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The paper is based on a study that aims to understand adolescent-parent relationships in the context of interpersonal disagreements. The issue of disagreements or disputes between parents and adolescents is of interest because of its relevance to understanding universal versus culturally variable features of adolescent development and parent-adolescent relationships. The study focused on understanding the dynamics of dispute resolution in Indian families, particularly the strategies of resolution and the patterns of reasoning involved in the same. A sample of 60 adolescents and their parents from nuclear, Hindu, upper middle class urban families was interviewed to examine their understanding of adolescence, perceptions of mutual expectations, and views on resolving two hypothetical disagreements on marriage partner selection and heterosexual relationships. The findings revealed little acknowledgement of adolescence as a clearly demarcated stage of development. In general, both adolescents and parents had positive perceptions of themselves as adolescents and parents of adolescents. Resolution of disagreements included the active involvement of all parties. Mutual accommodation was the most commonly used strategy for resolving disagreements. Adolescents endorsed resolutions favouring compromise with parents, based on the reasoning that parents had the welfare of their children in mind. Parents on their part adopted an open-minded attitude toward the adolescents' activities and allowed them space to articulate their own views. A primary motivation to sustain the values of family interdependence and harmony was clearly reflected in the sample.

Parent-Adolescent Relationships in the Context of Interpersonal Disagreements: View from a Collectivist Culture*

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Increasing research attention is directed towards cultural influences on parent-adolescent disagreements and conflict. This topic is of interest because

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of its relevance to understanding universal versus culturally variable features of adolescent development and of parent-adolescent interaction. Equally, it is compelling because of the insights that it can provide into the nature of outlooks linked to individualist as compared with collectivist cultural systems as well into the processes of social change. Just as work in the tradition of individualism/collectivism has assumed that collectivism is associated with giving priority to the group over the desires of the self and that individualism is associated with the opposite trend (Triandis, 1990), the same contrast is drawn in the work on parent-adolescent conflict. In particular, the central problem for adolescents is portrayed as that of either giving priority to the demands of their parents as opposed to giving priority to their individual needs and desires. Just as claims are increasingly being made that concerns with the self and with the group are found in all cultures and that the ideal stance is a position which integrates these two types of concerns (Kagitcibasi, 1997), work on parent-adolescent conflict is also recognising that within the adolescent-parent relationship there is the potential to give priority both to self and to family expectations, rather than to sacrifice one concern for the other. However, questions may be raised about the adequacy of the present understanding of the nature and meaning for self-development of parent-adolescent dispute resolution in collectivist cultures and about the direction of cultural change in the context of globalisation.

Research on dispute resolution provides evidence that in collectivist cultural groups, individuals are more compliant and other-oriented, whereas in individualistic cultural groups, they are more assertive and self-oriented (Gabrielidis et al., 1997; Trubisky et al., 1991). For example, Harre and Krahe (1999) compared adolescents' resolutions of conflicts with teachers, friends and parents. German adolescents were observed to prefer "confrontational" styles whereas Indonesian adolescents preferred "submissive" styles. Likewise, in a study on adolescent-parent dispute resolution, Yau and Smetana (1996) reported that Chinese-American adolescents gave priority to parental expectations rather than to their own wishes. In a language resembling that used by Triandis to characterise the "subordination of the self to the group" in collectivist cultures, Yau and Smetana (1996) portrayed the Chinese-American adolescents as engaging in stances in which they "subordinate concerns with personal jurisdiction to parents' conventional demands". They also observed that with increasing age, these Chinese-American adolescents considered their parents' expectations less and appealed more to psychological considerations—a trend which they argued reflected a universal process of autonomy development linked to adolescence.

In a recent comparative study with ethnic American adolescents, Phinney and her colleagues (Phinney et al., in press) extended these earlier findings to suggest that the developmental changes observed in adolescence are universally toward effecting a compromise or balance between self and other concerns. Thus, Phinney and her colleagues identified not only what they regarded as an individualistic and a collectivist mode of dispute resolution, but one that represented a compromise or balance between the two stances: (a) specifically, the collectivist strategy of "compliance" represents a stance of giving priority to other's wishes and subordinating the wishes of self; that is, the adolescent "complies without question to parent's wishes or views" (for example, "I would just do what my parents want"); (b) the individualistic strategy of "self-assertion" represents a stance of giving priority to one's own wishes as adolescents "openly follow their own wishes" (for example, "I would do what I want to do" "they can't stop me"); and (c) the balanced stance of "negotiation" represents a middle position in which the adolescent is assumed to "ask, beg, argue, or negotiate to get own way or work out a compromise".

