

Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students in Aizawl City

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study is to find out the status of family environment among higher secondary school students in Aizawl City. The study was conducted among 420 higher secondary school students from Aizawl city. Samples were selected based on stratified random sampling in order to ensure equal representation of genders. Family Environment Scale (1993) developed by Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadha was used for collecting the data. Descriptive survey method had been employed. The study found that majority of higher secondary school students in Aizawl city come from average family environment.

Keywords: Family environment, higher secondary school

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I. Introduction

The term “family environment” refers to all the objects, forces and conditions in the home which influence a person’s physically, intellectually and emotionally. The family environment “involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in a different setting, each family environment is unique. The environments can differ in many ways. Family environment is influenced by a number of factors like the nature of family group; number of children in the family; marital relationships between husband and wife; maternal (paternal) employment; and socio-economic and religious background of the family. The family environment possesses a certain consistency so that the impact of the same basic values, individuals, material objects etc. is felt over and over. It is the foundation for learning by the children. Children are influenced by the family during infancy and early childhood when they are under the guidance and care by their parents. Parental influence may not be felt in a specific situation, but the attitudes and ideas expressed day after day certainly leave their mark. Family environment plays an important role in the education of the child. The child is born in a family and this is the first agency through which he gets education for sociability. The influence of the family upon the child is very great. Family spirit of affection, helpfulness, unity, that grows of living for one another with one other is priceless and must be cultivated to full strength to make a home.

Daulta (1997) defines home environment as the factor, which sets the pattern for child’s attitude towards people and society, aids intellectual growth, in the child and support his aspiration and achievement.

II. Rationale of the Study

Family is the first to affect the individual. It is the family which gives the child his first experience of living. It gets him when he is completely uninformed, unprotected, before any other agency has had a chance to affect him. It is necessary for the today’s society to understand the importance of having a healthy relationship. From the family, a person’s develop confidence as well as adjustment which pave the way for the right path in life. The influence of the family on the child is, therefore, immense. Family interaction plays an important role in the development of an individual. The healthy functioning of these interaction patterns enhances mental health which might help them success in their living. There are some important interactional effects between family and its members at differential stages. It influences the whole life of adolescents. Family is still important not only for the children but even for the adolescents as well. From the family, one received guidance and care from the parents. Adolescents are at the stage of expecting respects, consideration, feelings and behaviours within the family. So, they need support and care from the family. A clear understanding of roles in the context of family function is very important in shaping the future of adolescents. The influence of other agencies must build upon the groundwork furnished by the family. The rationale for selecting this topic is that the results may

help us to understand the importance of family environment among higher secondary school students and used the information for educational purposes.

III. Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the family environment of higher secondary students in Aizawl city.
2. To compare the family environment of male and female students among higher secondary students in Aizawl city.

IV. Operational Definition of the Key Terms

Family environment: The Family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions with families. It is the core process of every child's up-bringing, with positive and negative influences. In the present study, family environment includes the following dimensions:

Cohesion: Degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another.

Expressiveness: Extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and express their feelings and thoughts directly.

Conflict: Amount of openly expressed aggression and disagreement among family members.

Acceptance and Caring: Extent to which the members are unconditionally accepted and the degree to which caring is expressed in the family.

Active-Recreational Orientation: Extent of participation in social and recreational activities.

Independence: Extent to which family members are assertive and independently make their own decisions.

Organisation: Degree of importance of clear organization structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.

Control: Degree of limit setting within a family.

Higher secondary school: Higher secondary school refers to the institution where students of Class XI and XII students were studying. This is the last stage where students wear school uniforms. At higher secondary level, there are mainly three streams available for students- arts, science and commerce. Students can choose different subjects in each stream.

V. Methodology

The present study is largely descriptive in nature. Descriptive survey method has been employed. Analysis of data was done through quantitative method.

Population:

The population of the study consisted of all Higher Secondary school students within Aizawl City.

Sample:

The sample of the study comprised of 420 students. Samples were selected based on stratified random sampling in order to ensure equal representation of genders.

Tools Used:

For collecting data, the investigator used standardized scales Family Environment Scale (1993) developed by Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadha. The scale contains 69 questions relating to family environment. It covers 8 dimensions- cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active-recreational orientation, organisation and control. The scale has 41 positive items and 28 negative items.

