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Parental involvement in academics of secondary school students during COVID-19

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Abstract

Parental involvement is the level of involvement parents have in their children's life events especially education. Their close bonds and personal investments of parents in their children's education boost their academic performance. Parents' educational backgrounds are one of influencing factor of the extent of parental support for schooling to face the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study was conducted at University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad with an aim to study the status of parental involvement among the secondary school students and the influence of parental education on parental involvement during the COVID-19. The total sample comprised of 180 urban and rural adolescents (90 from Dharwad taluk of Karnataka and 90 from Hajo taluk of Assam) aged between 15-18 years from private secondary schools. The Parental Involvement Scale developed by Chouhan and Ganotra (2001) was used to assess involvement of parents of adolescents. Case reports were collected to explore the perspectives of the effect of COVID-19 on parental involvement of adolescents. The study results revealed that majority of the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad had high level of parental involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parent's education was significantly correlated with parental involvement among the urban adolescents of Dharwad as well as Hajo. The t-test analysis revealed significant mean differences among the urban adolescents of Dharwad with different levels of father's education and among the urban and rural adolescents of Hajo with different levels of mother's education. To be prepared for further unprecedented pandemic or lockdowns, educational institutes must consider the potential of parents, conduct regular meet ups with them and make them aware of the repercussion of negligence of their children's education.

Keywords: Parental involvement, adolescents, COVID-19, father's education, mother's education

Introduction

Parental involvement is described as a variety of actions taken by parents to support their children's aspirations and academic success. As reported by Lawrence and Barathi (2016) ^[1], parental involvement is a process taken up by the parents for directing the behavior of children. Parental involvement, according to Dudeja and Balda (2019) ^[2] is the level of involvement a parent has in their child's life and education. Parental involvement in their children's education has been associated with increased academic performance, attitude, and behavior, according to multiple studies. Their close bonds with them and personal investments in their children's education may boost their children's academic performance.

According to studies, parents' educational backgrounds are one element influencing the extent of parental support for schooling to face the COVID-19 pandemic (Bonal and Gonzalez, 2020; Trevino *et al.*, 2021; Andrew *et al.*, 2020) ^[3, 4, 5]. For instance, Lee and Bowen (2006) ^[7] discovered that parents with a two-year college degree or higher were significantly more likely to attend events or meetings held at their children's schools, discuss academic matters with them more frequently, and anticipate greater academic success for their offspring. In contrast, parents with poor educational levels may be less involved because they lack the confidence to speak with school personnel. However, Pena (2000) ^[8] found that parents with low levels of education participated in a variety of school activities more frequently than parents with higher levels of education. The difficulty with parents who have low levels of education is that they are unable to assist their kids with school-related problems and lack of confidence in their capacity for the use of technology which was highly required for the online learning.

It is a matter of concern, as COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, it led to closures of schools and colleges, students especially those in the senior year were worried about being able to graduate as it is a peak point of a student's high school career. They were worried about being able to qualify and be fully prepared for college admission.

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They were aware that many colleges and universities that have shut down and wonder how this will affect their own future plans. Also, research studies have shown that there has been increase in the suicide rate of teenagers in which two-thirds of the suicides were from countries named India, UK and USA where online schooling or overwhelming academic distress were found to be significant causes (Manzar *et al.*, 2021) [9]. Due to school closures during the pandemic, parental involvement in the educational process has become one of the primary research issues in this situation. Therefore a need was felt to assess the parental involvement in education of secondary school students and the influence of parental education on parental involvement.

Materials and Methods

Differential research design and correlational design were used to study the role of parental education and their involvement in academics of secondary school students during COVID-19. Case reports were collected to explore the perspectives of the effect of COVID-19 on parental involvement of adolescents.

In the present study, stratified random sampling was used to gather data from the population of adolescents aged between 15-18 years studying in 11th and 12th standard taken from two private secondary schools of Dharwad taluk (urban and rural areas) under Dharwad district of Karnataka and two private secondary schools of Hajo taluk (urban and rural areas) under Kamrup district of Assam. Total study sample included 180 students (90 from each taluk). Of the total study sample, 42 were from urban Dharwad and 48 were from rural Dharwad and 48 were from urban Hajo and 42 from rural Hajo.

The Parental Involvement Scale developed by Chouhan and Ganotra (2001) was used to assess involvement of parents of adolescents aged between 13-18 years. The scale consists of

25 items. It is a five point scale with responses “Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never.” Each item carries weight of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Reverse score is given for negative items. The reliability of the instrument was 0.92. Parental involvement is measured on the basis of total scores obtained by the subjects.

Category	Score range
High	Above 80
Medium	63 to 80
Low	Below 63

Education of parents (fathers or mothers) was quantified separately as per Aggrawal *et al.* (2005) SES scale.

