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Research Paper

Challenges Endured By Low and High Scholarly Achievers of Class Tenth: The Parent-Adolescent Perception

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ABSTRACT

Background: Teenage years are usually considered as the "best years of life" by both adults as well as adolescents and thus they look forward to group of activities associated with this stage such as enjoying at parties going out to restaurants with friends or enjoying at sports events etc. Though these are merely a part of what awaits them in the coming years, the future is filled with challenges put forward by their teachers, parents, friends as well as themselves. *Purpose:* To evaluate problems of tenth class high and low academic achievers and parent adolescent perception of it. *Material and Methods:* The sample was collected from 300 respondents (50 high and 50 low academic achievers of tenth class) along with both of their parents. The data was collected using the socio-personal profile developed by the investigator, student problem checklist by Badami (1977) and modified version of student problem checklist. *Result and Conclusion:* The findings suggested that in majority of the domains studied such as Physical attributes, Physical health and fitness etc, both adolescents as well as their parents perceived average extent of problems. Whereas, in the area of economic and material facilities and physical health and fitness as compared to high academic achievers, low academic achiever adolescents perceived more problems. While fathers of low academic achievers perceived more problems in the area of friendship, sex and marriage, the mothers perceived their adolescents' problems in all the areas except vocational. It was found that adolescents perceived more problems in physical attributes, morality and religion and education and customs areas as compared to their parents while adolescents perceived more problems in economic and material facilities and vocation areas. Both high and low academic achievers perceived major problems in the areas of physical health and fitness and economic and material facilities.

Keywords: Challenges Endured, Low And High Scholarly Achievers, Class Tenth, Parent-Adolescent

Adolescence has been conceived as a "period of developmental disturbance with characteristics of erratic behavior, psychic disequilibrium and internal conflicts along with

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associated sexual maturation with confusion" (Carol, 1975; Saraswat, R.K. 1989). Thus, adolescence is looked upon by all with great curiosity, intrigue and interest and is considered to be the crucial period of human life. "Every step forward in growth and maturity brings with it not only new gains but also new problems"- Anna Freud (1958). Adolescence is the period from about age 12 or 13 i.e. when child becomes sexually mature to the age of legal maturity.

Following are the commonly observed physiological and psychological that takes place during adolescence:

Physiological Changes:
- Onset of maturation
- Gain in height and weight
- Muscular development and changes in body proportions
- Development of breasts in girls
- Development of sweat glands and oil glands
- Development of pubic hair and facial hair (in boys)
- Hormonal changes
- Changes in voice

Psychological Changes:
- Mood swings and self image obsession
- Greater closeness to friends than parents
- Increased interest in heterosexual relations and other sexual activities
- Identity crisis
- Attraction towards opposite sex
- Ego-centric behavior
- Increase in levels of curiosity, anxiety and violent behavior

Teenage years are usually considered as the "best years of life" by both adults as well as adolescents and thus they look forward to group of activities associated with this stage such as enjoying at parties going out to restaurants with friends or enjoying at sports events etc. Though these are merely a part of what awaits them in the coming years, the future is filled with challenges put forward by their teachers, parents, friends as well as themselves (Gupta, 2003). The adolescents face challenges of negotiating a path between dependence and gaining autonomy making the life ahead tough and challenging. If in case, the adolescents fail to solve their problems or communicate or are unable to cope up with such challenges, it leads to a lot of stress (Walker, 2002).

While some adolescent problems may occur at a certain age and some might be short lived, there might be a variation in severity, time span and observed manifestation of problem. This altogether constitutes to a wide spectrum of adolescent problems. Recent studies have related

such problems with both environmental as well as genetic factors such as mental disorders, imperfect parenting and poverty etc (Panta, 2005).

Following are some of the common adolescent tendencies and related problems that account for change in parent adolescent relations (Tandon, 2007):

- **Egocentric Tendencies -** Self-centeredness, indecisiveness, argumentativeness, self-consciousness, finding faults with adults
- **Tendency To Take Risk -** Drug abuse/ misuse, high death rates due to accidents and high rate of suicides
- **Health Neglect –** Alcoholism, obesity, bulimia, anorexia nervosa and depression
- **Liberal Sexual Attitude -** Premarital sexual activity, teenage pregnancies, STDs, HIV & AIDS
- **Closer Ties With Peer Group Than Parents -** Parent-adolescent conflicts related to social customs and traditions, choice of hair style, music, clothes and heterosexual relations

Such tendencies also account for parental anxiety and distress making it an added reason for mid life crisis of parents such as:
➢ Lack of previously accepted authority
➢ Loss of youth appearance
➢ Marital satisfaction issues
➢ Ageing
➢ Occupational competition

Instead of parents acting as "consultants" and thereby keeping their adolescents on right track, the parents tend to become "managers" and tend to manage their life completely under the pressure and tension of their own. Thus, render them from developing decision-making muscles' (Riera, 1995). By acting as "consultants", the parents also get an edge over evading over managing and over/ under parenting (Reira, 1995).

The adolescents develop enhanced academic performance, better self-confidence and better social skills if they get proper love, acceptance and encouragement from parents. On the other hand, adolescents lose confidence in taking independent decisions related to studies, job, etc and tend to become more dependent if the parents are excessively controlling in nature.

In order to strengthen the parent adolescent relationship and in turn reduce the related problems, the parents should practice effective and organized parenting techniques and should also strive to provide optimal family environment to adolescents.

Both the adolescents and their parents tend to be in dilemmas in case when parents expect adolescents to behave like adults and take on more responsibility while at the same time expecting them to listen to parental demands and be obedient (Ryan et al., 1986; Williams & Nussbaum, 2001).

Researchers have reported discriminating insecurity and emotional tension during adolescence (Sen, 1989). Positive Parental support at this stage has been shown to impart a great sense of emotional stability to the adolescents (Papini, 1990).

A change in the choice of friends, social interests and social behaviour has been found to be extensively related to adolescence (Harter, 1983). Moreover, studies also suggest multilevel and integrated changes in thinking during adolescence (Peterson, 1991). Thus, positive parenting influences understanding and thinking in adolescents thereby playing a crucial role in augmenting their cognitive development (Peterson, 1987).

The period of rapid physical as well as psychological changes, ultimately leading to sexual maturity, characterizes the puberty. Puberty is primarily influenced by genetics, though environmental factors also exert some influence thereby creating a different time table for every person, although the average age of onset in girls is 10yrs and that for boys is 12 yrs.

