

Parent adolescent perception of Family environment in defence officers' families in India

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ABSTRACT : *Families in defence services experience unique environment and challenges not generally found in other work environments. These are likely to influence the family environment and its perception by parents and adolescents. Research has shown that discrepancy in parent adolescent perception has marked influence on adolescent development and adjustment. The present study was thus carried out on 240 defence officers' families to understand parent adolescent perception of family environment and to find out differences in their perception if any. Results of the present study indicate that despite several service related stressors, defence adolescents and their parents in all the three wings of services have a favorable perception of their family environment. There are no significant inter services differences in the perception of majority of the dimensions of family environment. Both parents and adolescents in the defence families perceive the dimensions of Expressiveness and cohesion high and extremely high, Competitive framework ,moral orientation and organization high average and Independence and recreational orientation average. Significant difference in perception exists only in dimensions of moral orientation and competitive framework, with perception of adolescents being better than that of their parents.*

Key words—*Adolescents, Defence families, discrepant parent adolescent perception, family environment, defence service related stressors.*

I INTRODUCTION

Human development is interactive in nature. Therefore, family serves as a fundamental and foremost environment where salient interactions that determine the personal development and growth, take place. Families in defence services experience unique environment and culture. Mobility, frequent deployments, resultant family separations, and life threatening jobs are common experiences of defence families [1-3] On an average, even in peace situations, defence officers have to move on posting every two to three years. Thus, the frequent changes of schools and peer group are common experiences of the adolescents. Father absence is commonly experienced by defence children [4] These experiences are likely to influence the parent adolescent perception of family environment. Research studies indicate that if family environment is perceived positively, marital satisfaction is enhanced, level of expressiveness of its members increases and there is reduction in family conflict [5]. In such families even adverse effects of frequent father absences are not seen. But, when families are unable to successfully adapt to defence life, the performance of military members may be undermined. The nature of demands made by military services may increase the stress experienced by both the parents and directly or indirectly influence their relationship with the children. It has been reported that lack of time spent with the family members on part of the father may influence his closeness and sharing with the family and may lead to adolescent behavior problems such as depression, conduct problems, lack of self-restraint, hostility and anger[6-9].

The attitude of the parents and society towards defence services has a marked influence directly or indirectly on the children [10-11] . The child can bask in the reflected glory of parents' prestigious occupation and assimilate some of the prestige that comes with it. The defence services give the officers a proud identity which instills self-discipline, mental robustness and the tenacity to hold out against all odds. It infuses them with a sense of honor and loyalty and makes them selfless and devoted

towards the nation[12]. These qualities even influence family interactions and family environment. The family members try to imbibe these qualities and follow a code of conduct and self discipline. The uniform evokes a sense of awe from civilian friends and generally gives a sense of pride to the adolescents from defence families. The parental occupation also determines the social climate in which adolescents are reared. Their values, attitudes and social etiquettes reflect the demands of parental profession.

Research with military families indicates that, certain individual and environmental factors, such as social support and marital stability, moderate the relationship between service - related stress and well being.

Review of literature shows that earlier researchers [13-18] have studied defence families in relation to:

- Father absence and its impact on the defence children.
- Relocation and geographic mobility.
- The unique environment of the defence children.
- The reunion period following father's absence.
- Child adjustment to loss, following the death of defence parent.
- Child adjustment to divergent cultures.

Not much work has been done on defence families in India, so most of the review relates to studies done on defence families in other parts of the world. Even though, military family stresses and demands are similar in most places, research specific to Indian families where the culture is so divergent needs to be given impetus. Besides, study of discrepancy in parent adolescent perception is of vital importance as research indicates that parenting behaviors are most effective when there is congruence in parent adolescent perception, with beneficial consequences for development and mental health of adolescents [19-21]. Family cohesion, organization and expressiveness are related to greater congruence in perception [19&22] and lowered conflict in the family. The adolescents showing greater congruence endorse, family values, responsibilities and obligations [23]. The extent to which parents monitor differences between themselves and their children, and modify their expectations, increases congruence in perception and eventually enhances the quality of family environment. Thus the present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

1. To study the parent-adolescent perception of Family Environment in the three wings of defence services.
2. To examine Inter services difference in perception of family environment .
3. To examine discrepancy in perception of adolescents and parents in relation to Family environment.

