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Parenting Adolescents in India: A Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

Contemporary parenting has witnessed a multitude of adaptations over the past decade across various cultural settings. Adolescent attachment patterns with parents have been explored in varying cultural contexts. These attachment patterns have been extensively studied in the light of adolescence as a turbulent phase of development. This chapter offers a systematic review of the cultural factors influencing parenting, with a theoretical analysis specific to adolescents within the Indian context. Based on the exploration of these cultural influences on parenting, the chapter further explores the relevance of mindfulness-based approaches within the Indian culture, with an applicability of a model of mindful parenting specifically with adolescents in India. The conceptualization of mindfulness-based approaches stems from both Eastern and Western cultures, which have significant influences on parenting of adolescents. The components of mindful parenting have shown applicability within the dynamic context of parental-adolescent attachment patterns, especially considering the culture-specific concept of interdependence in a collectivistic culture like India. Such findings have potential implications for the formulation of parenting strategies toward the future of adolescent mental health in the country.

Keywords: India, parenting, mindfulness, adolescent mental health, cultural factors

1. Introduction

Ever since the conceptualization of parenting has evolved, it has been universally identified as one of the most crucial roles. Extensive research has further propelled its significance by highlighting its far-reaching consequences for the offspring, parents, siblings, and significant others. With growing awareness, parenting is increasingly being considered as a skill that needs to be honed through experience and training. As a result, many parents find themselves struggling to become a 'perfect' mother or father. Without a clearly defined thumb-rule to perfect parenting, this is undoubtedly a challenge, more so during the growing years of adolescence.

In an attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of parenting, it becomes important to recognize the multiple factors within the family as well as the dynamics of the family with the larger community [1]. Extensive research has vouched for the influence of cultural contexts on parent-child relationship, for example, see Refs. [2–4]. Therefore, the impact of these factors on the development of child-rearing practices within a particular culture assumes greater implications. The past few decades have witnessed significant adaptations in parenting approaches globally, for example, see Refs. [5–7]. With changing times, it is not only the practices of parenting that are evolving but also the attachment patterns and perceptions encompassed, especially within a parent-adolescent relationship. This chapter attempts to highlight such cultural influences interplaying within the parenting of adolescents, while also exploring mindfulness-based parenting strategies, with specific applicability to the evolving contemporary Indian cultural settings.

2. Evolving approaches to parenting: From then to now

Parenting has often been metaphorically described as an exciting and rewarding journey, providing a sense of fulfillment that is said to be incomparable to most other significant milestones of life. However, the same journey has also been regarded as a potential source of tremendous stressors and challenges, both for the parents and for the significant others involved. These very sentiments about parenting adolescents have been aptly expressed as being a source of "excitement and of anxiety; of happiness and of troubles; of discovery and of bewilderment; and of breaks with the past and yet of links with the future" [8]. With the evolving advancements and progress in our society over the past few decades, parenting practices as well as perceptions about parenting have undoubtedly witnessed adaptations in accordance with the changing times.

2.1. Theoretical background

Parenting as a variable has been extensively explored in the course of human development studies [9]. The theoretical background of parenting has emerged from the groundbreaking work by Baumrind, with the conceptualization of three specific parenting styles, namely authoritarian, permissive and authoritative, along with the identification of parental responsiveness and parental demand as the two fundamental elements of parenting [10, 11]. According to this traditional classification, parents with an authoritarian style tend to be strict, directive, and emotionally detached; parents with a permissive style tend to set less restrictions or limits; while parents with an authoritative style tend to give clear and firm direction, with moderate discipline, warmth, and flexibility [12].

A parenting style is a representation of the standard strategies used by parents to raise their offspring(s) [12], and therefore, as a psychological construct is dependent on the behavior and attitude of the parents. In fact, a parenting style need not always fit into specific theoretical paradigms and instead could also be a creation by the parents themselves; it could be derived from a combination of multiple variables, further evolving over time as their wards begin to develop their own individual personalities and experience transitions across varying stages of life [13].