Puberty if attained earlier or in case if it is significantly delayed, leads to issues in young (Gerald and Gerald, 1999). This is because changes during puberty, both physical and psychological are promptly noticeable in both boys as well as girls (Marshall et al, 2001). During adolescence, some girls tend to adopt a strict diet in order to get and ideal figure, which then sometimes lead to development of eating disorders (Archibald et al; 1999) and this has also been stated in previous studies that during adolescence, the teenagers tend to become preoccupied with their bodies (Mc Cabe & Ricciardelli, 2003, 2004)

Studies have found that youngsters tend to indulge in sexual activities while trying to escape from loneliness, as an index of personal maturity and most importantly for pleasure (Atkinson, 2002) and this can also be accounted to hormonal changes which make them prone to increase in sexual experimentation as well as developing heterosexual friendships.

PUBERTY RELATED PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENTS

Menstruation

Girls may suffer with stress and anxiety due to scanty/profuse periods or irregular menstrual periods pertaining to fluctuation in hormonal level. Generally, onset of menarche varies depending upon girl's hereditary, climate, living conditions, general overall health etc, thus, first period or menarche may occur as early as 11 yrs or as late as 16 yrs of age in girls.

Vaginal Discharge

Behavioural and emotional issues linked to anxiety might be common amongst girls if the vaginal discharge, which is generally clear or whitish and experienced few days prior to or after the menstruation or might also be experienced midway of the periods, becomes excessive, frothy, yellowish or continuous leading to foul smell and itiching

Wet Dreams

Wet dream in boys i.e. ejaculation of semen while watching a sexually active dream, is very normal and is a sign of puberty, though the person may not recall the dream partially or

completely. Thus the boys may require proper sex education else they may perceive this as a big problem and may get panicky.

Pimples (Acne)

Development of pimples on face during adolescence is very common both in boys as well as girls. Adolescents try out various treatments and may also squeeze the pus filled acne being very conscious of their looks. And thus, they may encounter stress and anxiety if they fail get successful treatment.

Addiction

Adolescence is tender age wherein they experience a lot of peer pressure, rebellious attitude, emotional detachment from parents, desire to establish freedom, incapacity for mature decision making, insecurity, frustration etc, which may indulge them in getting addicted to smoking, alcohol or drugs.

Problems related to identity and looking towards future

Formation of new identity is one of the other major psychological challenge that young people face. An adolescent is in a continuous struggle of -'searching for the meaning and purpose of life' perceived as the greatest of all issues as he is no longer a child.

The decision related to future course of education and career has to be made while still in school (Sharma, 1999). And, this becomes very tough in case an adolescent is unaware of his own abilities, interests and aptitude.

Problems related to academic performance

Parents constantly put their adolescents under stress to perform well since future success in life is equated to achievement in a school by the parents. And, in order to achieve this sometimes their leisure time and activities are also reduced and compensated with increase their study hours. Developing a good societal image also puts them under stress as underachievement invites adverse comments from both parents as well as other family members.

Objectives of the study
1. To evaluate problems of tenth class high and low academic achievers and parent adolescent perception of it.
2. To study differences in perception of problems by parent and adolescent of high and low academic achievers.
3. To examine differences in self perception of problems of high and low academic achievers of tenth class.
4. To study the gender based differences in perception of problems of high and low academic achievers amongst mother's and father's of adolescents.

METHOD

Two Government and two Public schools were randomly selected from Delhi. A complete list of all the students studying class tenth in these randomly selected schools was obtained along with their scores in ninth class. Then, randomly, 50 low academic achievers (25 boys and 25 girls) and 50 high academic achievers (25 boys and 25 girls) were selected from the lists obtained along with their parents (50 fathers and 50 mothers for low and high academic achievers both).

Tools Used

The selection of tools was done keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Following tools were used for measuring various variables of the study:

1. **Socio personal profile** – Included identifiers such as name Initials, Age, gender, School, etc.
2. **Students' problem inventory by Badami (1977)** – To study Adolescents' self perception of their problems
3. **Modified version of students' Problem inventory** – To study Parental perception of Adolescents' problems.

Administration and Scoring

Prior to administration of the tools, rapport was built with all the subjects and they were made aware about the purpose of the study and were also assured about the confidentiality of the information and then the tools were administered in a group. After obtaining the data, the scoring was done using standard norms as stated in the manual.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample descriptive information

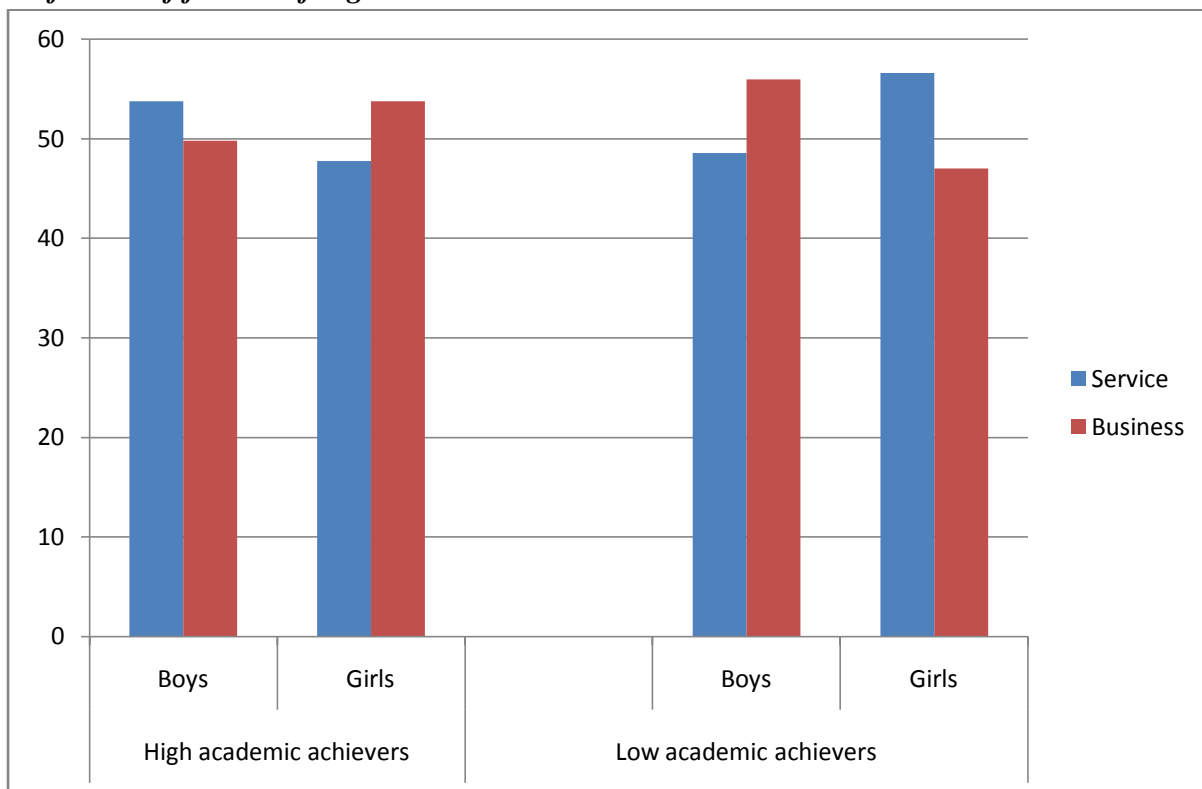|		High academic achievers (%)		Low academic achievers (%)	
Variables	**Categories**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**
Father's Qualification	Matric	35.2	34.5	18.1	42.3
	Graduate	33.0	**39.0**	**76.2**	**50.0**
	Post-Graduate	**37.2**	32.3	13.5	13.5
Father's Profession	Service	**53.8**	47.8	48.6	**56.6**
	Business	49.8	**53.8**	**56.0**	47.0
Mother's Qualification	Matric	42.0	27.1	**64.0**	11.8
	Graduate	12.9	**62.3**	12.1	**56.6**
	Post-Graduate	**49.5**	16.0	29.3	37.0
Mother's Profession	Working	**64.3**	47.8	22.7	42.5
	Non- working	39.3	55.8	**79.9**	**60.1**