II METHOD

2.1 Design of the study

The present study was conducted on adolescents and their parents from officers' cadre of all the three wings of defence services i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force.

2.1.1 Sampling Procedure

a) Selection of the Schools

The Army Wives Welfare Association (AWWA), Naval Wives Welfare Association (NAWWA) and Air Force Wives Welfare Association (AFWWA) were contacted so as to get support and willingness from the defence officer's families and schools for participating in this study. Kendriya Vidyalayas and Army, Air Force and Naval public schools at Chandimandir, Chandigarh, New Delhi and Mumbai were visited and the principals explained the aims and objectives of the study. The implications and utility of the present work was also discussed. This helped in getting the necessary co-operation of the school authorities in sample selection and data collection.

b) Selection of the Respondents

A list of adolescent children of defence officers was prepared and the sample was short listed in such a way as to ensure that the father of the subject was presently living with them. Families where fathers were deployed or were posted in non family stations were not included as father's participation in the study was essential. A total of 240 families were short listed with 80 families from each of the three defence services. Equal number of boys and girls from each service were then selected randomly. Thus a sample of 120 girls and 120 boys in the age group of 11 to 18 yrs were selected. Families of selected sample were personally contacted and the nature of the study was explained to them. Their consent to participate willingly in the study and to allow their adolescent children as well was taken.

Tools used in the study

The selection of tools was done keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Pre-testing of the tools was done on a sample of 20 families. Brief description of the tools is given below.

1. Personal profile of the sample

A personal profile of the sample was obtained by the investigator. It pertained to various aspects such as age, sex, class, number of siblings with ordinal position, school and address of the child. Father's and mother's educational qualifications, occupation, designation, income and years of service were also noted.

2. Family Environment Scale (FES) (Vohra, 1997)

Parent adolescent perception of Family environment of defence officers, was determined by using Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Vohra (1997) [53]. It is a self administered scale and is appropriate for use on ages of above 10 years and throughout adulthood. The tool has a fairly high validity and reliability. The scale contained 98 items pertaining to seven independent dimensions related to family environment viz, competitive framework, cohesion, expressiveness, independence, moral orientation, and organization and recreation orientation. Description of these dimensions of the family environment is given briefly in Table 1.

Table 1

Brief description of dimensions measured by FES

Dimensions	Description
Competitive Framework (Cf)	- The importance shown by the family members to achievement

oriented or competitive activities (such as school work etc.).
Cohesion (Co) - The degree of commitment, help, support and cohesion displayed by the family members.
Expressiveness (Ex) - The extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and express their feelings directly.
Independence (In) - The extent to which family members are independent, self –sufficient, assertive and make their own decisions.
Moral Orientation (Mo) - The degree of emphasis given to ethical, moral and religious issues and values by the family members.
Organization (Or) - The degree of importance given by the family members to clear organization, structure planning and responsibilities.
Recreational Orientation (Ro) - The extent of participation in social, recreational, political, intellectual and cultural activities by the family members.

The raw scores were converted into standard scores with a ten point range. Separate norms were available for the adolescents and their parents. A range of scores as follows indicated high and extremely high family environment, average, or low and extremely low family environment:

- 8-10 High and extremely high scores
- 4-7 Average score.
- 1-3 Low and extremely low score.

The test-retest reliability, was .78 for independence, .79 for competitive framework,.80 for expression; .81 for organization,.82 for moral orientation,.82 for recreational orientation , and .89 for cohesion.

