



## Effect of teenagers' behaviours due to parental quarrels

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### Abstract

Quarrels are a regular phenomenon in family life. It can be assumed that family-centred experiences are at the basis of the child's development. Therefore, the analysis of the consequences of parental quarrels on the child is of fundamental importance. The effects of parental quarrel behaviours on the child's condition have been widely researched since the 1980's. The focus of this research work has predominantly been on the negative consequences of these behaviours, however the positive effects have also been observed and discussed. This includes particularly the finding that parental quarrels can lead to teenager's maladjustment, which in turn results in negative effects on social, cognitive, educational and psycho-biological functions and also many positive effects.

**Keywords:** effect, behaviour, quarrels

### Introduction

A common scenario that often plays out in families with parental conflict is when a child is blamed and scapegoat by the parents, which in turn may cause the child to act out. This no adaptive parenting style creates a dynamic of discord that is enmeshed, reciprocal, and reinforcing. When overt or covert parental conflict is present, there may be a tendency to create "alliances" or "collusions" among family members, which typically only alienates healthy family relationships. Additionally, some parents who do not actively engage in conflict in front of their teenage children may allow their negative feelings toward each other to guide their decisions. These decisions, when motivated by resentment and not the best interests of the children, may be equally harmful.

### Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic status of teenage girls.
2. To study the positive and negative effects of parental quarrels on teenager's behaviour.
3. To suggest suitable measures for resolving conflicts among parents and counselling teenagers to overcome negative effects of parental quarrels.

### Methodology

Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh was purposively selected for the study as investigator is well acquainted with the district. A list of different intermediate schools was prepared and five English medium co-ed schools were randomly selected out of the total schools of Faizabad district. 60 teenager girls were randomly selected from each selected schools. Total 300 teenage girls were selected from the age group 13 to 19 years. Dependent and independent variables were selected in this study such as age, caste, education, religion, father's

occupation, mother's occupation, father's age, mother's age, family monthly income, family type, size of family etc. and dependent variables were selected such as parental quarrel, teenagers, positive effect, negative effect, psychological effect, social effect, emotional effect, physical effect, behaviour, conflicts, counseling, measures etc. The statistical tools used were percentage, weighted mean, rank, correlation coefficient (r) and testing of correlation coefficient with t test.

### Results

**Table 1:** Distribution of teenage respondents according to age group

| Age group (years) | Frequency | Per cent |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| 13 to 15          | 15        | 5.0      |
| 15 to 17          | 135       | 45.0     |
| 17 to 19          | 150       | 50.0     |
| Total             | 300       | 100.0    |

Age group is an important factor as a psychological effect of parental quarrels in future life. In families where there is high level of conflict and animosity between parents, children are at a greater risk of developing emotional, social and behavioural problems, as well as difficulties with concentration and educational achievement. Frequent and intense conflict or fighting between parents also has a negative impact on children's sense of safety and security which affects their relationships with their parents and with others. Parental conflict and violence also have a negative effect on the older siblings as they may struggle to form healthy relationships with their peers and life partners due to the due to the type of environment they have been exposed to during their teenage years.

**Table 2:** Distribution of teenagers according to forms of parental quarrels

| Forms of parental quarrels | Yes        | No         | Mean score | Rank |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------|
| Argument and screaming     | 270 (90.0) | 30 (10.0)  | 1.90       | I    |
| Use of abusive language    | 180 (60.0) | 120 (40.0) | 1.60       | V    |
| Isolation                  | 195 (65.0) | 105 (35.0) | 1.65       | IV   |
| Wild sex                   | 45 (15.0)  | 255 (85.0) | 1.15       | VI   |
| Limiting finances          | 255 (85.0) | 45 (15.0)  | 1.85       | II   |
| Ignorance and avoidance    | 80 (60.0)  | 120 (40.0) | 1.60       | V    |
| Playing the blame game     | 210 (70.0) | 90 (30.0)  | 1.70       | III  |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

90.0 per cent of the teenagers told that their parents quarrel in the form of arguments and screaming with mean score 1.90 and rank I, followed by 85.0 per cent of the respondents who said that their parents quarrel by limiting finances with mean score 1.85 and rank II. 70.0 per cent of the quarrels aroused due to playing blame game on each other with mean score 1.70 and rank III whereas, 65.0 per cent of the parents went in isolation with mean score 1.65 and rank IV. Parent child conflicts can occur due to many reasons. When conflict

occurs, the entire family can be thrown into emotional turmoil. Resolving a parent and child conflict requires the participation of everyone involved. Communication is a very beneficial tool in resolving conflicts. Good quality parenting, that is parenting that provides structure, warmth, emotional support and positive reinforcement, has been found to reduce the impact of conflict. Quarrel is the normal process through which people resolve differences. When people live together under the same roof, there are bound to be disagreements and arguments as personalities clash and everyone wants to be heard.

