ABSTRACT

This research investigates the difference in Moral Judgement, Social Maturity and Achievement Motivation between urban secondary school students from grades VI to IX, who experience different extents of parental pressure. Further it also investigates whether the parental beliefs about aims of education have any effect on the pressure that parents exert upon their children.

The investigation employed two questionnaires to measure parental pressure constructed by the investigator, and an intelligence test along with scales on Moral Judgement, Social Maturity and Achievement Motivation. The sample was taken from urban secondary schools of Kolkata.

Suitable statistical techniques were employed.

The study identified four perceptions of pressure –
- Parental Perception of Pressure on a Daily Basis (PPPD)
- Parental Perception of Pressure at Examination Time (PPPE)
- Child’s Perception of Pressure on a Daily Basis (CPPD)
- Child’s Perception of Pressure at Examination Time (CPPE).

It also identified beliefs of parents about the aims of education to be status, knowledge, money and all-round mental development. The study found that parents exert most pressure on their children on a daily basis if they believe knowledge to be the aim of education. Parents who believe in all-round mental development to be the aim of education exert the minimum pressure on a daily basis.

At examination time, the priority for parental pressure changes. Parents who believe in status exert most pressure while parents who believe in all-round mental development exert minimum pressure. However, from the child’s perception, whether on a daily basis or at examination time, parental beliefs about the aims of education makes no difference to the pressure exerted on them.
While pressure has been conceived of in different ways – PPPD, PPPE, CPPD, and CPPE, it was found by factor analysis that they could together account for a single variable which may be called Academic Pressure. The investigator further found out that Academic Pressure does affect certain psycho-social aspects of development significantly. It was found that Academic Pressure adversely affects moral judgement and social maturity. However, Academic Pressure does have a beneficial effect on academic motivation.

This research implies a cautionary note to parents and teachers. In particular, parents require reflecting on what they want from their child's education. Further, teachers require being observant so that the excessive pressure created by parents does not result in young adults whose moral and social development have been sacrificed at the altar of academic ambition.