Chapter-V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Congenial home environment and healthy parent-child relationship are crucial for proper mental and career development of children. Unfortunately, it does not happen in case of each and every family. For proper physical development a child needs balanced diet. Likewise for healthy mental development a child needs balanced love and affection. Over regimented attitude in the form of strict parental disciplinary measures and/or over indulgence in the form of too much love and affection are equally harmful for development of socially desirable behavior among children. The strongest factor in molding a child's personality is his relationship with his parents. If his parents love him with a generous, even-flowing, non-possessive affection and if they treat him as a person who, like themselves, has both rights and responsibilities in the family group, then his chances of developing normally and well are good. But if they diverge from this desired pattern, the child's development may be distorted. Robert LeVine (1974) concluded that families in all societies have three basic goals for their children:

1. **The Survival Goal:** To promote the physical survival and health of the child, ensuring that he or she will live long enough to have children too.
2. **The Economic Goal:** To foster the skills and the behavioural capacities that the child needs for economic self-maintenance as an adult.
3. **The Self-actualization Goal:** To foster behavioural capabilities for maximizing other cultural values (for example, morality, religion, achievement, wealth, prestige and a sense of personal satisfaction).

Over a period of time researchers carried out studies on different aspects of parent-child relationship. But very few studies were carried out to ascertain the quality time given by the parents to the children, parental disciplinary measures in case of adolescents living in Kolkata.
and impact of mothers working status on parent-child relationship, adjustment and anxiety of adolescents. Hence, the broad objective of the study was to assess the parental disciplinary measures, parent-child relationship, adjustment and anxiety among adolescents with working and non-working mothers from different social strata. There were six well-defined specific objectives and 14 hypotheses.

A group of 460 adolescent boys (48.0%) and girls (52.0%) aged between 13-17 years were covered in the study and they were selected from nine schools located in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. For collection of data four standardized psychological tests and one semi-structured questionnaire were used after local adaptation.

Findings reveal that 45.0% of the adolescents had one sibling while 35.0% were the only child of their parents. The rest had either two siblings or more. Majority of them came from nuclear family.

Most of the parents were graduate (43.0% each) while in case of higher studies i.e., post graduation and above fathers were ahead of mothers. Out of a total of 460 mothers, 141 were working while the rest were non-working mothers. The working mothers were involved in both government and non-government jobs while a good number of them were involved in business. Fathers were mostly involved in government service, followed by private service and business respectively. Monthly income of the families of adolescent boys and girls clearly indicate that they mostly belong to middle class families.

Quality Time Spent With Parents

Data pertaining to quality time given to the adolescents have been analyzed with respect to different demographic and socio-economic variables like sex, age, pattern of family, level of education, siblings, socio-economic status, parental education and parental occupation and accordingly discussed below:
It has been found that the adolescents are more comfortable with their mothers as compared to the fathers in all sorts of inhibition free communication. Gender wise analysis of data reveal that girls receive better attention and more time from their parents as compared to their counterparts. Mothers have been found to score high on all the aspects of spending quality time with their wards, e.g. speaking to them on week days, taking children out on holidays, sharing personal problems etc. In this regard, findings of previous study carried out by Aman-Back et al., (2004) and Youniss and Smollar (1985) corroborate with the findings of present study.

Good parent-child relationship helps adolescents to lead risk free life. In this regard, Andrews, Hops, and Duncan (1997) found that the adolescents who had a relatively good or moderate-quality relationship with parents tended to follow their parents’ example more than if the relationship was relatively poor, implying that positive relationships with antisocial parents sometimes may be a source of risk.

Boys have a more (73.6%) cordial relationship with their siblings than girls (66.3%). However, girls spend some leisurely hours with their siblings as compared to boys. It could be because of Indian cultural practice i.e., girls should be more in home while there is less restriction on movement of boys.

Although about half of the adolescents disclosed that they have relationship with extended family members, it is not helpful to resolve the family problems with their intervention as reported by little over one-third (Boys-36.8% and Girls-38.4%). As a result, nearly two-fifth of boys and girls share their personal problems with their peers. This might be one of the various causes that lead the adolescents in taking wrong directions and choosing incorrect pathway in life. On the other hand, Greenberg et al., (1983) observed contradictory findings. The authors studied 213 high-school juniors and seniors showed that most adolescents seek counsel from their parents even when they perceive the relationship as generally unsatisfactory. Peers did not assume increasing influence as these adolescents aged.

In this regard, Armsden et al., (1990) examined the attachment to parents and to peers of 43 early adolescents who were in treatment for depression with that of 52 youngsters of the same
age who were not in treatment and 12 who were being treated for other psychiatric disturbances. The results suggest that the depressed adolescents had less secure attachment to a parent or parents, and that those who were most emotionally distant from parents were also the most severely depressed. Those group were also less securely attached to peers than those in the control groups, but the researchers mentioned that this was just as likely to be a result of their depressions it was to be a cause of it.

It was observed that the fathers tend to spend more time with the adolescents in the age group of 14-15 years than the mothers. In case of the adolescents above 16 years mothers comparatively spend more time with them as compared to the fathers. This was more pronounced in case of the girls. This clearly indicates that with growing age the adolescents go out less with their parents for holidays. In general, it may be stated that the girls receive more quality time in comparison to the boys.