N=300

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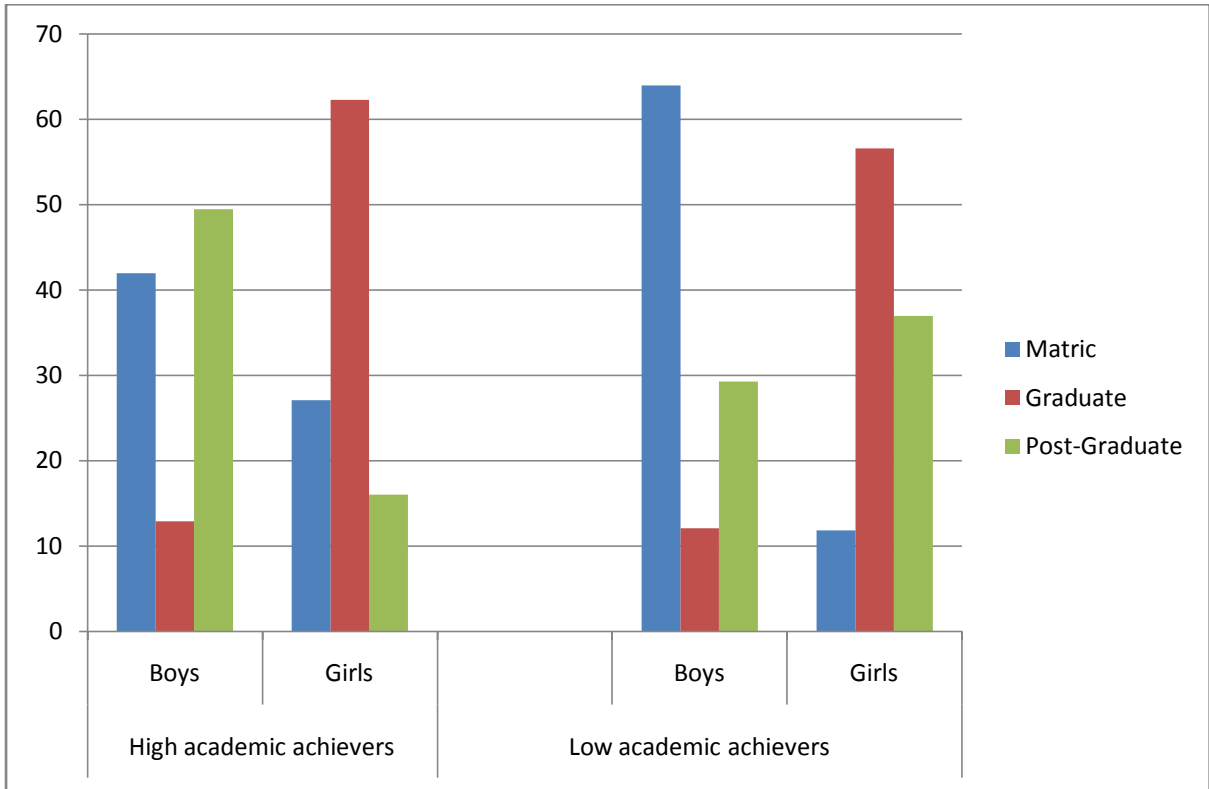*Qualification of fathers of high and low academic achievers*
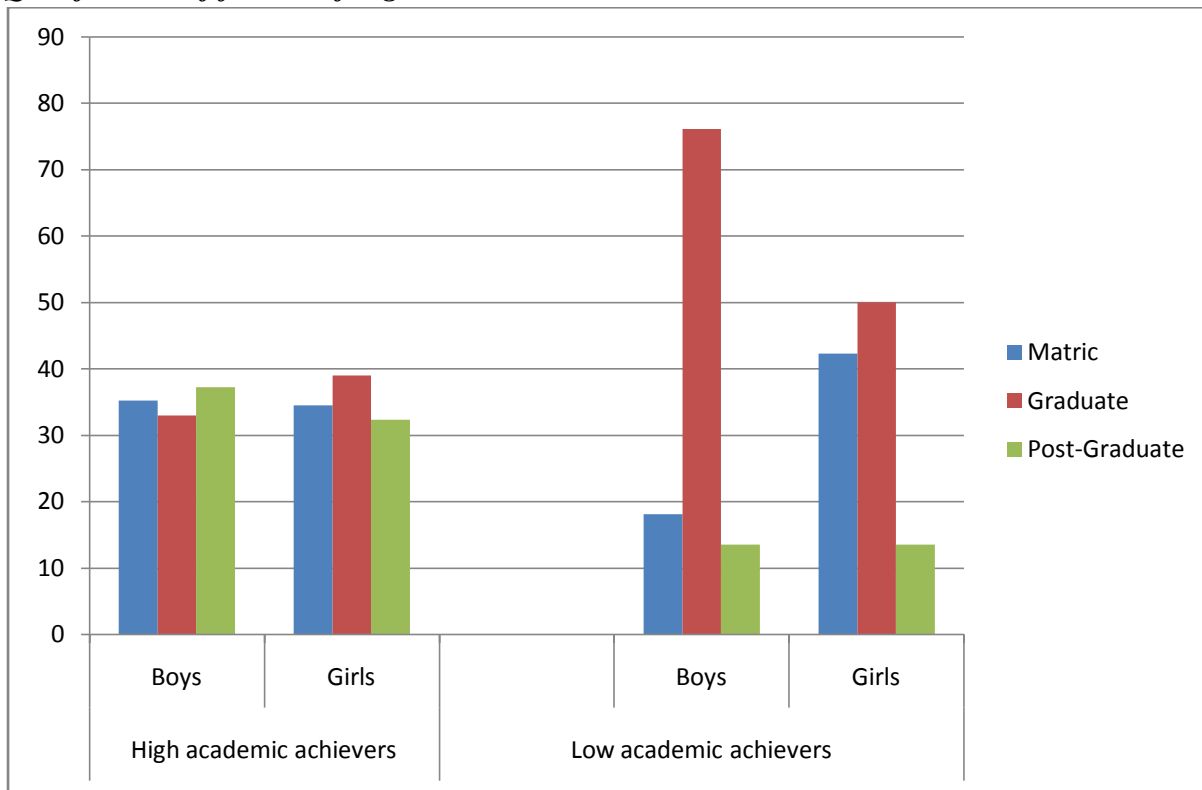
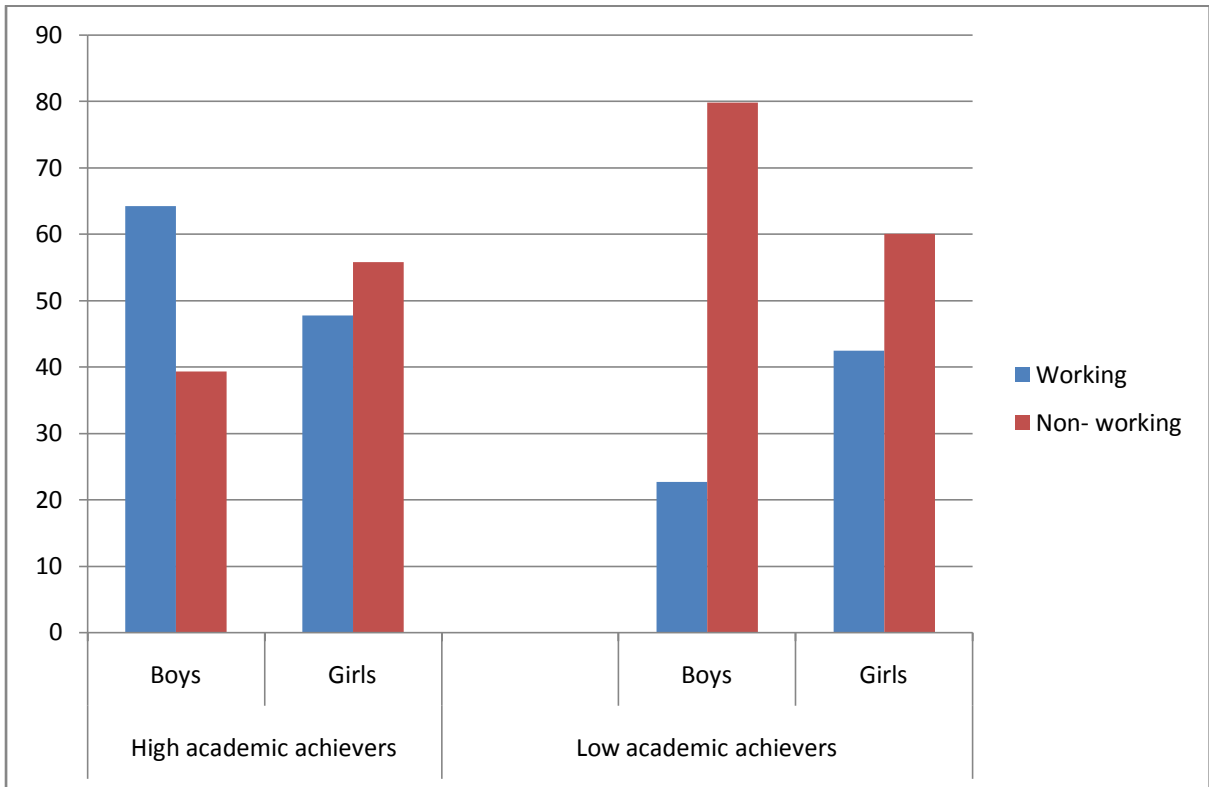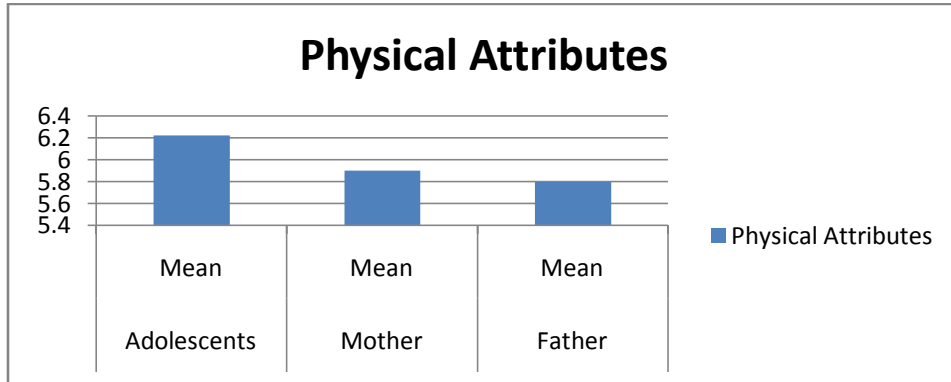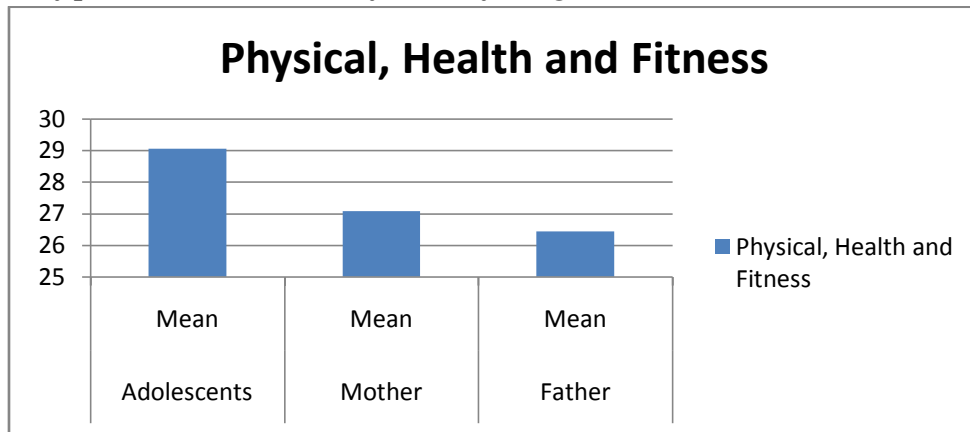
Profession of fathers of high and low academic achievers