The factorial validity varied from .77 for expression; .79 for organization; .82 for independence; .83 for cohesion; and .84 for competitive framework.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by computing total scores, means and standard deviation for the total sample as well as different groups i.e. girls/boys, mothers/fathers, Army/Navy/Air Force. ANOVA was used to see if any significant differences emerged in perception of family environment in the three defence services. Since one aim was also to study parent - adolescent differences in perception if any, t-test was used. The results were illustrated in graphical form wherever required.

III. Results

3.1 Adolescents' perception of family environment in defence services

The mean scores of adolescents' perception of family environment, Table 2, indicated that adolescents in all the three wings of the services gave high and extremely high scores for the dimensions of expression, cohesion and moral orientation and high average scores for the dimensions of competitive framework, organization. Recreation orientation and independence were given average scores.

Table 2

Mean scores of family environment as perceived by adolescents in the three wings of defence services

	ARMY		AIR FORCE		NAVY	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CF	7.92	1.70	8.16	1.40	7.94	1.62
CO	8.32	1.46	8.04	1.40	7.76	1.93
EX	8.71	1.89	8.80	1.89	8.48	2.24
IN	6.47	2.62	6.35	2.51	6.36	2.68
MO	8.30	1.46	7.95	1.81	7.74	1.65
OR	7.83	2.22	7.91	1.91	7.75	2.29
RO	6.59	1.74	6.36	1.64	6.09	1.94

CF - Competitive framework

EX - Expression

CO - Cohesion

MO- Moral orientation

IN - Independence

OR - Organization

RO - Recreational orientation

1 - 3 Low & extremely low,
4 - 7 Average scores
8 - 10 High & extremely high score

No significant differences emerged in adolescents' perception of various dimensions of the family environment in the three wings of services as seen from ANOVA results given in Table 3

Table 3

One-way ANOVA for adolescent's perception of family environment in the three wings of defence services

Family Environment variables		Sum of squares	Mean square	F
CF	Between groups	2.85	1.42	.57

	Within groups	593.12	2.50	
	Total	595.98		
CO	Between groups	12.65	6.32	2.40
	Within groups	622.92	2.62	
	Total	635.58		
EX	Between groups	4.52	2.26	.55
	Within groups	967.13	4.08	
	Total	971.66		
IN	Between groups	.75	.379	.05
	Within groups	1614.63	6.81	
	Total	1615.39		
MO	Between groups	12.90	6.45	2.36
	Within groups	646.08	2.72	
	Total	658.99		
OR	Between groups	1.05	.52	.115
	Within groups	1094.93	4.62	
	Total	1095.99		
RO	Between groups	10.03	5.01	1.58
	Within groups	752.26	3.17	
	Total	762.29		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

df - 2

N=240

3.2 Fathers' perception of family environment in defence services

Fathers in all the three services, (Table 4) gave high and extremely high mean scores going up to 8.64 for dimensions of expression and cohesion and high average mean scores for organization, competitive framework, moral orientation, independence and recreation orientation.

Table 4 Family environment as perceived by fathers in the three services

Variables	ARMY		AIR FORCE		NAVY	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CF	7.86	1.65	7.53	1.92	7.25	1.88
CO	8.26	1.47	7.96	1.55	8.33	1.43
EX	8.55	1.94	8.39	1.95	8.64	1.79
IN	6.14	2.44	6.26	2.40	6.51	2.33
MO	7.44	1.54	7.17	1.72	7.24	1.68

OR	8.06	2.27	7.43	2.47	7.63	2.44
RO	6.33	1.82	6.07	1.86	5.86	2.18

ANOVA results as given in Table 5. showed no significant difference in Fathers' perception of various dimensions of family environment in the Army, Air Force or Navy.