2.2. Traditional parenting

Endeavors to trace the journey of how parenting would have begun with new parents who did not have any support from researchers and theorists, and efforts to identify a single original 'tradition' of parenting, would unfortunately, be in vain. This is so because parenting patterns tend to exhibit variations based on a variety of factors, including culture, personality, parental background, educational level, socioeconomic status, family size, religion, etc. [14]. From a traditional point of view, most parenting styles tend to emanate from the way the parents themselves had been parented. However, this need not involve a repetition of similar parenting practices but could in contradiction involve discarding or avoiding such a repetition. This could simply be because these are the only practices of parenting that they have any knowledge about, or with the intention of learning from one's own parents' mistakes, or unconsciously relying on a vicarious learning of the same. In fact, even contemporary parents believe that their parenting styles are largely influenced by the way they were raised by their own parents, thereby serving as the departure point for beginning one's own journey as a parent [15, 16].

As it has been established that parenting styles are largely based on the cultural value systems that have been internalized within the family, it would seem appropriate and befitting to this chapter to gain an understanding of the traditional parenting practices within an Indian context. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind the paucity of research studies exploring such factors in contemporary India [17]. Based on the documented evidence about the collectivistic nature of the Indian society, it does not come as a surprise that traditional Indian parenting would also be pivoted around the promotion of social cohesion and interdependence [18]. The value of such parental goals helps Indian families provide for nurturance, emotional bonding, and social support [17]. Given the strong hierarchical kinship structure within traditional Indian families, an emphasis on obedience to authority can be clearly expected. Finally, as a culture which tends to give higher value to affiliation and contact, traditional Indian parenting does emphasize greater physical proximity between the parent and the child, including closeness to the body, frequent massaging, and co-sleeping, especially as an infant [19, 20].

2.3. Changes in contemporary parenting approaches

Parenting practices are bound to have evolved with changing demands over a period of time. With a constancy in the main objective of parenting, the methods and strategies used to attain such an objective have undergone significant adaptations. Over the decades, historical changes have been noted, including greater autonomy being provided by the parents, in terms of both private self-expression by the offspring and expressions of defiance toward parents [21]. There has also been a decrease in autonomy being provided by the parents for freedom of movement and a delayed acceptance of meaningful responsibilities [21]. The traditionally authoritarian style of parenting, involving an unquestioned obedience is now almost obsolete, instead being substituted by a preference for a sense of parental control [22]. Such transitions have been witnessed through a qualitative analysis of parental advice columns, with findings suggesting that parents, at the beginning of the previous century, lacked awareness regarding the offspring's whereabouts, and emphasized completion of chores and obedience as a

parental goal; but changing times have led to a reversal in the degree of importance attached to these same goals, with more emphasis on the freedom of expression within the home, greater restrictions on their independence outside the home, and emphasis on chores being replaced by value being given to academics [21].

Consequently, evolutions in the parenting styles, especially among urban educated parents, have led to an orientation toward a sense of connectedness, autonomy as well as control, with parenting practices becoming more permissive, child-centered, and responsive; and therefore seeming to fit in more with Baumrind's authoritative parenting style, as compared to a traditional authoritarian approach [10, 22, 23]. In fact, there is evidence to suggest a dialectical synthesis of both material independence and psychological interdependence as a characteristic of contemporary models of parenting within urban settings of India [22]. With the advent of technological invasion, especially the increasing role of the social media, a definite change in the nature of communication patterns in families can be witnessed [24]. In addition, there have been changes within the family size and structures [17], for example, increase in dual-income families (with working parents), or increase in number of single parents, among others, are also underlying significant changes in parenting trends. Such familial adaptations have been associated with a new form of parental indulgence, as parents are spending more time, energy, and resources on their children's educational and career options, ironically assuming a more demanding role in terms of parental expectations of achievement and success [22].