In a trend that is in accord with the claims of cultures increasingly converging in outlook under forces of globalisation and social change, Phinney et al. further documented that the outlooks of the collectivist and individualist adolescents became increasingly convergent with age. Thus, each group was observed to move toward what the authors described as a more "balanced" stance, with age increases in self-assertion observed among the collectivist Armenian-American and Mexican-American samples and age increases toward a greater orientation toward one's parents and a stance of mutuality with them observed among the European-Americans. All adolescents gave greater priority to the individualistic strategy of self-assertion in the context of the important issue of choice of a partner than in the context of less personally consequential issues, such as chores and a family dinner—a trend that is consonant with Yau and Smetana's (1996) claim of an increased emphasis on autonomy development during adolescence.

The purpose of this study is to address unanswered questions raised by earlier research as well as to examine how adolescent-parent dispute resolution in a collectivist culture may be affected by social change. In terms of unanswered questions, concerns arise that the assumption made in past research that stances of mutual accommodation involve low concern for self may fail to fully capture the sense in which within collectivist cultures this type of interpersonal responsiveness may be experienced as consonant with rather than opposed to self-development and self-interest. More generally,

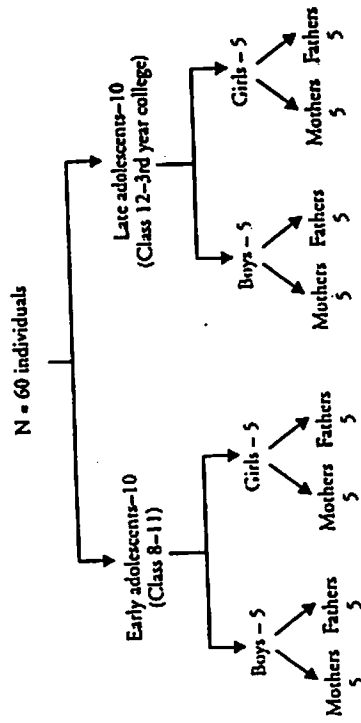
questions remain concerning the extent to which adolescent-parent dispute resolution in collectivist cultures may need to be understood in process-oriented terms as occurring dynamically over time and within a family system, rather than approached as a matter of autonomous individual decision-making.

This study examined the construction of adolescence and views of parent-adolescent conflict resolution among nuclear, Hindu, upper-middle class urban families. Such a sample was selected as a population exposed to industrialisation, market forces, and globalising influences which is experiencing marked social, economic and political changes. In recent years in India, industrialisation and market competitiveness have resulted in a large number of job openings in bigger cities, followed by high rates of migration and urbanisation. These forces are in turn leading to a shift from joint to nuclear family systems (Saraswathi & Pai, 1997). Smaller family units foster an individualistic orientation and greater needs for achievement and competition, giving new forms to child-centredness and indulgences on the part of parents (Saraswathi & Pai, 1997). A highly competitive academic setting has made education a top priority for both boys and girls. In spite of higher education and increasing career aspirations, marriage and motherhood continue to be the primary goals of socialisation for girls. These changes have been seen especially among middle and upper middle class families. It is for adolescents in this social class for whom this period is marked by prolonging of education, dependency on parents, delay in marriage as well as establishment of sustained heterosexual relationships (Verma & Saraswathi, 2002). Such changes have direct consequences for the family and especially for parent-adolescent relationships where possible alternative life influences not only impact the development of the adolescent, but also their interrelationships with their parents.

Method

The construction of adolescence was examined in nuclear, Hindu, upper middle class families of Baroda. The main aim was to obtain an understanding of resolution strategies used to deal with disagreements in parent-adolescent relationships.