Another interesting finding of the study is that younger age adolescents are somewhat more inclined towards their siblings but gradually as the age increases, the inclination shifts towards the peer group members.

Highest cases of indifferent and discordant type of relationship existed between parent-child relationships when adolescents belong to 16-18 years age group. This indicates that parents with adolescents of this age group have differences of opinions over various issues regarding the transitional phase of life. In this age group (16-17), the parents are perceived to have the highest amount of hot exchanges among themselves, which certainly influences the home climate. And the adolescents in turn perceived their home climate as not being calm and peaceful.

It is found that the maximum attachment to the peers is found in the age group of 17-18 years and the boys are more inclined to the peer group members than the girls.

So far as family pattern is concerned it has been observed that the fathers of nuclear families are able to devote more time to their adolescent children in comparison to joint families while
in case of mothers opposite picture revealed. On the other hand, mother of the adolescents of
the joint families are able to take their adolescent children out more than that of their nuclear
family counterparts. In general, adolescents feel more comfortable to share their problems with
the mothers, irrespective of the pattern of family. Another aspect, which comes out, is that the
adolescents are slightly more comfortable with the parents in a nuclear family in comparison to
the joint family.

Indifferent and discordant type of relation with siblings is more evident in nuclear families than
that of the joint families, irrespective of the gender. It may be stated that the reason for this
could be attributed to the fact that in joint families the sharing is more and in nuclear families
selfish attitude is on the higher side in Indian society.

Indifferent relationship between parents was more evident in joint families than in nuclear
families. Further analysis of data reveals that the percentages were higher among the girls than
boys. Lastly, coming to discordant type of relationship, it is seen that percentages of cases
reported is higher in nuclear families than in joint families. Hot exchange is higher in case of
joint families (51.3%) in comparison to nuclear families (32.5%). It may be assumed that in the
joint family there are various other people who give their opinions regarding the functioning of
the family. Further, turning to the female gender there are a lot of issues, which comes up
creating minor conflicts among the parents as well as with other family members. Irrespective
of various other facts, the adolescents hailing from nuclear families have a home, which is
surrounded by fewer problems than the joint family’s adolescents do. In a joint family there are
conflicts regarding property, division of responsibility, importance to family members and
other issues, which are, absent in a nuclear family.

Melby and Conger (1996) found that parental hostility is linked to declining school
performance and higher risk of delinquency. When such hostility is expressed as physical
abuse or neglect, the consequences for the child may be even more severe. Children from
families with open communication are seen as more emotionally or socially mature (Baumrind,
1971; Bell and Bell, 1982). Open communication may also be important for the functioning of
the family as a unit.
Researchers have found that, among other variables, hostility in parents' marital relationship is associated with the higher incidents of behavior problems in children. (Katz and Woodin, 2002). Conversely, the greater the parents' satisfaction with their marriage the better able their children are to regulate feelings of sibling rivalry (Volling, McElwain, and Miller, 2002).

The adolescents having more than one sibling found the least amount of time to speak to their parents during weekdays. The data indicated that the mothers do take their adolescents out more frequently than their fathers.

With regard to providing quality time, it has been observed that adolescents having one sibling again receive quality time from both the parents.

The data illustrates that the maximum number of adolescent boys (43.7%) and girls (53.1%) having no siblings turned toward the peer group for sharing their problem. Turning to second response category of ‘family’ the maximum number of adolescent boys (42.0%) from the ‘one sibling’ category and adolescents girls (44.7%) from ‘more than one sibling’ group were inclined towards the family member for sharing their problem. In fact, siblings play an important role during adolescent phase for sharing their personal and emotional issues. In this regard, Seginer (1998) found that positive relationships with siblings have been associated with perceptions of emotional and school-related support, above and beyond the contributions of mother, father, and peer acceptance.

Further analysis of data with respect to socio-economic status, it has been observed that the parents belonging to the middle socio-economic class provided maximum quality time whereas the parents from lower socio-economic class provide the least quality time to their adolescents. Another interesting finding of the study is that the most favorable type of sibling relationship is found among the lower strata. Since the adolescents of lower social strata are background they prefer to remain united to fight the hard reality in life.
In the middle and lower socio-economic class hot exchange amongst parents was reported most as compared to adolescent belonging to higher socio-economic class. The reason for this may be attributed to the fact that in the middle and low socio-economic strata there are lots of differences of opinion between the parents over various issues like adolescents academic and vocational endeavor, financial and social security. However, this is not so much prevalent amongst the parents in higher socio-economic class because of sound financial background.

It may be stated that maximum inhibition regarding sharing of problems by the adolescents is found to prevail among the higher socio-economic class. It is relevant to mention here that family’s income has been found to be one of the variables most highly correlated with an adolescent’s academic performance. The strong positive correlation between family income and academic achievement is highlighted by a number of educational statistics (Grant and Snyder, 1984). A family’s income is associated not only with adolescents’ actual academic performance but also with expectations for the future.

Eleanor Maccoby (1980) suggests that low-income living is probably much more stressful for parents and that stress affects the ways in which parental functions are carried out. Economic hardship creates its own psychological distress – a most pervasive discomfort that makes lower-income adults more edgy and irritable and more vulnerable to all negative life events (including the daily hassles associated with child rearing), thereby diminishing their capacity to be warm, supportive parents who are highly involved in their children’s lives.