At the same time, contemporary parents seem to be receptive toward reviewing their parenting approach in an effort toward building a better relationship with their child or adolescent [16]. With the dawn of globalization, better education and increased exposure to the Western cultures, both parents and adolescents have come to recognize the importance of independence and self-reliance in the contemporary world [25]. In tandem with such exposure, this growing awareness is also enabling a greater parental sensitivity, which in itself could lead to potential implications toward a 'kid-glove handling' approach to parenting in the future. Such an interface thus leads to an amalgamation of traditional parenting wisdom being integrated with the recent ideas and advancements in the field of childcare and parenting [20].

3. Parenting an adolescent

Adolescence as a phase is characterized by rapid developments including, both physical and psychological changes. It is a crucial stage of development, not only for the adolescent but also for the parents, bringing with it a set of apprehensions and worries. It is not uncommon to hear parental concerns regarding the approaching teenage years, being associated with changing expectations and relationships. In fact, a majority of parents have been found to consider adolescence as being the most difficult stage for childrearing [13, 26]. This section examines the attachment patterns of adolescents in relation to their developmental needs, along with exploring the influence of various cultural variables within this interplay.

3.1. Parent-adolescent attachment patterns

While there has been abundant research on attachment patterns arising from the seminal work by Bowlby and Ainsworth, for example, see Ref. [27]; most of the emphasis has been on the transmission of attachment patterns in infancy and childhood [28]. Ever since the work of these pioneers, it has been agreed upon, that an attachment with the parent (or caregiver) typically begins from infancy. However, as a child approaches the developmental stage of adolescence, it is not uncommon to note a shift in such attachments, seemingly to be directed more toward peers [29]. The function of attachment with parents has been found to change from the phase of childhood to adolescence [30]. While parental attachment with an adolescent does not necessitate the same degree of physical proximity as compared to childhood years, there is, however, a greater need for parental sensitivity during these teenage years [31].

It is also common for parents to feel isolated while parenting adolescents, which could possibly be attributed to this shift in attachment patterns. However, it is vital for them to recognize the significance of their role as a parent and to persist in their efforts toward increased awareness of the adolescent's subjective world, while being available to provide guidance, direction, and support, especially in the contemporary world [13].

3.2. Need for autonomy

As adolescence serves as a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, achieving a sense of autonomy has been identified as one of the salient characteristics of this phase of development. It has also been recognized as a period of transition from dependence on adult direction and protection to self-direction and self-determination [13]. Adolescents tend to adopt an exploratory approach, with the major objective of attaining independence. As Erikson described in his developmental theory, the primary psychosocial task of adolescence is the formation of an identity [32]. Therefore, it is during this phase that adolescents are likely to demonstrate a shift in their focus from the parents and the family, instead, striving toward greater interactions with the systems outside the family [33]. Recognition of such a shift reinforces the fact that the attachment of an adolescent with a parent cannot be viewed as similar to that of a child-parent relationship.

Moreover, it is also important to note that the desire for achieving autonomy does not necessarily imply a decrease in the attachment between an adolescent and his/her parents. However, normal adolescent development has been characterized by such a gradual shift from the importance of familial relationships toward interpersonal relationships with peers, with the objectives of socialization, self-definition, friendship, and support systems [13]. An adolescent would simply aim at reducing dependence on parents and, consequently, would tend to form attachments with peers, neighbors, and other members of the community. Moreover, there could also be instances when adolescents feel lost or overwhelmed with their independence, and this is the time when they could rely on their parents serving as a secure base for them [27]. In addition, a positive relationship between adolescents and their parents can often serve as a predictor for the adolescent's ability to develop a sense of autonomy [34].