Challenges Endured By Low and High Scholarly Achievers of Class Tenth: The Parent-Adolescent Perception

Qualification of mothers of high and low academic achievers

Profession of mothers of high and low academic achievers

PARENT-ADOLESCENT PERCEPTION OF PROBLEMS OF TENTH CLASS STUDENTS

Perception of problems related to physical attributes, physical health and fitness

Physical Attributes
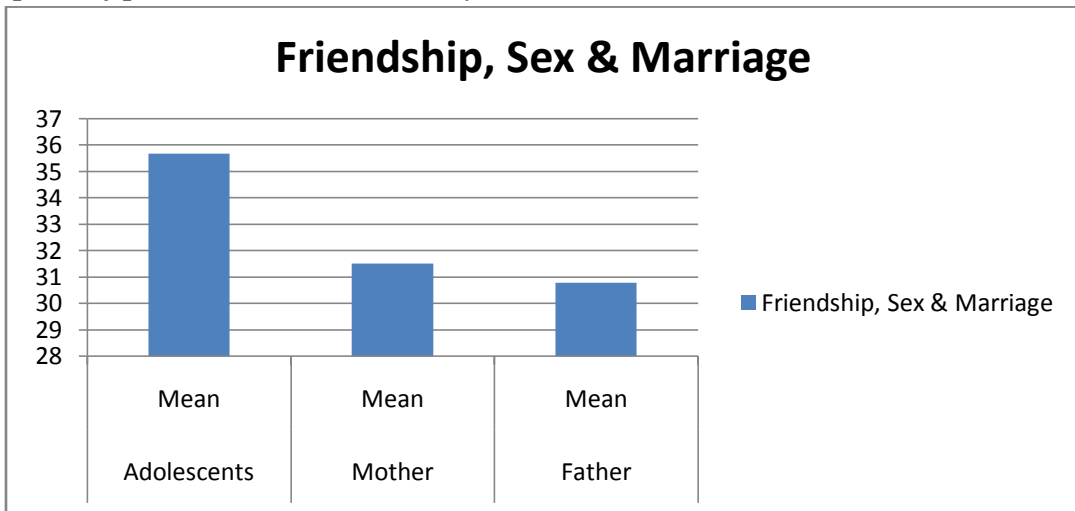
Perception of problems related to self and self image

Physical, Health and Fitness

Perception of problems related to Economic and material facilities
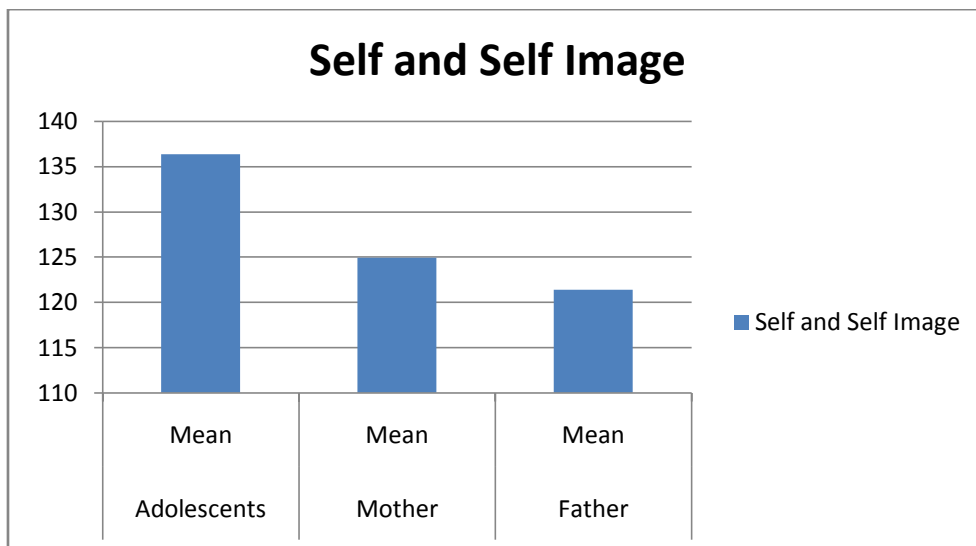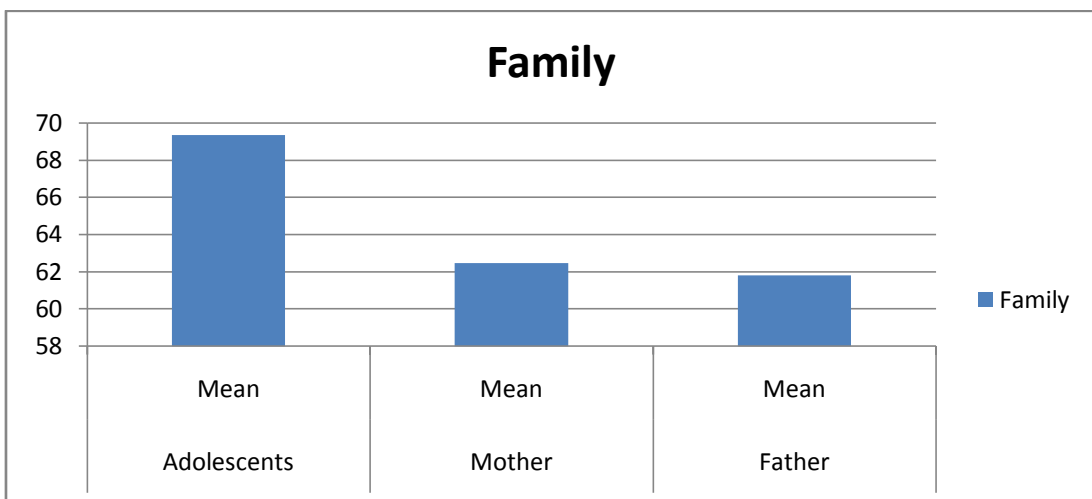
Self and Self Image