Rand Conger and his associates (1992, 1994, 1995) offered support for this ‘economic distress’ hypothesis by finding clear links between family economic hardships, non-nurturing/uninvolved parenting, and poor adolescent outcomes. Parents who are experiencing economic pressure or feeling that they cannot cope with their financial problems tend to become depressed, which increases marital conflict. Marital conflict, in turn, disrupts each parent’s ability to be a supportive, involved parent and therefore contributes to such adolescent problems as low self esteem, poor school performance, poor peer relations and adjustment problems such as depression, hostility and aggression. Many of the conflicts that economically distress parents have with their adolescents are centered on money matters – a highly sensitive
topic that can make a financially strapped parent feel downright hostile toward his/her children (Conger et al., 1994). And the adolescent adjustment problems and antisocial conduct that non-nurturing/uninvolved parenting helps to create may further demotivate parents, causing them to back away and become even less nurturing and less involved in the lives of their children (Vuchinich, Bank and Patterson, 1992). Therefore, it can be stated that economic hardships are a very important contributor to the relatively aloof and coercive style of parenting often observed in low-income families.

Regarding 'do your parents find time to speak to you during week days', both boys and girls with parents in the category 'Higher secondary to graduate' secured the highest percentages. Further it has been observed that the fathers who studied secondary and below were unable to take their children out primarily due to financial constraints.

Lesser percentages recorded in terms of providing quality time to the adolescent were found with the parents belonging to the 'post-graduate and professional' and 'secondary and below' educational levels. This was more prevalent among the latter category. Approximately only 6.5% fathers and 10.0% mothers are in a position to give quality time to the adolescent children owing to more occupational commitments.

The parents who studied up to higher secondary and/or completed graduation have maximum cordial relationship among themselves. Discordant type of relation amongst parents is seen to be more prevalent amongst parents with secondary and below educational level. Hence, it may be stated that the level of education of parents is correlated with the nature of relationship. The adolescents belonging to the family where parents are highly educated prefer to share their problems with the parents instead of peer group members because of better understanding between parent and adolescent relationship.

Non-working mothers are able to afford maximum time to the adolescent boys (69.6%) and girls (72.2%). Among the working group, the mothers holding non-government job comparatively could spend more time with the girls (12.3%). This was followed by the mothers of girls working in the government sector (11.9%). In case of the boys, for both the sectors,
approximately 6.0% mothers found time to speak to them during weekdays. Mothers in the ‘business’ and ‘others’ job sectors comparatively were able to spend less time. Among the working categories the parents in the government sector were able to take out their children the maximum during holidays.

As regards to the ‘observed hot exchanges’ between parents the data revealed that among the adolescents the highest percentage observed was in case of non-working category since they have ample leisure time while working mothers hardly find any time to fight. Among the working groups, the maximum percentage of hot exchange was reported in the business category.

In this regard Dixon and Reddacliff (2001) examined in a qualitative study the parent roles in achieving desired vocational outcomes and found the following important family characteristics: moral support, practical assistance, role models of appropriate work ethic, protection from difficulties and exploitation, and family cohesion. Clearly, parents occupy a critical position in the lives of youth, and parents’ engagement in planning activities for the adult life of their adolescent constitutes a major task of the adolescent period.

Adolescence is a very crucial stage of growth accompanied by various hormonal and emotional changes. There is a severe identity crisis and tremendous conflict over various issues between the adolescent and their parents. These conflicts with the parents push them closer to their peer group. They become very much attached to their peers and hence do not feel much the absence of their parents even including the mothers. And they always turn towards their peers to get the answers of the different queries they have and also seem to have full trust on what they say.

**Parental Disciplinary Measures**

Although the discipline as a whole was permissive towards the boys than the girls, in case of the mothers, the disciplinary practice was more authoritative towards the girls than the fathers. The reason for this difference is that there has always been a contrast between the boys and the girls in the Indian society. The parents are more protective about the girls and therefore the
boys enjoy more freedom than their female counterparts. The parents are very apprehensive regarding the security of the girl child. This practice is more evident in the Indian society as because it is still somewhat conservative in nature and the parents feel that the girls need to go to other household after marriage so they must be properly disciplined from before. As far as the boys are concerned the parents are slightly relaxed, as they know that the boy child will be able to handle external environmental conditions better.

In regard to impact of authoritative style of parenting, Lamborn et al., (1991) found that adolescents who describe their parents as authoritative are more socially competent and better adjusted psychologically than other adolescents. Adolescents who describe their parents as authoritarian are likely to obey rules and keep out of trouble but have less self-confidence than other adolescents.

Further effort was made to understand whether parental disciplinary measures vary in case of adolescent studying in English and Bengali medium schools. Findings reveal that medium of study do not have any connection in case of parental disciplinary measures. However, parental disciplinary measures found to be permissive in character. The reason for this might be the fact that society is slowly emerging towards modernization and that language barrier does not alter the type of disciplinary technique used by the parents.