It is also necessary to mention the role of cultural factors interplaying with such a developmental need, though these factors shall be discussed in more detail in the next sections. Commonly, a large extent of conflicting interests between parents and adolescents is attributed to this need for autonomy. Such a conflict could often be exaggerated within the Indian context, with parental emphasis on interdependence as an inherent part of the collectivistic culture of India. This discrepancy is often attributed to be a manifestation of adolescent rebellion or parental conservativeness. However, the role of cross-cultural variables needs to be reiterated here, as in individualistic cultures, parenting goals tend to value independence, while on the other hand Indian parenting goals are more likely to value obedience and good manners [28]. In addition, it has also been demonstrated that the parenting practices of Asian American parents who adhere to traditional Asian values may be incongruent with their children's level of acculturation, which could also breed further conflicts [35].

Simultaneously, there is growing contradictory evidence from the universalistic perspective, which demonstrates the importance of fulfilling the need for autonomy across both individualistic and relatively more collectivistic societies [36]. However, such apparent contradictions stem from the varying definitions of autonomy by both warring perspectives [37, 38]. Finally, it is necessary to note that there exists a gap in the extant research on this aspect of parenting, which has mainly been based on Western populations and thereby does not take into consideration the cross cultural differences in developmental pathways [28].

3.3. Role of cultural factors

Despite the progressing advancements, the traditional cultural value systems and beliefs still play a significant role in influencing parenting, parental attachments, and perceptions of parenting practices [21, 39–41]. Such influences can not only be attributed to the psychosocial and cultural factors influencing the immediate environment but also extending to the experience of these parents during their own upbringing. The role of a culture-parenting nexus has been recognized, both in constructing and in maintaining a pattern of parenting [2]. Recent evidence highlights the influence of both the parents' and the children's temperaments on the parenting style adopted by the parents, also being largely influenced by their own parenting and culture [13]. Therefore, it seems apt to devote the next subsections in exploring such cultural variations influencing the adolescent attachments and perceptions across cultural settings.

3.3.1. Cultural differences in parental-adolescent attachment

An analysis of the earlier research seems to suggest that most attachment theorists have focused on universals, with their measures being based on Western values like individuation and exploration; consequently, the role of cultural differences seems to have been neglected [42]. Cultural variations within the development of attachment could include differences in the subjective meaning of parental sensitivity, perceptions of parental acceptance or control, and in the meanings attached to various parenting practices [28, 43].

Research has identified that changes in parental attachments differ cross-culturally due to differences in the developmental pathways, which are characterized by culture-specific concepts

of independence or interdependence. This suggests that individualistic cultures tend to have a greater emphasis on the developmental pathway of independence, as compared to the construct of interdependence prevailing in collectivistic cultures [43, 44]. Culturally significant differences in the parental-adolescent relations have also been evidenced, for instance, a symbiotic harmony characterizes their relationship in Asian cultures like Japan, maintaining a stable relationship with both parents and peers; on the other hand, in Western cultures like in the USA, the parental-adolescent relationship is characterized by a generative tension, with a transferring of close relationships from parents to peers, consequently leading to a challenging of parental values, and conflicts between the adolescents and their parents [43]. Elaborating on the culture-specific functional role of attachment, it can be understood that such a symbiotic and interdependent relationship fulfills a need for assurance and further serves as an agency to provide for the universally underlying need for competence in such cultures; this is opposed to the striving for independence and separateness leading to competence within a Western culture [45]. Therefore, a parental-adolescent attachment could be viewed as being dependent on the cultural perceptions and interpretations of their needs, including competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are considered to be three basic psychological needs of an individual [37, 46].

3.3.2. Cultural perceptions of parental control vs. parental sensitivity

Cross-cultural factors have also been found to influence the perceptions of parental practices. For instance, the degree of parental control as perceived by individuals across cultures cannot be generalized, more so because the research findings related to parental control tend to focus more on culturally heterogeneous samples [47].

Especially from a culturally relativistic perspective, family climates with more emphasis on dependence are likely to demonstrate a greater degree of parental control, as compared to family climates emphasizing achievement [38]. According to a research study, parental control could have two specific expressions: a dependency-oriented control, involving the use of pressure to ensure greater physical and emotional proximity to the parent; and an achievement-oriented control, involving the use of pressure to strive toward excellence in performance-based situations [48]. In alignment with the same, the role of culturally significant differences in these expressions of parental control has also been evidenced [38].