Table 5 One-way ANOVA for father's perception in three defence services

Variables		Sum of squares	Mean square	F
A. CF	Between groups	15.05	7.52	2.25
	Within groups	790.43	3.33	
	Total	805.49		
CO	Between groups	6.00	3.00	1.35
	Within groups	523.92	2.21	
	Total	529.93		
EX	Between groups	2.57	1.28	0.35
	Within groups	857.27	3.61	
	Total	859.85		
IN	Between groups	5.83	2.91	0.50
	Within groups	1358.96	5.73	
	Total	1364.79		
MO	Between groups	3.00	1.50	0.55
	Within groups	647.72	2.73	
	Total	650.73		
OR	Between groups	17.00	8.50	1.47
	Within groups	1364.98	5.75	
	Total	1381.99		
RO	Between groups	8.57	4.28	1.11
	Within groups	914.58	3.85	
	Total	923.16		

*p<0.05,

**p<0.01,

***p<0.001

df – 2

3.3 Mothers' perception of Family environment in defence services

Mothers in all the three wings of services perceived their family environment extremely high on expression, cohesion, competitive framework and organization as shown in Table - 6. Mean scores for moral orientation, independence and recreation orientation were high average. Mothers gave highest mean scores for expressiveness followed by cohesion. The lowest mean scores were given for independence by the Army mothers followed by recreation orientation.

Table 6 Family Environment as perceived by Mothers in three services.

Variables	ARMY		AIR FORCE		NAVY	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CF	7.91	1.43	7.76	1.81	7.75	1.44
CO	8.16	1.41	8.04	1.42	8.11	1.32
EX	8.45	1.99	8.23	2.09	8.65	2.14
IN	6.01	2.52	6.30	2.34	6.68	2.45
MO	7.56	1.36	7.34	1.66	7.44	1.61
OR	8.11	1.82	7.47	2.14	7.75	2.22
RO	6.33	1.72	6.23	1.88	6.07	1.97

ANOVA results as shown in Table 7 indicated similarity in perception of mothers in the three wings. No significant difference emerged in any of the dimensions of family environment as perceived by the mothers in the Army, Air Force or Navy.

Table 7 One-way ANOVA for mothers' perception in the three defence services

Variables		Sum of squares	Mean square	F
CF	Between groups	1.30	0.65	0.26
	Within groups	587.87	2.48	
	Total	589.18		
CO	Between groups	3.43	1.71	0.88
	Within groups	457.56	1.93	
	Total	460.99		
EX	Between groups	7.23	3.61	0.83
	Within groups	1023.95	4.32	
	Total	1031.18		
IN	Between groups	17.65	8.82	1.48
	Within groups	1413.33	5.96	

	Total	1430.99		
MO	Between groups	20.33	1.01	0.42
	Within groups	573.26	2.41	
	Total	575.29		
OR	Between groups	16.35	8.17	1.91
	Within groups	1014.93	4.28	
	Total	1031.29		
RO	Between groups	2.53	1.26	0.36
	Within groups	825.05	3.48	
	Total	827.58		

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

df – 2

Since no significant difference was noted in the perception of various dimensions of family environment in the Army, Air Force or Navy families, as indicated by results presented above, the data has been pooled and treated as one group. The pooled mean scores and SDs of perception of family environment are given in Table 8 below:

Table 8

Mean scores of the family environment as perceived by adolescents, mothers, and fathers, in the defence services (pooled data)

Variables	Perception of adolescent boys		Perception of adolescent girls		Mothers' perception		Fathers' perception	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
CF	8.02	1.59	8.01	1.56	7.81	1.57	7.55	1.83
CO	7.89	1.74	8.19	1.49	8.10	1.39	8.18	1.49
EX	8.68	1.84	8.64	2.18	8.44	2.07	8.53	1.89
IN	6.36	2.59	6.43	2.61	6.33	2.44	6.30	2.39
MO	7.98	1.78	8.01	1.53	7.45	1.55	7.28	1.65
OR	7.83	2.17	7.83	2.12	7.78	2.07	7.70	2.40
RO	6.06	1.77	6.63	1.75	6.21	1.86	6.09	1.96

Overall results (Table 8) indicated that the adolescents, their mothers and fathers in all the three services perceived their family environment high and extremely high on majority of the dimensions except independence and recreational orientation, which were given average mean scores. Expressiveness was given the highest mean score by the adolescents (8.66), fathers (8.53) and the mothers (8.44) followed by scores on cohesion. The mothers gave it the highest score of 8.20 Moral orientation, competitive framework and organization too were given high mean scores.