Permissive type of disciplinary measure has been observed in case of adolescents belonging to high and low socio-economic backgrounds. This type of liberal discipline was found more in higher socio-economic strata than that of lower socio-economic strata. Authoritative discipline was found to exist in the middle socio-economic level. The reason for different types of disciplinary measures might be that these two levels i.e., parents of high and low socio-economic backgrounds do not put much pressure on the adolescents in terms of fulfilling certain goals and meeting standards of behaviour. So they are not very much bothered by the way their child behaves in the society. The most liberal picture is found in the high socio-economic class because there is an additional comfort of financial and other kinds of securities in life.
The reason for following authoritative disciplinary measures in the middle socio-economic strata is that there is a lot of expectation from the parents and they constantly give pressure to their child to excel in different spheres of life. They become strict with their children in terms of academics and other social issues, as they are always anxious about securing a sound future for their children.

So it may be observed that as far as the parental disciplinary practice of the fathers are concerned, for the adolescents with working mothers was authoritative in nature while in case of the adolescents with non-working mothers there existed liberal discipline. The reason for this observed difference may be because of the fact that the fathers perceive that more strict discipline is needed in case of the working mothers. This is so because the adolescents' behaviour is not monitored properly in the absence of their mothers and thus might get carried away in the wrong direction of life. So, the fathers are more liberal in case of adolescents with non-working mothers as they are assured that proper discipline is imparted to these children always as they are under the mother's guidance the entire day.

The nature of discipline adopted by the mothers who are working was permissive whereas, those who were housewives tended to be authoritative with their children. The difference may be clearly attributed to the fact that non-working mothers keep their children under their supervision twenty-four hours so they are always after the children's doings and constant monitoring goes on. This makes the overall discipline authoritative by nature. But when it comes to the mothers who are working, they tend to spend lesser time in comparison to the mothers who are just housewives. Therefore, the mothers do not always scrutinize the child's behaviour at each and every step and they appear to be more liberal in dealing with their children.

The working mothers are more liberal in discipline towards their adolescents than the non-working mothers. As a whole it may be seen that the working mothers irrespective of the type of working category, reported to have liberal discipline with the adolescents.
A working woman usually has a hidden guilt complex so whatever little is available at hand, it is spend more qualitatively by her than by a stay-at-home mother.

**Parent-Child Relationship**

In general, parents are more protective about the girls than the boys in Indian society. This is very obvious because they are cautious about the security and well being of the girl child. In India, the social environment is still not very conducive and safe for the girls to be always on their own. And even if the adolescent girls are able to manage herself, the parents do not allow the girl to be out of the house alone for a long time and neither getting the permission to go out alone in the night.

The mean values for the object punishment for the boys in case of the fathers and the mothers were 19.30 and 20.61 respectively. This was higher in comparison to the girls, whose mean values for the fathers and the mothers were 16.28 and 17.88 respectively. The reason for this difference may be attributed to the fact that the girls are timid by nature and therefore harsh punishments are not necessary for them to keep them under control. But as far as the boys are concerned they need certain strict punishing techniques so that they are fearful of committing big mistakes. And thus they abide by what the parents tell them to do.

The parents in general were more indifferent towards the boy child than the girl. The parents are little soft/delicate towards the girls as a whole. And therefore it seems for the adolescent boys that the parents are more rejecting as well as neglecting towards them as compared to their female counterparts.

The two remaining domains, which show a positive aspect of parent-child relationship, were Loving and Rewards. The latter was further divided into symbolic reward and object reward. In both of these domains the girls had scored higher than that of the boys. This observed difference might be attributed to the fact that the parents are more expressing in terms of their emotions towards the girls than the boys and this holds true even in case of
expression of love. In turn the boys are viewed to be stronger and rough and can do without the overt expression of this emotion.

The parents in general in India are perceived to be more rewarding towards the girl child than the boy. The reason for this perceived difference by the girls is that they are more inclined to get rewards and appreciation from the parents than in case of the boys.

Coming to the first domain 'Protecting', the adolescents having non-working mothers perceive their relationship with the fathers to be more protecting. It may be said that the fathers are more concerned about the children when the mother is working. They at times tend to give more attention and time to the child. This may be one reason of perceiving the fathers to be more protective than the mothers. Another fact is that for the working mothers, after they are back from work they need to engage in some household chores. So the children perceive the fathers to be a bit more concerned about the defending attitude of overtly expressing the acts of sheltering and shielding at times of hostile and harmful situations.

As far as Symbolic Punishment is concerned, for both in case of fathers and mothers, adolescent having non-working mothers scored higher on this domain. This difference may be because of the fact that symbolic punishment is more subtle and indirect. So when the parents are able to afford more time with the children they choose to adopt a more progressive way to discipline the child.

The children with non-working mothers perceive the parents to be more rejecting because they spend more time with them and there is more scope of interaction with the parents and thus the interaction may at times turn to be rough.

When the mothers are working the child seems to be more attached to the fathers than those with non-working counterpart. The attachment level is similar for both the parents. It seems that the child is more demanding towards the father than the mothers.
It was revealed that for both the parents the adolescents with non-working mothers (fathers=37.23 and mothers=38.41) perceived the love to be slightly more than the adolescents with working mothers (fathers=33.48 and mothers=37.62). The statistical analysis of difference between the mean values show that this obtained difference did not hold to be significant in either of the two cases. Hence, it may be stated that love is such kind of an emotion that a parent has for the child irrespective of any social criteria.