Depending on their cultural orientation, adolescents' interpretation of parental control, sensitivity, and the affective connotation attached with it is likely to differ [38]. An individualistic culture is likely to have adolescent perceptions of parental control as being intrusive and hostile, as a constraint, contradictory to a relatively benign and appropriate perception in the form of a supportive and more sensitive approach, in collectivistic cultures [49, 50].

Greater parental control could be correlated with detrimental effects on the adolescents, specifically in terms of stifled independence, along with an encouraged dependency. However, such negative effects of parental control would be relevant only to cultural contexts where independence is highly valued, being inconsistent with the prevailing cultural values [38]. Based on such differences in cultural orientations, parental control in Asian countries is likely to be perceived as an expression of parental involvement and care, being in alignment

with their traditional cultural values [51]. Therefore, positive meanings of sensitivity could be attached to the parental control in families wherein loyalty, parental involvement, and cooperation are valued [38]. However, it is important here to highlight the role of increasing westernization, growing exposure through education and media, and a greater cultural awareness, which could in turn lead to evolving cultural values influencing an adolescent's perceptions of the parental control.

3.3.3. Individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures

An exploration of the cultural variables influencing Indian parenting would be incomplete without an understanding of the nature of collectivism characterizing Indian culture. As discussed above, adolescence is earmarked by the development of autonomy and relatedness as a universal task. However, there is research evidence that supports cultural factors influencing the degree of importance given to each of these two tasks; for example, individualistic cultures emphasize autonomy relatively more than collectivistic cultures, which emphasize parental control and family obligations [28, 44]. Research on parenting within Indian families is suggestive of greater emphasis on interdependence [52]. This difference could be attributed to variations in the family size and structure across cultures, with smaller family units' parenting goals focussing on raising autonomous and independent individuals, and dependence being discouraged as being psychologically unhealthy [41].

Interdependence is a culture-specific construct highlighting the role of family relationships and obligations, which is emphasized in a collectivistic culture like in India [28]. This can be evidenced by the strength of the kinship networks and extended families that have been prevailing in India [53]. Therefore, such a cultural backdrop tends to emphasize loyalty toward family values; consequently, seeking an independence from parents could actually be disapproved of in such a cultural setting.

Upon examining cultural differences in parenting styles, Asian parents have been found to exhibit an authoritarian style of parenting [54]. Specifically, Indian fathers have traditionally been the patriarchal figures dominating their households [55]. Internalizing the values of collectivistic cultures within the process of parenting, the expression of an individual's own needs is typically inhibited in deference to valuing the needs of others; subsequently, it is common to note more authoritarian and restraining parenting, with a greater expectation of obedience dependence and sociability; on the contrary, parents from individualistic cultures tend to value self-reliance, self-interest, and autonomy within the socialization process, thereby having greater parental expectations of exploration and independence with an authoritative style of parenting [56]. At the same time, it is vital to note that the restrictive and normative parenting in collectivistic cultures is not necessarily associated with parents being rejecting or lacking in warmth [57–60].

Finally, it is also essential to mention that although Asian countries are often depicted as being uniformly collectivistic in nature, such a static characterization of cultures in general could be overly simplistic [61]. Simultaneously, it is interesting to observe multiple instances of Indians persisting to value familial unity and filial piety, despite the impact of increased exposure being considered responsible for the waning of traditional values over decades [62].

And therefore, the prevailing cultural factors within a family need to be explored as independent entities with significantly potential implications toward the relationship between parents and adolescents.