The sample consisted of 20 families with an adolescent girl or boy. The sample distribution was as follows:



A semi-structured in-depth interview schedule was developed to collect data. The interview schedule was divided into two sections. The first section included questions related to description of self as an individual and as a parent of an adolescent, description of mother/father or adolescent son/daughter, parental expectations, and responsibilities. In the second section, two hypothetical scenarios in which the adolescents' own wishes differed from those of their parents were presented to each individual. The scenarios are as follows:

Mixed Group Socialising Scenario. Reena/Rohit has been invited to a party where both boys and girls will be present. He/she is very excited about it but his/her parents have not given permission to go.

Marriage Partner Selection Scenario. Arun and Nisha want to get married to each other. But their parents are opposed to this marriage because they both belong to different castes. The parents feel that their children should get married within their own caste and to someone that their parents choose for them.

The first scenario involved a short-term decision about adolescent's social activities and heterosexual relationships, that is, going to a party with mixed group (girls and boys) of friends. The second scenario focuses on marriage partner selection. This scenario was constructed on the basis of the understanding that marriage as a norm is rooted in the Indian culture and is a more serious long-term issue that would affect the adolescent's future and also call for "active" involvement of significant others. Both the issues

were indicative of the important concerns of many parents and adolescents in contemporary upper middle class families. They also represented issues that are related to changing norms and thus that, it was anticipated, would constitute areas of potentially conflicting outlooks among parents and adolescents.

A set of predetermined probes was used across both the scenarios to maintain uniformity. Broadly, individuals were asked to report how they perceived each situation, how it could be resolved, and what would be the final outcome. Importantly, they were also asked to give reasons for their responses. The interview schedule was translated into Hindi by an expert proficient in both English and Hindi. The pilot test was done on a family of an older adolescent boy.

Snowballing techniques were used to identify the sample. Individuals were interviewed at their residence, after seeking prior permission and explaining the nature of the study. Each parent and adolescent boy/girl was interviewed separately. The duration of each interview was approximately 20–25 minutes and individuals were interviewed in English or Hindi as per their preference. The interviews were tape-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim to maintain the cultural meaning of the terms.

Given the small sample size, the data analysis was essentially qualitative in nature, and supplemented by a quantitative analysis in terms of frequencies. Data reduction charts highlighting relevant responses in each category for each individual were prepared. These matrices helped to understand parents' and adolescents' description of self, description of son/daughter or mother and father, parental expectations, and parental responsibilities. Qualitative responses for the two hypothetical scenarios were also categorised in the form of matrices to understand the perception of the issue, the resolution strategies used, the final outcome suggested and the reasoning for the same.

Results and Discussion

Construction of Adolescence

Largely, adolescents and parents had a positive perception of themselves as adolescents and as parents of adolescents, respectively. Adolescents interpreted this stage in terms of their personal (for example, independent, loving,

bindras [carefree], shy, short tempered), and interpersonal attributes related to family and friends ("I have good rapport with my parents"; "I'm enjoying with my peers"). Parents described this stage as being interesting in terms of their parenting experience. At the same time, they believed that it involved a great sense of responsibility for them. Both generations believed that they shared an open and frank relationship with each other. This was an indication of the open-mindedness and permissiveness that characterise parent-child relationships in this social class today.

In contrast to patterns observed in many contemporary Western cultures, there was little acknowledgement of adolescence as a clearly demarcated stage of development characterised by parent-adolescent conflict or marked discontinuity. For example, as revealed in the interviewer-adolescent responses, the question on perceptions of oneself as a "teenager" was frequently treated as having little meaning and could only be answered in terms of referring to one's qualities as a person:

Adolescent Example 1

Int: How would you describe yourself as a teenager?

T1: Teenager? I didn't understand your question ... describe means in what sense?

Int: Tell us something about yourself a person.

T1: I take my studies very easily, play sometimes, that's all the qualities I have.

Example 2

Int: How would you describe yourself as a teenager?

T1: Teenager? Means?

Int: Anything different about being a teenager, anything that comes to your mind?

T1: Life is very different Like we have less responsibilities.

Int: Any particular topic that you can stay?