Collection of Data:

The investigator collected the data by visiting the higher secondary schools in Aizawl City. Firstly, permission was taken from the Principals in each school. When granted, students were brief about the nature and rationale of the research in order to obtain a reliable data. After making appropriate instructions, the questionnaire was handed out to the samples after giving them necessary instructions and directions. Students were taken around 45-50 minutes for answering the questions and the researcher collected all questions immediately after completion.

Scoring:

In Family Environment Scale (FES), five choices were given as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. These responses were scored as 5,4,3,2,1 for positive and 1,2,3,4,5 for negative statements as given in the manual.

Analysis of Data:

In order to analyse the data collected percentages are used in order to divide the students into various groups.

Findings:

Status of family environment of higher secondary students in Aizawl City.

In order to group the students in various categories based on their family environment, norms had already been established by the authors of the scale used. These norms have been reproduced in table no-1 as follows:

Table no-1

Norms formulated separately for each specific group/ dimension of family environment under study-

Sl. No.	Group/ Dimension	Raw Score	Qualitative norms
1.	Cohesion	61 and above	High
		46 to 60	Average
		45 and below	Low
2.	Expressiveness	40 and above	High
		28 to 39	Average
		27 and below	Low
3.	Conflict	52 and above	High
		38 to 41	Average
		37 and below	Low
4.	Acceptance and Caring	55 and above	High
		41 to 54	Average
		40 and below	Low
5.	Active-Recreational Orientation	34 and above	High
		26 to 33	Average
		32 and below	Low
6.	Independence	41 and above	High
		31 to 40	Average
		39 and below	Low
7.	Organisation	10 and above	High
		7 to 9	Average
		6 and below	Low
8.	Control	18 and above	High
		14 to 17	Average
		13 and below	Low

Table No. 2

Status of Family Environment of Higher Secondary Students in various dimensions (N=420)

Sl No.	Dimensions	High (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
1.	Cohesion	2.23	66.64	31.13
2.	Expressiveness	0.51	75.06	24.42
3.	Conflict	2.23	58.8	38.97
4.	Acceptance and Caring	0.58	53.03	47.54
5.	Active-Recreational Orientation	9.42	74.06	16.51
6.	Independence	0	30.35	69.65
7.	Organization	6.35	69.7	23.94
8.	Control	12.64	53.93	33.67
	Total	4.24	60.20	38.72

As shown in the table no. 2, there are 8 components of family environment which are cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, active-recreational orientation, independence, organisation and control. According to the norms given in the manual, the family environment of the students could be divided in the following ways:

-From the above table, 2.23% students came under the high category, meaning that they had good family environment under the dimension of cohesion. Going by the same norm 66.64 % of the students had an averagely cohesive family while 31.13% had low cohesive family environment.

-In the dimension of expressiveness, 0.51% students scored high environment regarding expressiveness, 55.06 % fall under the average mode and 24.42% of the students were under the average group of expressing their feelings and thoughts directly to their family members

-Under the dimension of conflict, among the students 2.23% had highly conflictive family environment, 58.8 % fall under the average conflict and 38.97% of the male students were under the average mode.

-Under the dimension of acceptance and caring, students were found to score 0.58% which came under the high category, 53.03% fall under the average mode and 47.54% of the students were under the average mode an acceptance and caring of their family.

-Under the dimension of active-recreational orientation, 9.42% of the students were found to be in the high category environment while 74.06% fall under the average group and 16.51% of the students were under the low environmental group.

-Under the dimension of independence, students no students came under the category of high environment, 30.35% fall under the average mode and 69.65% of the students were under the average mode.

-Under the dimension of Organisation, 6.35% of the students had high family environment, 69.7% had average organizing family environment and 23.94% of students had low family environment.

-In the dimension of control, among the students 12.64% had high control in family environment, 53.93 % fall under the average and 33.67 % of the students were in the low average group.

The above table reveals that out of all the 420 respondents, majority 60.20% of the students had average family environment, while 38.72% of the students had low level of family environment and only 4.24 % of the students fall under the high category of family environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that majority of higher secondary school students in Aizawl city had average level of family environment.

Comparison of family environment among male and female higher secondary school students in Aizawl City.

