Gregariousness is instinctive. All of us want to belong to someone.

Belongingness is one of our important psychological needs. Since India is not an individualistic but a collective society, we cannot think of our identity as segregated from others, i.e., family or society. A common man in India seeks happiness in his bonds with family and society. The acceptance, warmth, protection and encouragement given to the child during his infancy lay the foundation for his attachment with family. Research suggests the effectiveness of parental warmth and supportiveness in developing secure attachment and intimate parent-child relationships. Early attachment experiences influence mental health indirectly through their effects on the development of adult relationships.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To investigate the causes of deteriorating bonds of relationships and how the early experiences of the child in family affect the life of the individual and the society.

## METHODOLOGY

Since the study was based on secondary data, the investigator reviewed the literature related with the effect of family experiences, especially during infancy and childhood and its impact on adult life in Indian context. The studies related with some other factors such as family structure and working status of women were also taken into account.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have proved that relationships have pervasive impact on all aspect of life of an individual across the life span. Freeny (1995) found that anxiety over relationships and the concern over health issues were linked with attachment and the way attachment styles regulate distress. Relative to their less securely attached peers, adults with secure attachment orientations consistently demonstrate superior functioning across a wide array of adjustment indices including greater relationship trust and satisfaction, commitment and less symptomatic distress. (Simpson, 1990). Researches have also shown that a secure attachment style acts as a buffer against the psychological distress (Kemp, 2000). The concept of attachment postulates a biological and social-behavioural system, inherent in the infant and designed to maintain proximity to primary care giver in condition of danger or threat (Bowlby, 1969).

But now the things are gradually changing. There is a degradation and deterioration in all types of relationships whether familial or social. Rampant increase in the incidents of violence, deceit and crimes of all types are the outcome of this deterioration in human relations.

Every sensible person is worried about this sensitive issue. If we go into the root of this problem, we find many factors that are related to it and are aggravating it.

The first and foremost reason for it, is undoubtedly the erosion of our eternal Indian values that emphasized patience, forgiveness, selflessness, renunciation, truth, non-violence and altruism, etc., the prime importance in human conduct. There was a concept of collectiveness in our culture. Obviously when we see our identity or self as embedded in others, we will refrain from being selfish or egocentric. But today individualistic outlook has become more prevalent in society.

Another important aspect of Indian culture was its emphasis on the balance in different aspects of life. It guided the man to maintain the balance between Dharm, Arth, Kaam and Moksh. Guided by these principles the individuals exercised a restraint in all aspects of life. When one decides the limits of one's possessions and achievements, one does not elbow out others to attain one's goal and is contented with what one has. This attitude towards life can eradicate many evils and negativities in the society.

But now we see that due to globalisation, western values are influencing our minds especially of new generation who is unaware and unmindful of its ancient cultural values. Today Machiavellianism is increasing in society which shows mistrust in human nature, lack of conventional morality, opportunism and lack of affect in interpersonal relationship. The Machiavellian views human beings as objects to be manipulated rather than as individuals with whom one has empathy. His interaction with others is

utilitarian. He wants to maximize his gains by manipulating people whom he thinks to be weak, fallible and gullible. In a society where success and achievements are considered to be the sole parameter of progress, Machiavellianism leaves little space for emotions in human relationships.

Another important cause appears to be the change in structure and goals of families. Whereas a joint family structure provides liabilities as well as social support to its members, the nuclear family structure, the compulsion for many people, leaves its members with insecurity, overburden and consequent self-centeredness. Various studies (Sharma and Jaiswal, 2008) have revealed that people with social support were better in their psychological health. Psychological distress has been found to be greater in nuclear families and joint family members show better coping behaviour than nuclear family members (Pattnayak et. al. 1997). Studies suggest that the family dimensions pertaining to reinforcement, social support, roles, communication, cohesiveness and leadership are changing significantly, with Indian families demonstrating limited closeness, occasional family loyalty and emotional separateness (Bhatti et. al. 1998). This suggests that Indian families are in a process of transition and this would have an impact on adult attachment orientations which in turn would have an implication on distress.