T2: No.

Int: Just generally? ... like you said you have less responsibilities And what else about being a teenager ... you think is different?

T2: I don't know.

Likewise, as seen in the illustrative parental responses, when parents were asked to describe what it was like for them "as a parent of a teenager",

responses referred to the positive ongoing experiences of parenting, and gave little indication that adolescence was perceived as characterised by marked discontinuity.

Parent Example 1

Int: How would you describe yourself as a parent of a teenager?

P1: Well, it's a pleasant experience I would say, seeing children growing up from kids to teenagers. Pleasant in seeing them growing up, seeing them developing, physically as well as mentally and emotionally.... And enjoying their company as they grow, as they change their thinking patterns, their growth in the values ... they grow in the decision-making powers.... Something worth enjoying.

Parent Example 2

Int: How would you describe yourself as a parent of a teenager?

P2: As a parent, I would like to inspire her to do something good ... and at the same time I would not like to sit on her head ... and breathe down her neck ... to do this and that ... generally I would also like to see that she becomes a good human being, I mean coming right on top—really not the thing you are looking for ... nothing else.

As these responses suggest, adolescence tended to be understood as a preparatory period for young adulthood and as a period of cognitive and social development. However, it was not characterised by marked discontinuity with earlier developmental periods or by marked disruption in parent-adolescent relationships.

Mutual Expectations of Parents and Adolescents

In the case of early adolescents, parental expectations were perceived primarily in terms of such life goals as "to realise one's potentials, and to do whatever one wants". The other parental expectations were to "develop a good character" and "get good marks and study well". Interestingly, parents and adolescent girls also mentioned gender related expectations such as "doing household work", "settle in a good home", and "marry at the right age".

In families with late adolescents, most parental expectations, from the perspectives of both parents and adolescents, were related to academic and future or career related issues. This is a reflection of the primary concerns at

this age where critical decisions in terms of academics and career need to be made. Many respondents also reported that a common parental expectation was "to be a good human being".

For early adolescents and their parents, parental responsibilities were mostly non-material in nature, particularly in terms of guiding children and being there for them in difficult times. Fathers of boys also perceived material responsibilities for their sons, like providing for their education and financial assistance. Gender specific responsibilities for daughters were expressed in such responses as "to get her married" and "provide for her equally, just like the son". While such gender specific responsibilities for daughter were expressed in families of late adolescents as well, other responsibilities were found to be common for both girls and boys. These included providing economically for children, providing education, guiding children and counselling them when necessary, teaching children to respect elders, and be well mannered and *sanskaar*.

A majority of the parents and adolescents perceived their interactions positively. Being friendly, understanding, and sharing an equitable relationship with each other were considered important by both generations.

Resolution of Parent-Adolescent Disagreements

Most adolescents and parents approached the two scenarios as a process rather than directly suggesting an outcome. For greater clarity, the analysis and presentation of these results is organised in terms of resolution strategies, final outcomes, and reasoning processes.

Resolution Strategies. The scheme adopted in coding the modes of dispute resolution was derived from the coding categories employed by Phinney et al. (in press). Their categories of "compliance", "self-assertion" and "no conflict" were adopted without any modification. However, the category of "negotiation" was expanded to encompass responses that involved "mutual accommodation". "Negotiation" included stances which an individual adopted to bring the other person around to his own point of view. In contrast, "mutual accommodation" involved trying to understand the other's point of view, in an effort to change or adapt one's own viewpoint. These responses were observed commonly to co-occur and thus were coded together as part of one larger category. The resolution strategies adopted by adolescents and parents in relation to the two scenarios are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Percentage of Respondents Adopting Different Resolution Strategies

	Early Adolescents	Late Adolescents	Parents of Early Adolescents	Parents of Late Adolescents
<i>Mixed group socialising</i>				
No conflict	10	10	5	0
Negotiation/mutual accommodation	90	70	80	95
Self-assertion by child	0	20	15	0
<i>Marriage partner selection</i>				
No conflict	10	0	10	0
Negotiation/mutual accommodation	90	100	90	100
Self-assertion by child	0	0	0	0

As shown in Table 1, the scenarios tapped issues involving parent-adolescent disagreement, with fewer than 10% of respondents indicating that there would be no conflict in their own families about these types of issues. The resolution strategy of "compliance" was not used and thus it is not included as a category in the table.