3.4 Difference in adolescents' and parents' perception of family environment

As seen in Table 9, significant difference in perception of adolescents and their fathers emerged in dimensions of competitive framework, moral orientation and recreational orientation. Significant difference in adolescents' and mothers' perception was noted in moral orientation. Difference of perception between fathers and mothers was noted in competitive framework.

Table 9 Difference in parents' and adolescents' perception (t-values)

Variable	Adolescents' perception	Fathers' perception	Mothers' perception	AM	AF	MF

	M	SD	M	SD	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	t-value	t-value	t-value
CF	8.01	1.57	7.55	1.83	7.81	1.57	1.63	3.45***	2.35*
CO	8.04	1.62	8.18	1.49	8.10	1.39	1.18	1.06	2.11
EX	8.66	2.01	8.53	1.89	8.44	2.07	1.55	0.96	0.68
IN	6.40	2.59	6.30	2.39	6.33	2.44	0.37	0.43	1.46
MO	8.00	1.65	7.28	1.65	7.45	1.55	5.5***	6.81***	1.82
OR	7.83	2.12	7.70	2.40	7.78	2.07	0.35	0.86	0.55
RO	6.34	1.79	6.09	1.96	6.21	1.86	1.24	1.96*	1.02

AM- Difference in adolescents' & mothers' perception
AF- Difference in adolescents' & fathers' perception
MF- Difference in mothers' & fathers' perception

IV Discussion

4.1 Overall - perception of family environment in the three services

4.1.1 Parent - adolescent perception of family environment

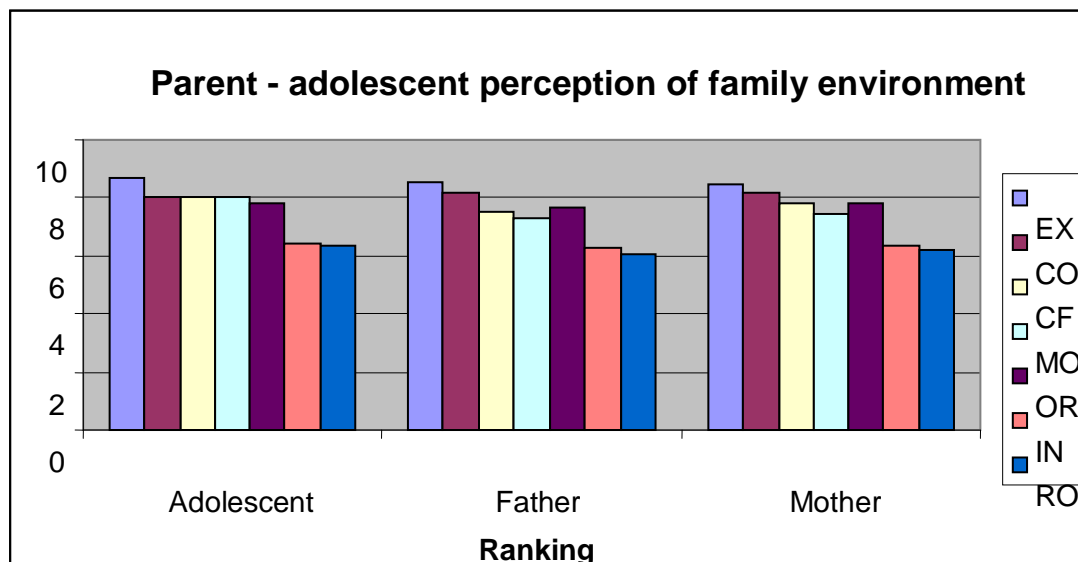
Results of the present study indicate that defence adolescents and parents in all the three wings of services have a favorable perception of their family environment. There are no significant inter services differences in the perception of the family members in majority of the dimensions. Their mean scores range between 6.09 - 8.80 for adolescents, 6.07 - 8.64 for fathers and 6.01 - 8.45 for mothers.