The *symbolic reward* was comparatively higher for the adolescents with non-working mothers. The non-working mothers are able to afford more time to the children. Therefore, there is ample opportunity for them to symbolically reward their children while in case of *Object Reward* working mothers are ahead of non-working mothers. When the mothers are working, she is in a stronger position to spend more on the child and pamper the child with materialistic luxuries. Whereas, in case of the non-working mothers they are dependent on their husbands for the financial support.

**Parent-child Relation and Adjustment**

Statton and Kerr (2000) demonstrated that high parental knowledge derived from adolescent disclosure about their activities, which are enhanced by mutual engagement and communication, predicted positive adolescent adjustment more strongly than did parents' control of adolescents' activities through tracking and surveillance. These findings imply that the characteristically warm, accepting relationships in authoritative families may increase the likelihood of positive parental influences on adolescents (Barnes and Olson, 1985; Darling and Steinberg, 1993).

Neilson (1982) stated that the parents who employ authoritarian or permissive styles usually exert less influence over their children than those who exhibit either a democratic or an authoritative style. This is the case; it appears, because adolescents whose parents are overly strict and authoritarian are likely to rebel by conforming to peer values that defy their parents' views. Children are more likely to be influenced by democratic parents who explain the reasons underlying their rules and who respect their children's ideas by encouraging honest,
reciprocal communication, than they are by autocratic parents who discourage discussion,
dictate without providing their rationale, and espouse the principle that adults 'always know
best'. Finally, the quality of the relationship between adolescents and their parents often
determines whether teenaged children will continue to seek the counsel of their parents and
conform to the family values. There is some truth to the notion that adolescents may turn to
peers for advice with greater frequency when communications with their own parents have
been blocked or temporarily disrupted.

Studies of parent-child interactions suggest that one crucial ingredient for a secure attachment
is emotional availability on the part of caregiver (Biringen, 2000). An emotionally available
caregiver is one who is able and willing to form an emotional attachment to the infant. For
example, economically or emotionally distressed parents may be so distracted by their own
problems that they cannot invest emotion in the parent-infant relationship.

Dozens of studies (Carlson and Sroufe, 1995; Leve and Fagot, 1995) show that, compared to
children rated as insecurely attached, children rated as securely attached to their mothers in
infancy are later more sociable, more positive in their behavior toward friends and siblings,
less clinging and dependent on teachers, less aggressive and disruptive, more empathetic, and
more emotionally mature in their approach to school and other settings outside the home.

A warm parent cares about the child, expresses affection, frequently or regularly puts the
child’s needs first, shows enthusiasm for the child’s activities, and responds sensitively and
empathetically to the child’s feelings (Maccoby, 1980). On the other end of this continuum are
parents who overtly reject their children.

Psychologists have found that children in warm and loving families are more securely attached
in the first two years of life; have higher self-esteem; are more empathetic, more altruistic, and
more responsive to others’ hurts or distressed; and have higher I.Q. scores in pre-school and
elementary school (Domitrovich and Bierman, 2001; Maccoby, 1980; Pettit, Bates, and Dodge,
1997).
In another study DeVore et al., (2005) explored the recent developments in the literature regarding parenting practices and adolescent development, with a focus on parenting style, parental monitoring, communication, and supervision. Findings demonstrate the significant, enduring, and protective influence of positive parenting practices on adolescent development. In particular, parental monitoring, open parent-child communication, supervision, and high quality of the parent-child relationship deter involvement in high-risk behavior.

**Anxiety of Adolescents**

The mean value of anxiety in case of adolescent boys (24.06) was slightly more than adolescent girls (22.55). It could be because of the fact that still in Indian society the boys have more pressure regarding the proper choice of vocation and future career since in future they have to take responsibility for running the family. At the same time, it is relevant to highlight another interesting observation, as the difference between mean score of anxiety between boys and girls is not much. This may be attributed again to the gradual change in the society. The girls are becoming at par with the boys in regards to academic success and vocational choice.

Adolescents of Bengali medium schools were slightly more anxious than that of English medium counterparts. This difference may be due to the language barrier faced by the Bengali medium students in reality afterwards while searching for a job. Sometimes, even after excelling the English medium students in academic field adolescents studying in Bengali medium schools lag behind them just in terms of fluency in spoken English. This might be one of the reasons behind the anxious behavior of adolescents of Bengali medium schools.

The relationship between anxiety and academic performance has been described in a number of findings relevant to understanding of adolescents (Hansen, 1977; Phillips, 1978; Sarason, 1980; Tobias, 1979). First, anxiety interferes more with academic performance during adolescence than during childhood. In a culture that judges an individual’s intellectual abilities and ascribes status on the basis of academic performance, it is perhaps not surprising that students become more anxious over their academic success and failures as they age. Second,
the relationship between an adolescent’s academic success and anxiety is curvilinear – a minimal amount of anxiety tends to enhance academic performance, but excessive anxiety undermines academic performance.