**Table 3:** Distribution of teenagers according to the positive effects

| Positive effects                           | Always     | Sometimes | Never      | Mean score | Rank |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|
| Warm and caring towards others             | 75 (25.0)  | 15 (5.0)  | 210 (70.0) | 1.55       | IX   |
| More sympathetic                           | 48 (16.0)  | 18 (6.0)  | 234 (78.0) | 1.38       | XI   |
| Career oriented                            | 180 (60.0) | 21 (7.0)  | 99 (33.0)  | 2.27       | II   |
| Courteous and polite behaviour with others | 75 (25.0)  | 18 (6.0)  | 207 (69.0) | 1.56       | VIII |
| Active listeners                           | 135 (45.0) | 15 (5.0)  | 150 (50.0) | 1.95       | V    |
| Good problem solvers                       | 210 (70.0) | 9 (3.0)   | 81 (27.0)  | 2.43       | I    |
| Support other parent relationships         | 90 (30.0)  | 15 (5.0)  | 195 (65.0) | 1.65       | VII  |
| More mindful and intelligent               | 105 (35.0) | 18 (6.0)  | 177 (59.0) | 1.76       | VI   |
| Avoid arguments and fight with peers       | 60 (20.0)  | 21 (7.0)  | 219 (73.0) | 1.47       | IX   |
| Maintain positive relations with others    | 180 (60.0) | 18 (6.0)  | 102 (34.0) | 2.26       | III  |
| Good brain stormers                        | 45 (15.0)  | 24 (8.0)  | 231 (77.0) | 1.38       | XI   |
| Good future parents                        | 180 (60.0) | 9 (3.0)   | 111 (37.0) | 2.23       | IV   |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Sometimes parental quarrels develop positive relation among teenage children. This type of children become more loving

and caring, more sympathetic, career oriented, have polite behaviour, are active listeners, good problem solvers, more intelligent and often have positive relations with others.

**Table 4:** Distribution of teenagers according to physical effects

| Physical effects             | Yes        | No         | Mean score | Rank |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------|
| Poor health                  | 105 (35.0) | 195 (65.0) | 1.35       | II   |
| Under development as per age | 180 (60.0) | 120 (40.0) | 1.60       | I    |
| Sleeping disorders           | 48 (16.0)  | 252 (84.0) | 1.16       | IV   |
| Bed wetting                  | 36 (12.0)  | 264 (88.0) | 1.12       | V    |
| Punishing self or sibling    | 51 (17.0)  | 249 (83.0) | 1.17       | III  |
| Eating disorders             | 48 (16.0)  | 252 (84.0) | 1.16       | IV   |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Children are like emotional Geiger counters that mean they are like an instrument to measure the intensity of love and affection or other emotions among their parents. Teenage

children pay close attention to their parents' emotions for information about how safe they are in the family. When parents are destructive, the collateral damage to teenage will last a lifetime. Parent's physical aggression like hitting and pushing are very harmful for teenager's physical development.

**Table 5:** Distribution of teenagers according to psychological effects

| Psychological effects                  | Always     | Sometimes | Never      | Mean score | Rank |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|
| Misbehaviour                           | 135 (45.0) | 18 (6.0)  | 147 (49.0) | 1.96       | IV   |
| Demanding isolation                    | 30 (10.0)  | 21 (7.0)  | 249 (83.0) | 1.27       | VIII |
| Lack of concentration                  | 45 (15.0)  | 15 (5.0)  | 240 (80.0) | 1.35       | VII  |
| Lack of interest in sports             | 15 (5.0)   | 27 (9.0)  | 258 (86.0) | 1.19       | IX   |
| Unsympathetic towards family relations | 48 (16.0)  | 18 (6.0)  | 234 (78.0) | 1.38       | VI   |
| Negative or low feelings               | 75 (25.0)  | 27 (9.0)  | 198 (66.0) | 1.59       | V    |
| Depression                             | 180 (60.0) | 21 (7.0)  | 99 (33.0)  | 2.27       | III  |
| Behavioural problems                   | 225 (75.0) | 15 (5.0)  | 60 (20.0)  | 2.55       | I    |
| Poor future parenting                  | 210 (70.0) | 9 (3.0)   | 81 (27.0)  | 2.43       | II   |

When parents repeatedly use hostile strategies with each other, some children can become distraught, worried, anxious and hopeless. Others may react outwardly with anger, becoming aggressive and developing behavioural problems at home and at school. Children can develop sleep disturbances and health problems like headache and stomachache, or they may get

sick frequently. Their stress can interfere with their ability to pay attention and create learning and academic problems at school. Most children raised in environments of destructive conflict have problems forming healthy, balanced relationships with their peers. Even sibling relationships are adversely affected.