Categories	Score
Illiterate	0
Just illiterate but not schooling	1
< primary but attended school for at least one year	2
Primary pass but < 10th pass	3
10th class pass but < Graduation	4
Graduation	5
Post graduation (non-technical incl. Ph.D)	6
Professional qualification with technical degree or diploma (e.g. Doctor, Eng. CA, MBA)	7

Results

The study findings (Figure 1) show that majority of the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad had high level of parental involvement (73.38% and 89.58% respectively), followed by medium level (26.19% and 10.42% respectively). Similar trend was seen in Hajo, where highest percentage of the urban and rural adolescents had high level of parental involvement (75.00% and 69.05% respectively), followed by medium level (25.00% and 30.95% respectively)

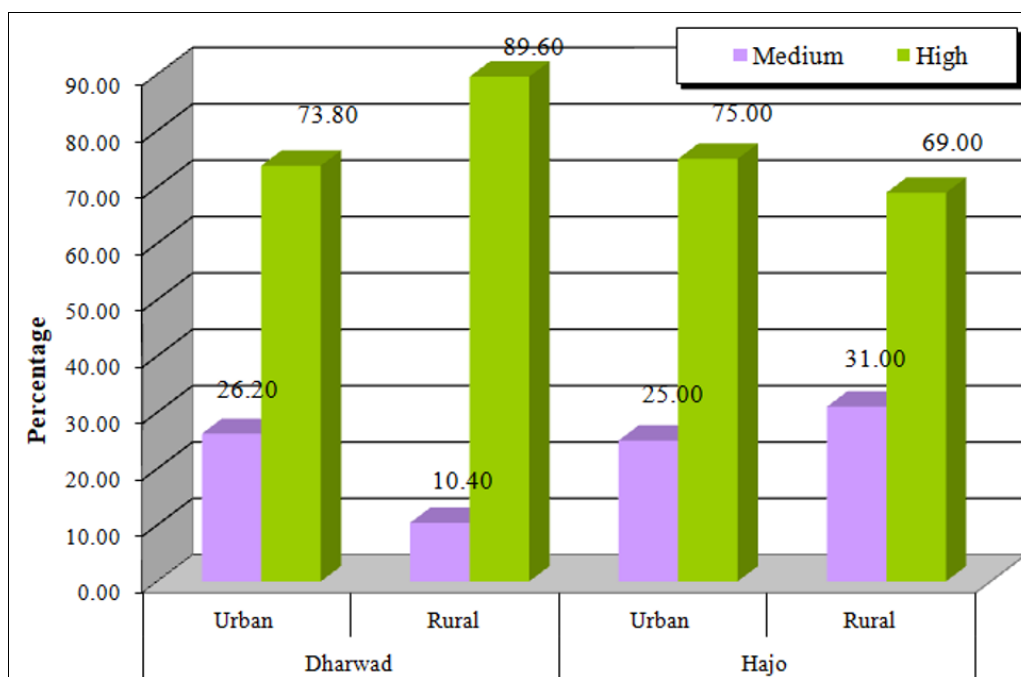


Fig 1: Parental Involvement of urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo

Among the urban adolescents of Dharwad, both father’s and mother’s education were significantly correlated with parental involvement, whereas among the rural adolescents, the variables were not significantly correlated. In Hajo region,

both father’s and mother’s education were significantly correlated with parental involvement among the urban adolescents. For the rural adolescents, the variables were not found to be significantly correlated. (Table 1)

Table 1: Correlation between parental involvement and education of father and mother of urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo

Region	Independent factors	Parental Involvement	
		Urban (n=42)	Rural (n=48)
Dharwad	Father's education	.310*	.061
	Mother's education	.402**	.201
Hajo	Father's education	.412**	.336*
	Mother's education	.250	.199

Table 2: Comparison of means between urban and rural adolescent's parental involvement of Dharwad and Hajo by father's education

Region	Father's education	Urban n=42			Father's education	Rural (n=48)		
		Total	Mean ± SD	t-value		Total	Mean ± SD	t-value
Dharwad	10 th pass but less than graduation	14	77.14+12.19	1.21	Primary pass but less than 10 th	14	76.22+9.75	1.08
	Graduation/Post-graduation	28	86.10+13.77		10 th pass but less than graduation	34	85.64+14.54	
		Urban (n=48)			Rural (n=42)			
Hajo	10 th pass but less than graduation	11	85.00+12.34	2.06*	10 th pass but less than graduation	26	83.50+9.88	1.23
	Graduation/Post-graduation	37	90.09+11.89		Graduation/Post-graduation	16	90.25+8.56	

Table 3: Comparison of means between urban and rural adolescent's parental involvement of Dharwad and Hajo by mother's education