The mean value for anxiety was found to be the maximum for the adolescents belonging to middle socio-economic class (30.07), followed by the adolescents belonging to lower (28.62) and then the higher (23.60) socio-economic class. Hence, it may be stated that the adolescents of middle socio-economic class face the highest amount of anxiety. This may be because of the tremendous pressure they have from all circumstances of life. In terms of establishing themselves, fulfilling their parental desires and expectations and struggling to excel in all endeavors of life. The adolescents of middle class even face the maximum amount of parental pressures. The least anxiety is seen in case of the high socio-economic adolescents, this may be partly attributed to their secured future at least in terms of material and financial aspects. As far as the adolescent of low socio-economic strata is concerned, there is evidence of anxiety as their parents too have a lot of desires and expectations but they are aware of certain limits above which they do not expect to rise. In regards to the parental pressure in terms of career, it is not too severe as in case of the adolescents of middle class.

The mean value of anxiety scores of the adolescents having working mothers (26.27) was slightly more than that of adolescents having non-working mothers (23.46). This slight difference may be due to the perceived lack of warmth and attention from the mothers when they are working. The adolescents might feel that their mothers are not giving them enough time and thus they feel anxious at times when they need their mother.

In one of the previous studies on impact of mothers working status on psychological development of children Glueck and Glueck (1957) found that mother’s employment deprived her children of emotional and psychological support. Thus, the employed mother was accused of contributing to her child’s juvenile delinquency, emotional disturbances, and poor academic performance.
However, later study findings observed some positive impact of mother’s employment on their children. Indeed, it appears that children with employed mothers derive certain benefits denied to those whose mothers are full-time homemakers. According to the data, adolescents whose mothers work tend to be more independent and to describe their mothers as more intelligent and competent than housewives’ children. In contrast to earlier predictions, adolescents with working mothers have not been found to be more delinquent or more academically handicapped than children with unemployed mothers. Moreover, the data suggest that daughters tend to benefit more than sons from their mother’s employment, in terms of their academic and vocational achievements (Dellas, Gaier, and Emihovich, 1979; Gold and Andres, 1978; Hoffman, 1979; Hoffman and Nye, 1974).

Many families are undergoing dramatic transformations as a consequence of women’s employment. Society’s more tolerant attitudes about educating and employing women have enabled more females to develop their vocational talents. In dual-career families, both the husband and wife have professional careers, earn similar salaries, and share equivalent vocational status in society. Interestingly, however, adolescents growing up in dual-career families will observe their mothers doing most of the child rearing and most of the housework. Even when their mothers are as professionally successful and as well educated as their fathers, most data indicate that adolescents will seldom witness an equal sharing of household or childcare responsibilities between their parents (Ericksen, Yancy, and Ericksen, 1979; Ferber and Huber, 1979; Rappaport and Rappaport, 1977; Smith, 1979).

**Adjustment of Adolescents**

The mean score reveals that the adjustment of the girls (47.5) is slightly better than that of the boys (46.4). The reason for this difference may be referred to the difference obtained in the anxiety test scores by the two sample groups. Earlier it has been seen that the boys are found to be slightly more anxious than the girls. So the boys may be said to be slightly poor in adjustment. Another picture that emerges from this, which is strictly found in the Indian society is that the girls are more compromising than the boys are and they accept readily any social circumstances better than latter does. The girls are more influenced and listen to their
parents what they say more than the boys. Two surveys of 100 adolescents in 1960 and 1976 showed the girls to be more influenced by their parents’ opinions than boys (Sebald and White, 1980). Girls have been reported spending more time actually talking with their parents, while boys spend most of the time with their parents playing sports or watching television (Larson, 1983).

The reason for the insignificant difference found in scores of adjustment between the adolescents studying in two different medium of instruction in the schools, might be due to the fact that although there were observed differences in regard to the anxiety scores, when it comes to adjustmental quality both exhibits the same type of pattern.

It is clear from the scores that most well adjusted adolescents are those who belong to the low socio-economic strata while adolescents belonging to middle strata have the least adjustment capacity with changing situation. The adolescents belonging to the lower socio-economic group know that whatever situation comes they have to manage on their own. So they face every challenge of their life courageously. As far as the adolescents from the middle socio-economic class are concerned, they are as anxious as their parents who pressurize them regarding their academic performance and vocational planning. As a result, adolescents of middle socio-economic class sometimes lag behind healthy adjustment pattern.

The adolescents having working mothers are better in adjustment as compared to the adolescents having non-working mothers. As discussed earlier, adolescence is a stage where there is a lot of strives for getting independence from the elders especially the parents. So here the adolescents in spite of having working or non-working mothers want to be on their own and at least try to cope with various situations in life. The adolescents having working mothers are found to be well adjusted in comparison to their non-working mother counterparts, as they need to cope with some circumstances alone in absence of their mother. And at times they even need to take small decisions on their own. This absence of the mothers at certain times makes them better adjusted. But not a great difference is perceived in terms of needing the mothers in securing better adjustmental grades.
The adolescent who parents work in government sector is seen to have the least anxiety, least liberal kind of parental discipline and poor adjustment qualities. For the remaining occupational sectors of parents, it has been observed that as the anxiety level rises, the adjustment pattern also becomes better. It could be because of the fact that the adolescents take the situation as a challenge and they know that they have to face it. This becomes more clearly in the 'others' category where the parents either work in small factories or are carpenters, drivers, masons, domestic helpers etc. These adolescents have a lot of anxiety regarding their financial and social security but they even know that they need to adjust themselves even in adverse situations of life.