4. Mindfulness-based approach to parenting

According to the teachings of Buddha, mindfulness, being ubiquitous in nature, can be useful everywhere [63]. As a fundamental parenting practice, mindfulness in the context of parenting and parent training has been suggested as a significant force toward improving the effectiveness of parenting interventions [64]. Such an approach not only could improve the quality of the parental-adolescent relationship but can also influence parental self-efficacy.Given the pressure felt by most parents to "get parenting right," along with the parents' concern about their level of confidence in their parenting [16], adopting a mindfulness-based approach could be extremely beneficial. With the growing popularity of the concept of mindfulness, and increasing evidence indicating its benefits within the field of mental health and applied research, incorporating such an approach within our parenting practices undoubtedly can unfold its potential toward improving the experience of parenting for both the parent and the adolescent.

4.1. Historical underpinnings of mindfulness

The roots of mindfulness as a practice have been borrowed from the Eastern meditative and Western Christian contemplative traditions, specifically from the teachings and practices associated with Buddhist traditions [65]. The term "mindfulness" is an English translation of the Pali word *sati*, in the language of Buddhist psychology 2500 years ago, connoting awareness, attention, and remembering [66]. While this is not the first instance of borrowing components of Buddhist practice and other Eastern meditative practices, many such integrations between Buddhism and Western psychology have been developed in the past few decades, ranging from such inclusions within the original psychoanalytical traditions to more recent integrations within the cognitive-behavioral traditions [67, 68]. The construct of mindfulness has now carved a niche for itself as an established component of several contemporary psychotherapies, including Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and its derivatives, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Compassion-Focused Therapy, and Mindfulness-Based Relationship Enhancement [67, 69].

According to Marsha Linehan, who developed the model of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, core mindfulness is one of the fundamental modules of the skills training program, aiming at improving an individual's control of attention and the mind, which has also been found as a promising intervention for adolescents [70, 71]. The practice of mindfulness has been defined as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" [72]. More Western psychological perspectives are also in alignment, describing mindfulness as "a receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience" [73].

4.2. Model of mindful parenting

Mindful parenting was first proposed as a concept by Myla and Jon Kabat-Jinn in 1997, identifying sovereignty, acceptance, and empathy as the salient features of parenting [74]. According to them, sovereignty is described as the process of recognizing the child's "whole-ness" by "seeing beneath behavior"; and acceptance refers to "an attempt to come to terms with the nature of things", within the parent, the child, or a particular situation [74]. The parental attitudes of compassion, acceptance and kindness, along with them being fully present during their interactions with their offspring, are key characteristics of mindful parenting [75, 76].

While there is not much empirical evidence as yet to explore the application of mindful-ness within parenting, there is sufficient evidence supporting its role within a preventive paradigm toward mental health [77]. A model of mindful parenting could be considered as a framework in which parents intentionally bring moment-to-moment awareness to the parent-child relationship, through an integration of various components of core mindfulness; these could include attending behavior, emotional awareness, self-regulation, and nonjudgmental acceptance as integral parts of the parenting practice [78]. Further elaborating on this model, a recent research operationalized mindful parenting consisting of six dimensions, which involved (i) listening with full attention, (ii) having compassion for the child, (iii) a nonjudg-mental acceptance of parental functioning, (iv) an emotional nonreactivity in parenting, (v) an emotional awareness of the child, and (vi) an emotional awareness of the self [79]. A combina-tion of these dimensions enables parents to be mindful, maintaining a consistency with their parenting goals and values, within the realm of the parent-child relationship [78].

Integrating a mindfulness-based approach within parenting practices enables a shift in paren-tal awareness toward the present-moment parenting experience, thereby becoming one of the most significant aspects of the parental relationship [78]. In fact, an application of such an approach to parenting creates a demarcation between the parenting goals being predomi-nated by parent-oriented or child-oriented motivations [80]. The model of mindful parenting reiterates such a distinction, encouraging parents' mindful awareness and acceptance of the child's needs, thereby improving their relationship with the child [78].