In contrast to trends observed among more individualistic populations, there was an overall low usage of self-assertion strategies. Also, in contrast to the earlier findings observed among US samples, the adolescent did not utilise self-assertion more frequently in relation to the more personally consequential issue of marriage partner selection than in relation to the less consequential issue of mixed group socialisation.

Rather, in an overwhelming majority of cases, adolescents as well as their parents stated that strategies of negotiation/mutual accommodation should be employed in resolving the issue. In the case of mixed group socialising, the early adolescents believed that they should convince their parents to have confidence in them, and give them all the details that they ask for (for example, where the party was held, who was attending it, time to return home). Parents on their part, felt that they should explain the pros and cons of the situation to their adolescent (for example, falling in bad company). Both generations believed that there should be an open discussion and that only talking to each other could resolve the issue, and in fact, enhance their relationship. No clear gender or generation differences were evident in these results.

Gender differences were evident in responses from families of late adolescents. For girls, parents expressed greater concern about "inquiring"

about the situation, in terms of who would be present, where was the party, when would it be held and similar other questions. For boys, however, parents were more concerned about "explaining" the norms of behaviour in such a mixed group party. A common justification given was that girls were more physically vulnerable than boys and that they would be unable to protect themselves if anything untoward were to happen. This would not only have implications for her family, but also for her own future. Boys, on the other hand, would not have to face any such implications, so it was fine to be more liberal with them, after they were explained how to behave appropriately in such situations.

In the case of marriage partner selection, families with both early and late adolescents suggested negotiation/mutual accommodation as an appropriate strategy for resolving the issue. Early adolescents and their parents felt that they should discuss and convince each other of their decision. Some adolescents said that they would get the girl/boy home so that their parents could meet them and talk to them. Parents were basically concerned about the girl's/boy's nature, family background, and future prospects, in terms of education and work.

Gender differences were also evident in families with late adolescents. As in the earlier scenario, parents of girls were more concerned about "inquiring" about the boy (for example, family background, education, and job prospects). In contrast, parents of boys believed it to be more important to "explain" to their sons about the adjustments they would be required to make in the case of intercaste marriages. It is likely that the parents of girls felt more of a need to make such inquiries because they felt more responsible towards her as she would get married into another family and be required to adjust to that family. Such a line of thought was not observed in the case of parents of boys.

On the whole, however, in both the cases under consideration, there was a desire to maintain harmony in the relationship. Neither party appeared to want to assert their views on the other. As a result, they tried to mutually accommodate each other's wishes.

Final Outcomes. Following a similar strategy adopted in an earlier research (Phinney et al., in press), the final resolution of the conflict in each scenario was coded in terms of the point of view prevailing, that is, the position of the adolescent in the scenario or that of the parent. The percentage of cases in which the parent's position ultimately prevailed in dispute resolution (with the adolescent's perspective prevailing in the remainder of the cases) is given in Table 2.

Table 2
Percentage of Resolutions Favouring Position of Parents

	Early Adolescents	Late Adolescents	Parents of Early Adolescents	Parents of Late Adolescents
Mixed group socialising	70	100	35	70
Marriage partner selection	44	60	20	5

Strikingly, in both situations, adolescents more frequently endorsed than did parents resolutions in which the adolescent gave in to the parents' wishes and agreed to the decision that they had taken. The responses revealed little or no resentment on the part of the adolescents. Rather, the adolescents respected their parents and viewed their hierarchical authority positively. This appeared to be based on the view that the parents had the welfare of their children in mind. From the adolescents' perspective, their parents were to be "listened to" on the basis of their age, role, experience, and knowledge rather than to be deferred to on the basis of their assertion of power.