Although parental attitudes can indeed undermine an adolescent's academic success, there is considerable evidence that most impoverished parents do instill in their children a respect for school, for the work ethic, and for academic success (CDF, 1979; Edelman, 1981; Jones, 1984; Staples, 1975). According to the data, most low-income parents have high educational and occupational aspirations for their children.

**Conclusion:**

In a nutshell, it may be stated that the parents belonging to the middle socio-economic status provide maximum time whereas parents from lower socio-economic status provide the least quality time to their adolescents in Kolkata. The socio-economic background of adolescent plays a very crucial role in their academic performance. A family's income is associated not only with adolescent's actual academic performance but also expectations for the future.

Turning towards the type of the family systems, fathers in nuclear families are able to afford more time and mothers in a joint family are able to provide the most quality time to their children.

Adolescents in majority feel more comfortable in discussing their problems and queries with their mothers than their fathers. The mothers as a whole are able to afford more quality time than the fathers. Here it may be stated irrespective of any kind of situation, in every social
strata the mother-child bond is something very unique and special which makes the mothers more wanted and approachable than that of the fathers. The present study finding also reveals the same picture.

Not only good parent-child relation but also cordial relationship between the parents is a vital indicator of the happiness and level of adjustment of the adolescent. Parental hostility is linked to declining school performance and higher risk of delinquency.

When the parents become friendly to their adolescents and create a comfortable atmosphere for them in the home to express their feelings frankly to them, then the adolescents feel a lot secured and turn less towards the peer group for acceptance and acknowledgement.

Generally it has been observed in the present study that the younger adolescents are closer to their parents. Some adolescent boys have been found to spend more with their parents between the ages of 13 – 16 than girls, while the situation reveres itself between the ages 16 – 19.

As far as the parental disciplinary practices are concerned, permissive kind of discipline prevailed in most of the situations. Working mothers were more liberal in their disciplinary styles. The fathers of adolescents with working mothers exhibited authoritative discipline towards their adolescent.

As a whole, discipline towards the girls was a bit strict as compared to the boys because of unsafe social environment in the Indian society.

Permissive type of discipline has been observed in case of adolescents belonging to high and low socio-economic backgrounds.

So far as parent-child relationship is concerned, parents are more protective about girls since social environment in India in general and Kolkata in particular is not very conducive and safe for the girls to move around freely. At the same time, parents do deal with boys more strictly as
compared to girls so that they do not indulge themselves in any undesirable social activities under peer pressure and/or situation affairs.

Regarding rewarding the child, girls are again in advantageous position as compared to the boys. Interestingly, a positive picture has emerged from the present study in regard to parent-child relationship especially with the girls in the urban set up in Kolkata i.e., girl child receives better attention, care and more reward from their parents as compared to the rural scenario in India where gender discrimination is very strong. In rural set up, the boys are in a better position in terms of nutrition, education and health care.

Working mothers are found to provide more object reward to the adolescents while non-working mother prefer to extend symbolic reward to adolescents. At the same time, the non-working mothers are more rejecting in nature as compared to working mothers.

So far as anxiety of adolescent boys and girls are concerned, adolescents of working mothers are more anxious at the same time more adjustable as they know that at times they need to cope with circumstances all by themselves. On the contrary, in case of non-working mothers the reverse picture has been observed. It is also seen that children are more independent and confident when they have working mothers. It is also relevant to mention here that adolescent belonging to middle socio-economic strata suffer from more anxiety as compared to their counterparts because of over expectation of parents in terms of career development. But in terms of adjustment capacity, adolescents belonging to lower socio-economic class are more adjusting in nature.
Recommendations:

On the basis of the findings of the present study, the following steps are recommended for developing and/or improving the healthy parent-child relationship and for the future researchers:

(i) Training for Effective Parenting: Parents should be trained in effective child-rearing practices. The parents should learn to make the adolescent feel comfortable to discuss various issues with them and provide them with a convincing answer to the queries put forward. A set of techniques variously termed as cognitive-behavioural interpersonal social skills training is a successful method for solving interpersonal problems. This technique helps to understand how to recognize adolescent's needs and feelings and thereby acting as effective parents through acceptable interpersonal behavior and negotiation skills. The educational institution and/or other professional bodies can organize the same training program for the parents with trained professionals.

Implications of Training for Effective Parenting:

- Parents need to recognize the continued importance of their relationship with their adolescent. They should be careful not to confuse adolescents' development of autonomy with rejection of the parental relationship.
- Parents need to be available to their adolescents, supportive and actively engaged in negotiation of increased autonomy and self-reliance.
- Parents need to anticipate that their adolescent will require increased availability and support during periods of transition, such as entry into high school and college. Parents should support their adolescent in effective planning and management of this transition concerning examination and emotional issues.
- Parents need to support adolescents in their exploration of social norms by listening to concerns about social approval and peer pressure, discussing values and reasons for limit setting, and negotiating rules when appropriate. Parents need to monitor
involvement in potentially dangerous situations and work with their adolescent to ensure safety.