Perception of problems related to Friendship, sex and marriage
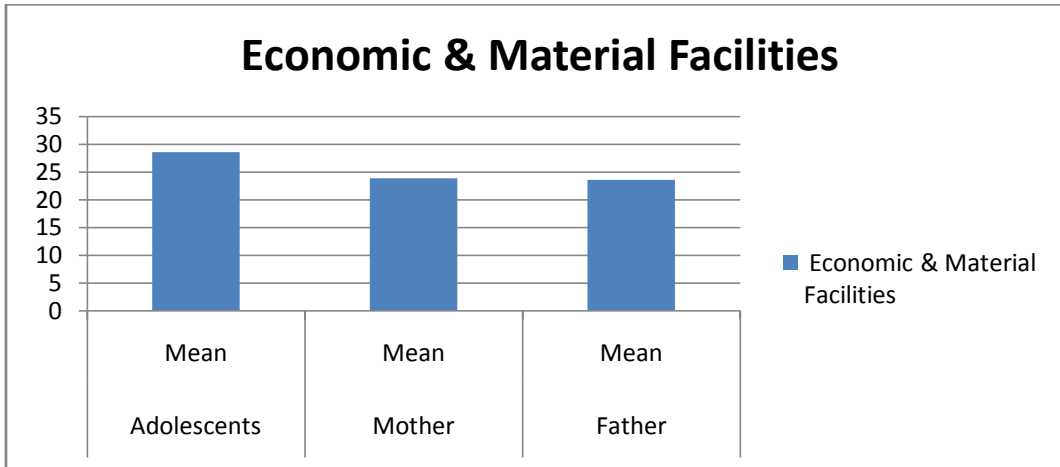
Perception of problems related to Family

Perception of problems related to Social issues

Perception of problems related to Education

Perception of problems related to Vocation
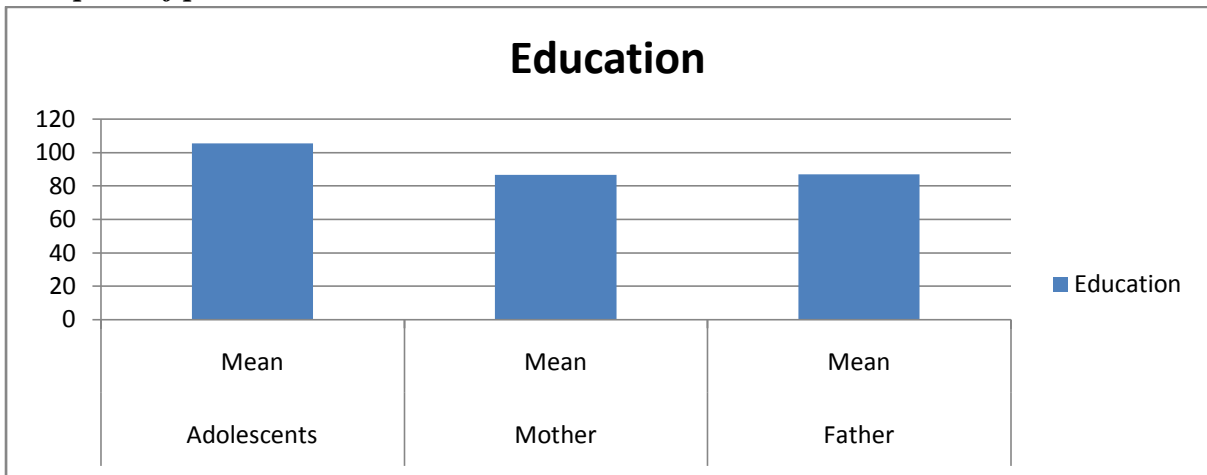
Perception of problems related to Customs, morality and religion

Discrepancy in parent-adolescent perception of problems of high and low academic achievers