The ranking of mean scores shows that expressiveness and cohesion are perceived as the strongest dimensions of family environment by all groups and recreation orientation and independence weakest. Parents play a pivotal role in helping children cope with stressors. [24]. They help adolescents in accepting the military lifestyle, being optimistic, developing self reliance and self esteem [25]). This perhaps helps them in having a favorable perception of their family environment. Good marital relationship also contributes to favorable parental perception of family environment[26].

As shown in Figure 21, both parents and adolescents in the defence families perceive the dimensions of;

- Expressiveness and cohesion high and extremely high,
- Competitive framework , moral orientation and organization high average and
- Independence and recreational orientation average.

Figure - 21



Expressiveness is perceived as the strongest dimension of defence families and is given the highest score by the adolescents (8.66), fathers (8.53) and the mothers (8.44). Higher perceived level of expressiveness in the defence family environment, as suggested by Moos & Moos (1986)[26], indicates a greater freedom of expression of feelings. Expressiveness in the family environment reduces conflict and even negates adverse effects of frequent father absence, which is a very common feature of defence families[15]. Expressiveness is the essence of a good family environment and plays an important role in molding adolescent behavior. Adolescents' perception of high level of expressiveness in the family environment indicates that encouragement is given to clear expression of personal ideas and feelings even when they differ and sensitivity is shown to personal needs in the defence family environment. This helps the adolescents to develop and exercise their 'decision-making muscles'[28], become autonomous and establish a clear sense of personal identity [29]. Perception of high degree of importance to expressiveness in defence families boosts the self - esteem, self - confidence and sociability of adolescents.

Parents' favourable perception of expressiveness in the defence family environment indicates good parent - adolescent communication and a lowered level of conflict. Many earlier studies report that rational discussion instead of open hostility reduces conflict within the family and increases perception of cohesion [30]

Cohesion has been given the next highest mean score of 8.20 by the mothers, followed by fathers' score of 8.18 and adolescents' 8.04. According to Moos & Moos (1986), cohesion indicates high degree of commitment and support amongst the family members. Greater level of perceived expressiveness also increases cohesiveness as parents and adolescents feel free to exchange mutual help. Perception of cohesion plays a positive role in the lives of the adolescents[31]. It helps in bringing them closer to their parents and developing attachment with them [32]. It even encourages positive sibling relationships [44]. It enhances satisfaction of adolescents with defence life and reduces anxiety and depression related to various stressors [33].

Adolescents in defence families have disciplined parents as role models, and perception of high emphasis on expressiveness and cohesiveness by them induces good conduct and reduces delinquent behavior. It enhances their ability to take advantage of the resources available [34] and reduces their risk taking behavior such as drug abuse, sexual experimentation, alcoholism etc. [35]. Favorable perception of cohesiveness and expressiveness in family environment helps adolescents in even getting better benefits from schooling [36] and higher scholastic self concept [37]. These studies also report that adolescents who come from conflicting and non - cohesive family environments are likely to be under achievers and school dropouts.

Cohesion in the defence families encourages the members to help each other in time of crises situations that they may face and become each other's moral support. Situations such as the loved one

being killed or severely injured, changes in housing, necessity of frequent moves, possible interruption in financial support, demand cohesiveness and sharing of emotions in the family. Cohesiveness improves communication between family members and strengthens the family bonds. Satisfaction and low level of family stress perceived by officers also contributes to perception of cohesion in the family. Perceived cohesiveness enhances the psychological well being and mental health of the defence family members [38].

High perceived cohesiveness in the defence family environment may even be related to the nuclear family structure. Sinha [39] suggests that in nuclear families, there are closer family bonds and intimacy in parent-child relationship due to small family size and limited number of family members. Gore (1968) and Ross (1961) [40-41] also endorse that nuclear families foster cohesiveness, as each member is given importance of being an individual in his own right, while in joint families the older persons may have a greater say.