Tiwari & Verma (1913) in their study investigated the relationship between perceived parental support (psychological and instrumental) with mental health problems. The study was conducted on a sample of 400 boys and girls between the age range of 15-19 years. The results revealed that girls perceived more instrumental support (paternal and maternal) than boys. A significant negative correlation was found between parental support and various mental health problems. The study revealed the fact that parental support was associated with better mental health.

Parental acceptance and rejection also play a crucial role in determining the happiness of the individual. Khalique et al. (2007) in their study compared perceived parental acceptance / rejection and psychological adjustment of children in Finland, Pakistan and United States. The sample comprised of 669 respondents and included both parents and children in each country. The results of the study revealed that in general, children experience parental acceptance more than rejection. The study also revealed a positive correlation between parental acceptance and individual's psychological adjustment. In loving families (as perceived by children) there was a significant agreement between children's and parents' report of parental acceptance but in less loving families (as perceived by children) there was no significant agreement between children's and parents' report of parental acceptance.

Today the role of females has changed drastically. They are working 24x7 to meet the demands of family as well as profession. This overloaded lifestyle deprives them from giving enough quality time to their wards. It is a proven fact that the children that are brought up in joint families display better understanding of emotions and better adjustment. The parents are to be sensitized over this issue.

Although the mother is the primary care giver for the child, but studies reveal that father-child relationship also plays a vital role in later development and adjustment of the child. Lamb (1997) suggests that a critical factor in father-child relationship is the way it is perceived by father, mother and their children. It is not enough to study the ways in which a mother and baby or a father and baby interact, we must study the way in which they affect each other. Clarke, Stewart (1978) in their study found that mother's influence on child is direct while the father's is often indirect. The child influences both the parents directly. The father indirectly influences not only the child but also the entire family members. Numerous studies indicate that the father's emotional support to the mother during pregnancy and early infancy is important in the establishment of positive beginning of relationships. The absence of father during infancy creates considerable stress on the whole family system (Lewis, 1987). Now in the changed circumstances, father should also take active part in the upbringing of the child.

The grandparents can also play a vital role in developing the bonds of affection among the family members. Their relationship with grandchildren is more playful and relaxed. They frequently offer more approval and support, empathy and sympathy and less discipline. Grandparents also have time to tell the child, stories about when they or their parents were small children. This helps in creating a feeling of family identity and traditions. Regular contact with close knit network of cousins, aunts, uncles and other relatives develops in child a feeling that he or she is a part of a larger group. According to Robert A. Cummins, a close relationship acts as defence for our subjective well-being.

The media is also playing a negative role in this regard. Most of the T.V. serials are showing betrayals in human relationships. When a common man watches such types of programmes repeatedly, these things start appearing normal to him. Nowadays parents are encouraging individualistic attitude in their children in order to make them fit in the changed social environment and professional life.

In the cross-cultural studies of different nations, it was found that in individualistic nations' reports of global well-being are high and satisfaction with domains such as marriages are extremely high. Nevertheless, suicide rates and divorce rates in these individualistic nations are also very high (Deiner and Su in press-b). It may be that people in

individualistic nations make more attributions for events internally to themselves and therefore, the effects are amplified when things go either well or bad. Thus, individualists may experience more extreme levels of subjective well-being, whereas collectivists may have a safer structure that produces fewer people, who are very happy, but also fewer people who are isolated and depressed. Famous psychologist Seligman, also accepts the role of relationships in happiness and well-being.

Although the problem has become complicated and hence requires efforts and remedies from many sides and at various levels, but as all of us know that if we want a lasting solution for this, we will have to pay heed to the socialization process of the child. This process starts from the birth of the child and lasts till death. Parents share the responsibility of bringing up their children in a manner so that as adults they become effective members of their respective society. Whatever parents do with children to achieve this goal is broadly known as parenting. Thus, the process of parenting needs attention.

By inculcating eternal human values in our children, we can ensure happiness and joy of good relationship for ourselves and for coming generations. We will have to explain them the relative importance of all the things in life and help them in developing a unified philosophy of life which includes in it not only worldly goals but also the goals that go beyond this life.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that early childhood relationship, acceptance of the child by parents, family structure and inculcation of eternal human values during socialization, can assure a good quality of life for the individual and the society as a whole.

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#### Corresponding Author

**Dr. Amita Nigam\***

Department of Psychology, BDKMV, Agra

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**Dr. Amita Nigam\***