Custom, Morality& Religion

Discrepancy in high and low academic achiever's perception of problems
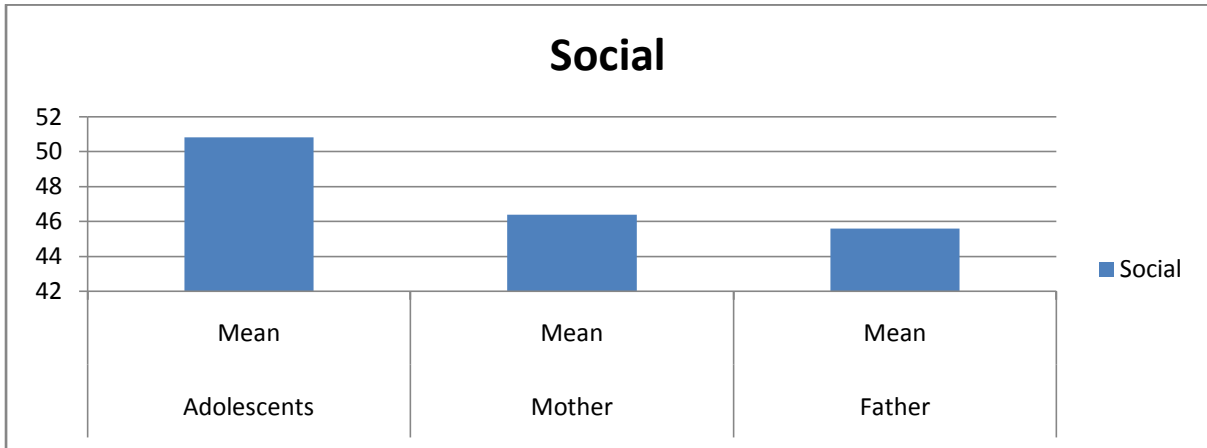
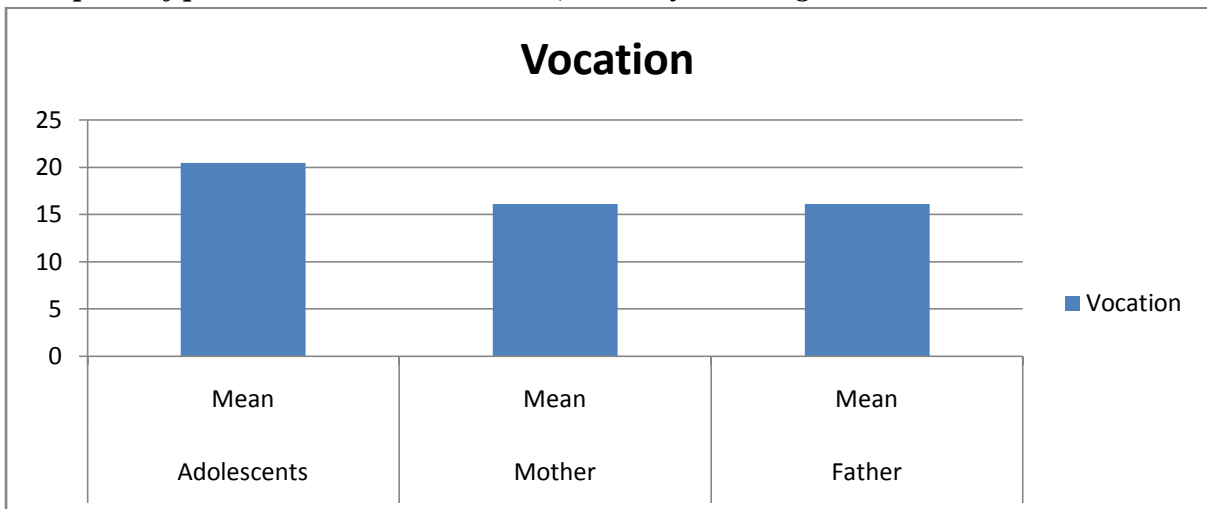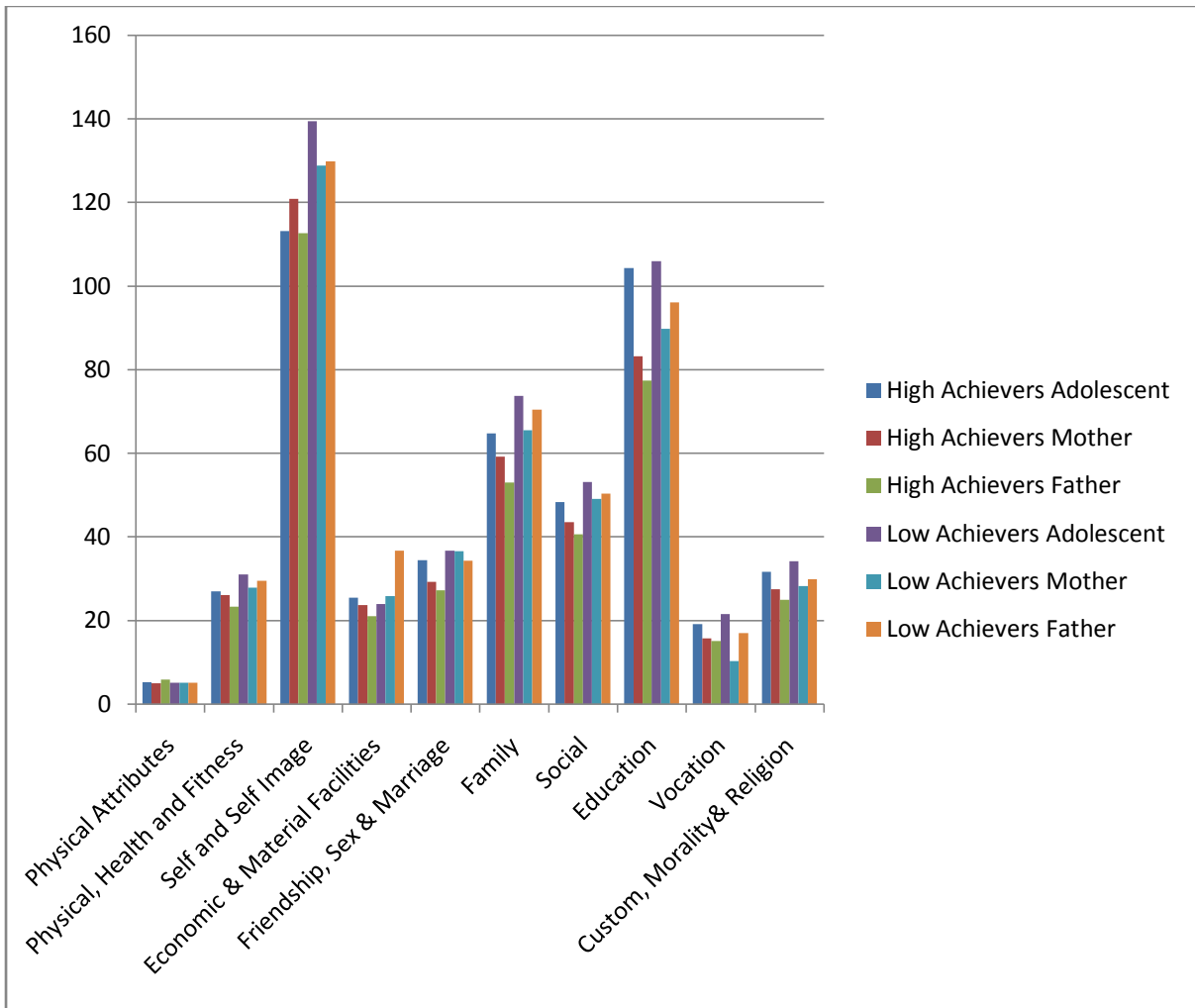