Competitive framework is another dimension of family environment which is perceived high by all the defence family members. This indicates that in defence families importance is given to personal growth of family members. Getting ahead in life and working hard to succeed are considered important. Due to high emphasis on competitive framework, defence adolescents feel less threatened by evaluative situations and show higher levels of achievement and success seeking behaviors [42]. Defence parents generally observe distinct achievement centered rules, enforce limits, follow clear, specific role boundaries, and consistent monitoring which enhances academic performance and competitive spirit of the adolescents. This in turn enhances their school competence, and ability to cope with academic stress.

Moral orientation has been given high average mean scores, indicating that both parents and adolescents perceive emphasis on values like honesty, respect and discipline. The family shows strictness about lying and cheating. They emphasize on characteristics such as, bravery, selflessness, conscientiousness and ethics. Morality, in general, makes its special and insistent claims on each of us, but given the morally tough situations that arise in the defence services, defence officers attend more carefully to the common moral standards, and try not to compromise their behavior and character, or succumb to any temptation. Perceived high emphasis on moral orientation is thus, in all likelihood a reflection of the high moral values, attitudes and social etiquettes which are part and parcel of defence culture as mentioned in the book of general service knowledge. The services emphasize on truth, strong sense of duty and integrity. Officers are expected to extend help, co-operation and understanding to their colleagues and their families and expect the same from their children. The children generally desist from unlawful means of achieving anything. They respect laws and abide by them.

Organization has also been perceived favorably, indicating that defence families emphasize on structure in planning family activities and responsibilities, as well as lay stress on rules and procedures for running the family. High average mean scores on organization reflect the influence of defence culture. Duties are generally allocated to family members who feel responsible for their behavior and do not push each other around. Rules are clearly communicated and often discussed with the adolescents. Orderliness and cleanliness are appreciated. Parents help adolescents to inculcate values of punctuality, time management, money management and use of limited resources [43].

The defence officers are expected to portray, leadership qualities which means that they show organisational skills to obtain their goals. They are expected to direct plans and actions, so as to make their men function as a close knit family, and project a strong character and a sense of discipline to be the role models for them. Similar organizational skills are practiced by them in running their families so as to ensure healthy psychological growth and autonomy of adolescents [44].

Independence has been perceived poorer than the other dimensions of the family environment. Regimentation is generally an integral part of defence officer's personality and may perhaps be contributing to this. Restrictions are imposed on adolescents' behavior and activities because of the service demands and family needs [45-46], and this is likely to influence adolescents' perception of independence.

Poor perception of independence may also be related to greater emphasis on dependence in socialization of Indian children. Interdependence rather than independence is appreciated in Indian

families. Besides, in defence families mothers are seen to play a more important role in socialization and mother - child bond favours dependence as discussed by Kakar (1981) [47].