- Parents must be careful not to disregard adolescents' real emotional difficulties by assuming that these are due to physical or hormonal changes associated with this period.
- Parents need to be careful not to dismiss problems in the adolescent-parent relationship as simply due to age, temperament or other child characteristics. Both they and their adolescent contribute to the quality of the relationship.
- Parents need to recognize the continued importance of their relationship with their adolescent for adjustment, despite their child's increased interest in and time spent with peers. Parents need to be aware of and monitor their adolescent's involvement with various peer groups and their activities at school.
- Parents need to understand that as adolescents move into romantic relationships they can benefit from parents' emotional support and guidance. Parents need to be available to adolescents to discuss their feelings, values and decision-making regarding issues of intimacy and sexual involvement in romantic relationships.
- It is advisable that parents of children who have experienced extreme difficulty in early child-parent relationships anticipate the challenges of adolescence and assess the need for mental health support.
- Parents who recognize risk factors in themselves that may place their adolescent at risk for insecure attachment may benefit from counseling or therapy for their own difficulties, and/or to reduce the transmission of risk within the family.
- Adolescents need to feel that their parents are engaged and supportive of them. Adolescents are more independent than children in many aspects of their lives. Nonetheless, they require ongoing parental support in terms of parents remaining open to communication and responsive if help is needed, while, at the same time, fostering adolescent autonomy. Specific parenting skills include warmth, acceptance of individuality, active listening, behavior monitoring, limit setting and negotiation.
- Parents need to recognize the special role of fathers in supporting the well being of their children. Fathers' increased psychological support of daughters may be particularly beneficial to them.
Obviously, adolescent adjustment is also determined by factors outside the family and
the parent-child relationship. Even though parents may only indirectly affect how peers,
romantic partners and other social influences determine the adjustment of their
children, parents' support through the stressful challenges of adolescence remains
important.

Carl Rogers (1961) and Richard Carkuff (1969) suggested some basic premises for adults
trying to communicate with an adolescent. These models of communication are based on
warmth, genuineness and openness that are crucial for establishing rapport with adolescents.

The first step in establishing effective communication is to accept the adolescent with what is
referred to by these theorists as unconditional positive regard. What this requires is that rather
than assuming a critical, judgmental or authoritarian attitude, we are to converse with the
adolescents from a more empathetic posture. Indeed, authoritarian behaviors such as advising,
directing, forbidding, and warning, moralizing or commanding are seen to impede discourse
and to serve as obstacles to effective communication. In contrast to this reaction, they believed
that the parents and other significant people in an adolescent’s life must master the skills of
active listening.

- The first step in active listening is to rephrase or reflect the youngster’s statements.
- The second step is clarifying.
- The third step is to acknowledge the adolescent’s perspective even though it may differ
  from our own.
- The final step is an exchange of feelings and viewpoints.

(ii) Steps for Adolescents:

In every educational institution some special program should be organized for the adolescents
as to how to cope with stressful situation and develop better communication and/or
understanding with parents. Some of the approaches have been described briefly in the
following section:
**Behavioral Language:** A number of therapeutic models for helping adolescents depend upon our ability to communicate by using behavioral terminology. Behavioral statements rely exclusively on words that represent observable, measurable behavior, rather than referring to aspects of adolescent’s character or attitudes. From this perspective the most efficient way to bring about behavior changes in adolescents is to state our compliments, our criticisms, and our expectations in behavioral terms (Goldstein, Sprafkin, and Gershaw, 1981).

The purpose of a behavioral statement is to identify the specific behavior the specific behavior that is being criticized, praised, or desired. Adolescents who learn to express their frustrations and to identify their needs in behavioral terms can more effectively set goals for themselves, alter their interactions with other people, and avoid catastrophizing events in ways that make them seem possible to remedy (Neilsen, 1982).

**Transactional Analysis:** Another approach frequently employed by counselors to enhance communication between adolescents and adults is Transactional Analysis. ‘TA’ is a model for analyzing verbal communication that categorizes all our statements as representing the perspectives of either the ‘child’ or the ‘adult’ or the ‘parent’. According to the TA model, the statements most conducive to productive communication are those that come from the perspective of adult within us. These statements are rational, nonjudgmental, and non-manipulative, in the sense that they represent honest feelings and reasonable expectations.

**Behavioral Contracting:** This perspective contends that an adolescent’s negative self-judgements and emotions such as depression or anxiety can best be alleviated through systematically altering the rewards, punishments, setting events and models in the environment. Hence, the best way to help adolescents in our professional or personal roles is to utilize the principles of behavioral psychology. Further more, the behavioral view contains that self-control is a learned skill that involves applying the principles of behavioral psychology to one’s own life. This means that we can teach adolescents the principles of behavioral psychology and thereby give them the skills of self-management and self-control.
(iii) Peer Programs: These programs teach the adolescents the ways to resist different kinds of peer pressures and how to be assertive in behavior. They show the adolescents both the positive and negative sides of peer association.

(iv) Recommendations for Future Researchers:

- More research is needed to clarify the changing nature of girls' compared to boys' relationship to their fathers during adolescence, the relation of these differences to differential parental socialization and implications for adjustment.
- The above associations between variables do not identify cause and effect. Research is necessary to clarify the causal role of parenting and the parent-child relationship in child adjustment.
- Longitudinal analyses should continue to examine the role of social context risk factors such as inadequate income and low maternal education in the development of parenting problems and child maladjustment.
- Further research is required to determine whether parenting and the quality of parent-child relationships play a role in determining how other factors - such as peer influences - contribute to determining child adjustment.