**Table 6:** Distribution of teenagers according to emotional effects

| Emotional effects         | Always     | Sometimes | Never      | Mean score | Rank |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|
| Attention demanding       | 105 (35.0) | 27 ( 9.0) | 168 (56.0) | 1.79       | VI   |
| Feeling of ignorance      | 30 (10.0)  | 45 (15.0) | 225 (75.0) | 1.35       | XI   |
| Weeping and crying        | 45 (15.0)  | 36 (12.0) | 219 (73.0) | 1.42       | IX   |
| Temper tantrums           | 75 (25.0)  | 24 ( 8.0) | 201 (67.0) | 1.58       | VIII |
| Fear of making friends    | 105 (35.0) | 33 (11.0) | 162 (54.0) | 1.81       | V    |
| Lonely feeling            | 210 (70.0) | 12 (4.0)  | 78 (26.0)  | 2.44       | II   |
| Low level of trust        | 225 (75.0) | 9 (3.0)   | 66 (22.0)  | 2.53       | I    |
| Victim towards harassment | 45 (15.0)  | 18 (6.0)  | 237 (79.0) | 1.36       | X    |
| Insecurity                | 183 (61.0) | 21 (7.0)  | 96 (32.0)  | 2.16       | III  |
| Guilt and shame           | 135 (45.0) | 27 (9.0)  | 138 (46.0) | 1.99       | IV   |
| Low self esteem           | 90 (30.0)  | 39 (13.0) | 171 (57.0) | 1.73       | VII  |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Emotional effect has a long-term, damaging effect on the teenager's overall mental health especially in case of teenage girl as they are more emotional and sensitive as compared to

teenage boys. There is a host of mental issues that could crop up in children as a result of such fighting. Some of the most common health issues could be severe anxiety, depression, feelings of guilt, poor self-esteem, difficulty in concentration and coping up with academics, fear, and insomnia and so on.

**Table 7:** Distribution of teenagers according to social effects

| Social effects            | Yes        | No         | Mean score | Rank |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------|
| Problems in communication | 180 (60.0) | 120 (40.0) | 1.60       | II   |
| Lack of gratitude         | 45 (15.0)  | 255 (85.0) | 1.15       | V    |
| Lack of discipline        | 135 (45.0) | 165 (55.0) | 1.45       | III  |
| Lack of social activities | 75 (25.0)  | 225 (75.0) | 1.25       | IV   |
| Poor adjustment           | 210 (70.0) | 90 (30.0)  | 1.70       | I    |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Children are inherently dependent on their parents and may

therefore experience higher levels of exposure to conflict which can result in social issues, social problems and even challenges in developing empathy.

**Table 8:** Distribution of teenagers according to suitable measures for resolving conflicts among parents

| Considerations for parental conflicts | Always     | Sometimes | Never      | Mean score | Rank |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|
| Cultural and religious traditions     | 45 (15.0)  | 9 ( 3.0)  | 246 (82.0) | 1.33       | XIII |
| Control of stress level               | 120 (40.0) | 15 ( 5.0) | 165 (55.0) | 1.85       | X    |
| Flexible about little issues          | 105 (35.0) | 21 ( 7.0) | 174 (58.0) | 1.77       | XII  |
| Lose your self control                | 180 (60.0) | 15 ( 5.0) | 195 (65.0) | 2.55       | II   |
| Stay calm                             | 120 (40.0) | 12 ( 4.0) | 168 (56.0) | 1.84       | XI   |
| Eye contact                           | 150 (50.0) | 18 ( 6.0) | 132 (44.0) | 2.06       | VI   |
| Good listener                         | 150 (50.0) | 15 ( 5.0) | 135 (45.0) | 2.05       | VII  |

|  |            |           |            |      |      |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|------|------|
| Treat your teenagers with respect            | 225 (75.0) | 12 ( 4.0) | 63 (21.0)  | 2.54 | III  |
| Open to hearing one's child's points of view | 210 (70.0) | 12 ( 4.0) | 78 (26.0)  | 2.44 | IV   |
| Be open about your feelings                  | 240 (80.0) | 9 ( 3.0)  | 51 (17.0)  | 2.63 | I    |
| Explain your view simply and briefly         | 210 (70.0) | 6 ( 2.0)  | 84 (28.0)  | 2.42 | V    |
| Negotiate with your teenagers and compromise | 135 (45.0) | 15 ( 5.0) | 150 (50.0) | 1.95 | VIII |
| Demonstrate problem solving skills           | 120 (40.0) | 27 ( 9.0) | 153 (51.0) | 1.89 | IX   |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of respective values)

Parents solving problems involves both analytical and creative skills. Which particular skills are needed will vary, depending on the problem and their role in the family. As parents, the way parents manage any problems or fighting in their relationship can protect their children from the downsides of conflict. The way parents work through problems can also teach their children important skills for life. When they find solutions together, they help the whole family have happier, healthier and stronger relationships.

### Conclusion

Parents should be hopeful because parents often struggle to discern between moodiness that is typical teenage behaviour. Parents need to understand the things that make life challenging for their teenagers, to become defter at guiding them through these formative years. Parents should look for changes in function in different areas, such as a drop in academic performance, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, or their teenage child no longer enjoying activities they have previously liked.

### Recommendations

1. Sensitive and difficult issues between parents should always be discussed at private meetings or in the presence of others such as counsellors, mediators or lawyers if necessary.
2. There are many resources available on developing and using healthy communication skills, which include expressing ideas and feelings, active listening, problem solving and negotiation and conflict resolution strategies.
3. Parents should tell their teenagers that the issues are not about them and that the grown-ups are sorting it out.

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