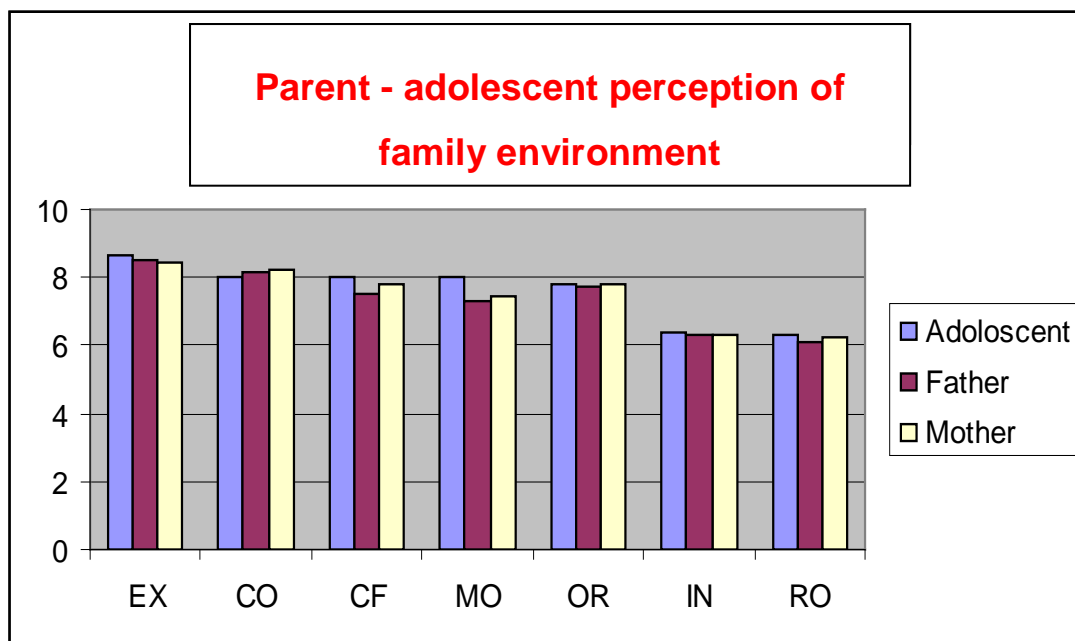
Recreational orientation has been perceived average and this is perhaps related to academic stress which majority of the adolescents experience at the high school level in India. During the high school years even defence parents feel very concerned about the performance of their children in the board examinations and do not give sufficient liberty for indulging in recreational activities. The defence children generally study in Kendriya Vidyalayas which follow the highly demanding C.B.S.E curriculum. The outstanding results of Kendriya Vidyalayas point to higher emphasis on academics in defence families. Even the high scores to academic dimension in the child rearing scale indicate the same. The adolescents are restricted in spending a lot of time in recreational activities outside home, such as going for picnics, camping, movies, plays etc. The frequently reported source of entertainment in most families is watching T.V Even Larson (1994)[48] reports T.V. watching as the main group activity which the families of adolescents frequently indulge in.

5.2 Parent - adolescent difference in perception of family environment

Significant parent-adolescent differences in perception exist only in dimensions of **moral orientation** and **competitive framework**, with perception of adolescents being better than that of their parents as shown in Figure 23. Better perception of moral orientation is perhaps related to the difference adolescents see in their own conduct and parental behavior and that of their civilian age mates and their parents. The parents in defence seem to believe that their moral behavior and thinking percolates down to the children [49] and studies in fact do show that children's moral thoughts are influenced by parental moral values. So, generally most parents in defence emphasize on similar moral standards, values and behavior which are almost a part of defence culture. Thus they do not perceive moral orientation in their family as something extraordinary and rank it as average.

IJOART

Figure - 23



Adolescents' perception of higher emphasis on competitive framework is perhaps related to the encouragement they get from their parents towards competition and better performance. Victory for the best is accepted sportingly as reported by them in the Family Environment Scale.

Congruence in parent - adolescent perception of various dimensions of family environment as revealed by the results, is an indication that authoritative style of parenting is followed in the defence families [50]. It is documented that in families where both parents are warm, responsive, supportive and sensitive to the developmental needs, (authoritative), adolescents show more similarity in their perception with that of their parents [51]. Since authoritative parents, are organized, effective, encourage individuation through non-coercive discipline, and demand age appropriate behavior, they foster high achievement and a favorable perception of the family environment [52]. The parent - adolescent congruence in perception of family environment also reflects the emotional and social climate within defence families and indicates the extent to which adolescents identify with parents, accept their values, execute family roles, develop affection and work towards their individual goals [53].

Thus from the results of this study one can conclude that despite various service related constraints defence parents and adolescents show a favorable perception of their family environment and parenting, with in fact positive influence of defence culture on the child rearing practices and family environment. These findings seem to dispel some of the myths and misconceptions related to parenting and family environment in defence services. In fact the findings can help civilian families to strengthen certain aspects of parenting and family environment which seem to help defence adolescents' development of personality, skills, values, and self discipline, so essential to functioning in a larger social context.

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