5. Applicability for adolescents within an Indian context

Drawing from the implications suggested above, with an integration of the various cultural factors influencing parenting, it seems interesting to explore the applicability of such a mind-fulness-based model of parenting in India. Such an approach could be advocated especially for the parenting of an adolescent population, considering the characteristic challenges asso-ciated with this phase of development. Undoubtedly, the role of parenting does not come without its challenges, it being easier to find faults in retrospect. In fact, with increasing stress-ors, it is indeed becoming difficult to parent effectively in the contemporary world [7]. In light of research supporting the benefits of mindfulness within daily living, such a model can also have potential implications not just toward the parental-adolescent relationship but also toward reducing parental stresses and enhancing their own well-being [73].

5.1. Incorporating mindfulness within communication patterns

As the value of interdependence within the Indian culture has previously been established, the application of one of the most significant components of the model of mindful parenting can potentiate significant implications. Parents' mindful listening, i.e., with full attention and awareness being given to the present moment experiences, can have significant implications toward the relationship between the parent and the offspring. As the parental attachment undergoes a shift during adolescence, such mindful listening can enhance the quality of attachment and security. Furthermore, this can be appreciated by adolescents who are commonly heard complaining of 'not being understood' by their parents.

This model can also play a significant role in shaping the perceptions of the parental sensitivity toward the adolescent. This is expected to be reflected in their accurate and increased awareness of the adolescent's verbal as well as behavioral cues, along with a simultaneous reduction in parental expression of expectations from the adolescent. This assumes a greater significance considering the lack of parental awareness of the adolescent's whereabouts in the outer world [81].

Finally, recent preliminary evidence suggests that self-reported mindful parenting can be associated with the interactions between the parents and the youth [82]. Further, such mindful attention and awareness is likely to improve the accuracy of parental perceptions of adolescents' thoughts and feelings, thereby leading to a significant decrease in the amount of conflicts or disagreements, and deceptiveness by the adolescents, which are considered characteristic of this phase [81, 83].

5.2. Adopting a nonjudgmental stance

Given the magnitude of conflicts between adolescents and parents, a mindfulness-based model of parenting advocates a nonjudgmental acceptance of both the self and the adolescent [78]. In combination with an enhanced and mindful understanding of the adolescent's thoughts and feelings, such a stance enables the parents to be accepting of the presence of struggles within the parental-adolescent relationship. Such an acceptance brings with it a more realistic set of expectations, along with an enhanced sense of parenting self-efficacy.

Mindfulness within parenting approaches has been hypothesized to reduce parental preoccupation and/or negative bias [77]. It also enables parents to identify their interactions with the adolescent, which could contribute to a relational disconnect [84]. Therefore, the parental goal shifts from evading such conflicts toward gaining a more complete and nonjudgmental understanding of the present moment (based on mindful attention). Such a perspective can serve as a foundation for a preventive approach toward parenting conflicts, and in turn improving the parental-adolescent relationship.

6. Implications: Way forward

Mindfulness-based parenting can serve as a foundation for enhancing crucial parent-adolescent relationships. As has been suggested by Duncan [78, 82], the implementation

of a mindfulness-based model of parenting can help in the creation of family contexts that are more conducive for a satisfying parental relationship with the child. Such a model has immense potential toward a preventive approach to adolescents' parenting. Adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward their parents can largely be impacted by this model, consequently improving the quality of the parent-adolescent attachments.

Incorporating a mindfulness-based approach within our parenting styles can be instrumental in altering the nature of responsiveness toward the adolescent's emotions. It is also likely to reduce the expression of negative affect within the parent-adolescent relationship. In addition, mindful parents tend to develop more adaptive coping mechanisms, thereby equipping them to deal with their parental stresses as well. Therefore, this model brings with it a two-fold benefit for adolescents' as well as parents' well-being.

Finally, the success of such a mindfulness-based approach is expected to have a greater receptivity, given the nature of spirituality rooted within the Indian culture. In spite of the research supporting mindful parenting as a preventive model, there is a need for empirical investigations of the efficacy of such mindfulness-based parenting, as a means to foster positive outcomes for the adolescent [77, 85]. It is imperative that future research exploring the efficacy of such a model can extend this discourse, as well as formulate more culturally sensitive parenting practices within the societal realm of India.

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