Region	Mother's education	Urban (n=42)			Mother's education	Rural (n=48)		
		Total	Mean ± SD	t-value		Total	Mean ± SD	t-value
Dharwad	10 th pass but less than graduation	23	78.13+13.21	2.78*	Primary pass but less than 10 th	15	81.26+11.26	2.34*
	Graduation/Post-graduation	19	89.15+12.25		10 th pass but less than graduation	33	86.09+10.86	
		Urban (n=48)			Rural (n=42)			
Hajo	10 th pass but less than graduation	16	79.31+13.73	1.97	Primary pass but less than 10 th	10	82.60+6.68	1.28
	Graduation/Post-graduation	32	86.59+11.73		10 th pass but less than graduation	32	87.16+10.52	

Among the urban adolescents of Dharwad, those whose father's did graduation/post-graduation had higher mean of parental involvement when compared to their counterparts with less paternal education. Similarly, among the rural adolescents, those with father's education 10th pass but less than graduation had higher parental involvement when compared to those whose father's were primary pass but less than 10th. However, there were non-significant differences in parental involvement observed between the adolescents with different levels of father's education.

In Hajo, a significant mean difference ($t=2.06$, $p=0.01$) was observed among the urban adolescents with different levels of father's education, where those whose father's were graduated/post-graduated had higher mean of parental involvement (90.09) when compared to those whose father's were 10th pass but less than graduation (85.00). There was non-significant difference found among the rural adolescents with different levels of father's education.

With respect to mother's education in Dharwad, urban adolescents with mothers having graduation/post-graduation degree have higher mean of parental involvement (89.15) than those with lower level of maternal education (78.13) and rural adolescents whose mothers were 10th pass but less than graduation level of education had higher mean of parental involvement (86.09) than those whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th (81.26). There were significant mean differences observed among the urban ($t=2.78$, $p=0.04$) and rural ($t=2.34$, $p=0.02$) adolescents with different levels of mother's education. There were non-significant differences found among the urban and rural adolescents with different level of mother's education in Hajo.

Qualitative narratives of adolescents

The adolescents spoke about how was their parental involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the participants reported- "Parents were supportive. They put me into coachings nearby my house during the lockdown period.

They asked me to study how much I could and not to take much stress. After board exams got cancelled, they were also relieved." She added- "Luckily my aspirations match with my parents, so I get full support from them. They also want me to do graduation with good CGPA and get a good job later."

Another participant reported- "My parents were concerned about the health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were also worried about my entrance examination. I was preparing for NEET. They provided me with their best possible support: waking me up early in the morning, motivating me not to give up, providing me with timely food, enrolling me with online coachings and the list goes on."

Discussions

Results from the current study found that majority of the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad and Hajo had high level of parental involvement, followed by medium level of parental involvement. Findings of the study indicated that due to lockdown and deaths all around during the COVID-19 period, families grew closer, parental involvement increased, parents spent quality time together with their children, and provided required facilities which were lesser earlier because of the busy schedules of parents as well their children.

The study results revealed that father's education and mother's education were significantly correlated with parental involvement among the urban adolescents of Dharwad There were significant correlation between father's education and parental involvement among the urban and rural adolescents of Hajo. The study results are in line with the findings of Bonal and Gonzalez (2020) [3], Trevino *et al.*, (2021) [4], Andrew *et al.*, (2020) [5]. The t-test analysis also revealed significant mean differences among the urban adolescents of Hajo with different levels of father's education, where one with father's of higher level of education had higher parental involvement. Similarly among the urban and rural adolescents of Dharwad with different levels of mother's education, there were significant mean differences in parental involvement.

The results are in accordance with the study done by Jafarov (2015)^[10] and Erol and Turhan (2018)^[11], who reported that as the parents' levels of education increases, students' parental involvement also increases.

Regarding parental involvement during COVID-19, case reports of the adolescents revealed that their parents were supportive in whatever academic decisions they would take which supports the results of the quantitative analysis of the study as majority of the secondary school students reported to have high level of parental involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, students reported that their parents have asked them to stay calm and not to take much stress as such circumstances can't be avoided and health should come first. Parents had put them to nearby tuition centers which were open with few students during the lockdown period.

Conclusions

Parental involvement plays a key role in uplifting the educational aspirations and performances of children as parents get involved with their children, they can help them out in their educational decision making, discuss with them about the various fields of study, provide them with the resources and boost their mental health. Parental education is one of the significant contributors of parental involvement which is confirmed as there were positive relationships found between parental involvement and parental education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students were bound to stay at home with limited socialization with other social agents like friends, teachers etc., making parents play an active role in school teaching process. The study showed majority of the secondary school students perceived their parents to be highly involved during the COVID-19 pandemic. To be prepared for further unprecedented pandemic or lockdowns, educational institutes must consider the potential of parents, conduct regular meet ups with them and make them aware of the repercussion of negligence of their children's education.

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