Table-3

Comparison of family environment among male and female higher secondary school students (N=420)

Sl No.	Dimensions	High (%)		Average (%)		Low (%)	
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
1.	Cohesion	2.91	1.55	61.63	71.65	35.46	26.80
2.	Expressiveness	-	1.03	73.84	76.29	26.16	22.68
3.	Conflict	2.91	1.55	55.23	62.37	41.86	36.08
4.	Acceptance and Caring	1.16	-	53.48	52.58	47.67	47.42
5.	Active-Recreational Orientation	11.63	7.22	69.77	78.35	18.60	14.43
6.	Independence	-	-	26.16	34.54	73.84	65.46
7.	Organization	7.56	5.15	61.05	78.35	31.39	16.49
8.	Control	13.95	11.34	51.16	56.70	34.88	32.47
Total:		5.01	3.48	56.25	63.85	38.73	32.73

-From the above table, 2.91% of male students came under the high category, meaning that they had good family environment under the dimension of cohesion. Going by the same norm 61.63 % of the male students had an averagely cohesive family while 35.46% had low cohesive family environment.

Among the female students, 1.55% of students had high family environment, 71.65% fell under the average mode and 26.80 % of them were in the low family environment under the dimension of cohesion.

-In the dimension of expressiveness, no male students scored high environment regarding expressiveness, 73.84 % fall under the average mode and 26.16% of the male students were under the average group of expressing their feelings and thoughts directly to their family members

The female students were found to score 1.03% which came under the high family environment, 76.29% had average family environment and 22.68% fall under low expressiveness in their family.

-Under the dimension of conflict, among the male students 2.91% had highly conflictive family environment, 55.23 % fall under the average conflict and 41.86 % of the male students were under the average mode.

The female students of 1.55% had high conflict regarding family environment, 62.37 % had average family environment and 36.08% of them were in the low average group.

-Under the dimension of acceptance and caring, male students were found to score 1.16% which came under the high category, 53.48 % fall under the average mode and 47.67% of the male students were under the average mode.

Among the female students nobody had high family environment, 52.48 % had average family environment and 47.42 % had an acceptance and caring of their family.

-Under the dimension of active-recreational orientation, 11.63% of the male students were found to be in the high category environment while 69.77% fall under the average group and 18.60 % of the male students were under the low environmental group.

It can be seen that 7.22% of the female students had high family environment, 78.35 % had average family environment and 14.43% fall under low environment regarding social and recreational activities.

-Under the dimension of independence, among the male students nobody came under the category of high environment, 26.16% fall under the average mode and 73.84% of the male students were under the average mode.

Among the female students nobody had high family environment, 34.54% of the female students had average family environment and 65.46% fall under low environment.

-Under the dimension of Organisation, 7.56% of the male students had high family environment, 61.05% had average organizing family environment and 31.39% of the female students had low family environment.

The female students of 5.15% had high family environment, 78.35 % had average family environment and 16.49% of the students were found to score under the category of low family environment regarding organisation.

-In the dimension of control, among the male students 13.95% had high control in family environment, 51.16 % fall under the average and 34.88 % of the male students were in the low average group.

The female students were found to score 11.34% which came under high family environment, 56.70 % had average family environment and 32.47% fall under low environment.

As is quite evident from the table, most of the students fell in the average group when all the dimensions were studied. This shows that most students were from low and average environmental background or family environment. Both male and female students were in the average category according to the scale used. In all the eight dimensions of family environment, only two dimensions i.e. active recreational orientation and control had more than 10% of the students having high family environment. In all the other dimensions, the students fell in the average and low average category.

The dimension of expressiveness among members and cohesion which signifies a close relationship among members, received very low score from the students with only 2.91% of males and 1.55% of females scoring good Family environment. This could indicate a weak home enrolment where members do not show much affection or share personal problems. The result could be an unhealthy environment where members may not even support each other when problems arise.

VI. Conclusion

The study found that only a very small percentage of the higher secondary school students had a high family environment under various dimensions. Majority of them fell in the average level of family environment. Another small percentage was in the low family environment category. In this case, it may be assumed that, since the samples comprised of equal number of male and female students, higher secondary school students of Aizawl city mostly come from the average family background where the sense of cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance, caring, recreation and independence is at an average level.

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