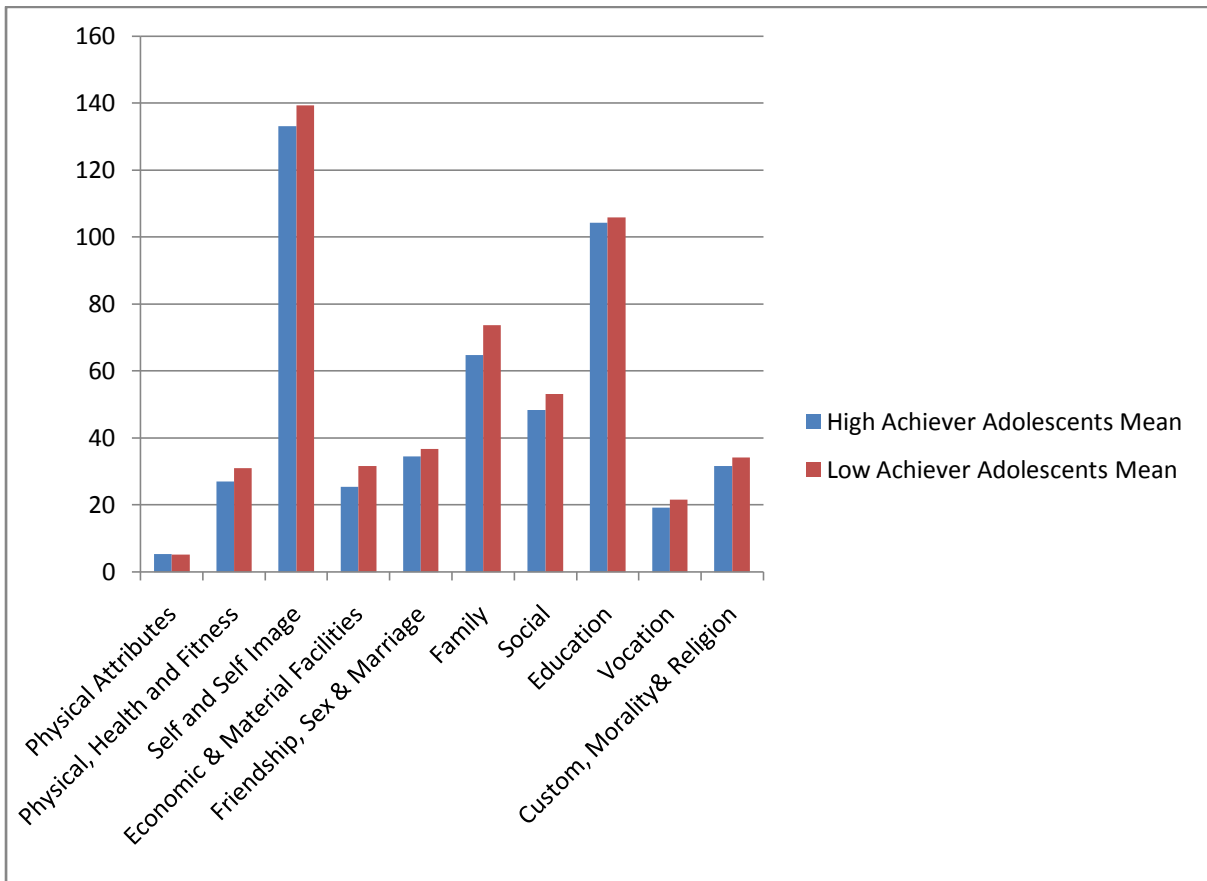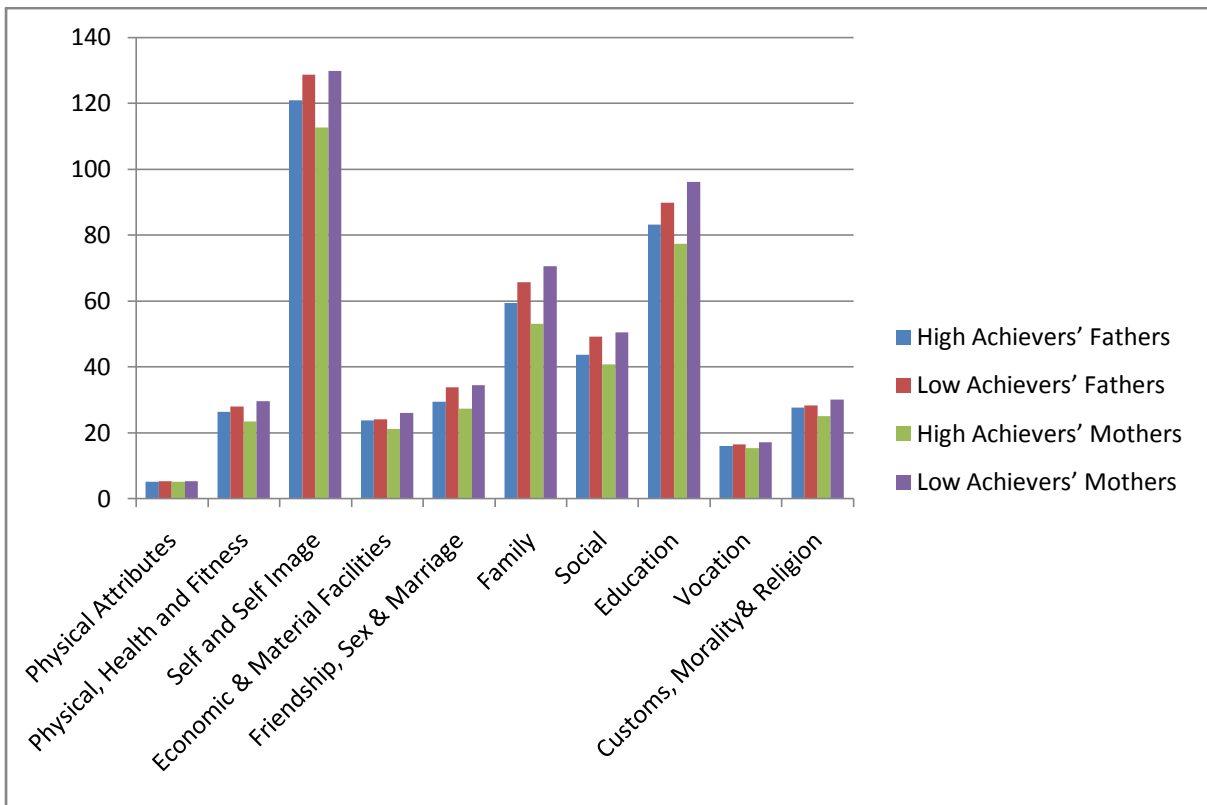**Challenges Endured By Low and High Scholarly Achievers of Class Tenth: The Parent-Adolescent Perception**

Discrepancy in mothers' and fathers' perception of problems of high and low academic achievers

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of the current study suggest that both parents and adolescents as a group perceive few problems related to the attributes taken into consideration. Both parents and adolescents reported a few problems like lack of perfection in completing tasks, wasting too much time on phone and movies and getting late. Selections of courses, immoral behaviour of the peer group, friendship with opposite sex or love marriage are some other problems perceived by both parents and adolescents.

Discrepancy in parent-adolescent perception of problems of high and low academic achievers

➢ There are significant differences between adolescents, mothers and fathers in all domains of development in case of high academic achievers.

➢ Significant differences were observed in education, economic and material facility and custom, morality and religion in case of low academic achievers.

Differences in self perception of problems of high and low academic achievers of tenth class

The low academic achievers showed perception of problems only the areas of physical health and fitness, economic and material facilities.

While in other areas there was no significant differences observed in self perception of problems between low and high academic achievers.

Discrepancy in mothers' and fathers' perception of problems of high and low academic achievers

In case of mothers', the perception of problems of high and low academic achievers was observed in most of the problem areas with significant differences, while no such differences were observed in father's perception.

In comparison to mothers of high academic achievers, mothers of low academic achievers perceived greater problems in all the areas.

It is now a necessity a relook into perception of problems both by adolescents and their parents in this modern world and its rapidly changing demands. The results of the present study indicate that the adolescents do not get the sufficient support for their stage of stress and storm. The results of the present study indicate that problems of both low and high academic achievers studying in tenth class are perceived only moderately in majority of the domains by both adolescents and their parents.

However amongst the parents and adolescents and between high and low academic achievers of tenth class students, significant discrepancy were observed in perception of problems. Thus, these differences in perception amongst parents and adolescents can result in increased level of anxiety, depression and conduct problems in adolescents and increased level of stress within the family.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

➢ Only students of tenth class were taken into the study.
➢ The study was limited to selective number of High Schools of Delhi.
➢ The sample size taken into consideration was just 100 students and their parents only.

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