The tendency of most parents to resolve disputes in line with the adolescent's expressed wishes reflected a tendency in this social class of parents to adopt new ways of life and "change with the times". In the mixed group socialising scenario, parents were more accepting of their children's heterosexual friendships. As one parent commented, "society is changing and people are becoming broadminded". In the marriage scenario, the tendency to defer to the adolescent's wishes reflected the concern that the resolution should bring satisfaction to the children (for example, "my children should remain happy, and that is where my happiness lies"), as well as some concern that the children may not accept the parents' views readily so it was better to give in rather than to create unpleasantness.

Both parents and adolescents favoured the adolescents' perspective more often in relation to the personally consequential issue of marriage partner selection than in relation to the less serious issue of mixed group socialising. This, however, was more marked among parents than among adolescents, given the adolescents' tendency to welcome their parents' views on this marriage life decision, whom they regarded as caring about their welfare and possessing more extensive knowledge about life than they themselves possessed.

Reasoning Processes. A qualitative examination of the interview responses indicated that dispute resolution proceeded over time as a process. Thus, for example, an initial stance of negotiation by an adolescent may be followed by accommodation either by the adolescent or by the parent, as they not only clarified their own position to the other, but also sought to be more

fully responsive to the other's perspective. The modes of resolution observed yielded a picture of dispute resolution as a process that included the input of multiple parties. It also reflected a stance where adolescents, while not always agreeing with their parents' perspective, welcomed it.

The nature of these dispute resolution processes may be illustrated by an examination of sample responses to the marriage partner selection scenario. The first exchange is from an interview with a 19 year old adolescent female:

Older Adolescent Female

How do you think this situation can be resolved?

Both parents and the daughter have to compromise—there is nothing other than that. If they compromise—both will be happy. If there is no compromise, both can't be happy. Either the parents will be very sad or the girl will be unhappy for her whole life. If the girl wants to marry someone then parents will ask questions and inquire about the boy, who are his parents, etc. and they will resolve it.

What if the parents say no?

They should give each time. In that case, girl's parents have to see if the boy's parents are good—his parents should also come forward, they should show the girl's parents that both will have a good future tomorrow. If the boy is not able to maintain the girl properly then how can it be that they both live together and in the case where the parents are also not supportive.

Who do you think will take the final decision in this situation?

Final decision depends on parents as well as the girl. The girl herself has to decide what her future holds. Parents should also see if she has brought a guy whom she likes then they should also have to see whether he is good or not and then decide.

What if this situation was to happen in your house, how would you deal with it?

Personally, I am against love marriage and against intercaste marriage, so I will be listening to what my parents say.

And why so?

Because I have full trust and faith in my parents. What they will do is always good for me and my future.

As may be seen from this example, the focus is on compromise and on adopting a stance that is sensitive to both the needs/desires of the parents and of the adolescent. It does this, however, in a way that, in deference to parental authority that it entails, differs from the more egalitarian compromise position adopted by adolescents in the US (Phinney et al., in press). The response illustrates the adolescent's stance of accommodating her parents and welcoming their input because of their assumed wisdom and caring, and is not based on a position of merely complying or conforming to authority. It also illustrates that the parents' input represents not the assertion of power over the adolescent but their fulfilment of a perceived moral responsibility to be actively involved in protecting the welfare of their children.

Another illustrative response is given by a 17 year old adolescent boy. In contrast to the earlier case, this adolescent personally rejected caste-based marriage and thus approached the scenario from a position in which the parental demand differed fundamentally from his own outlook.

Older Adolescent Male

How do you think the situation can be resolved?

By allowing them to get married. Caste or religion doesn't matter much.

So then how exactly will they go about it since the parents are not allowing?

By talking to each other's parents they can solve some caste problems or other problems that are there.

Then who will take the final decision?

The parents should because they have guided their children throughout their lives. They should let the marriage happen.

And what if the parents don't allow them to get married? What happens then?

According to me they should break up. Because everyone loves their parents and do not expect them to break their heart or to get them hurt.

Say if this situation were to arise in your house. How would it be dealt with?

I think my parents would resolve the situation. They will talk to her parents and I mean the matter will be resolved ... and there will be no need of breaking up. They will allow me to marry.

Say in your case, your parents do not give you the permission to get married. What happens then? How would that situation be resolved?

I would do what my parents say because I don't want to hurt them. I love them and they will do what is right for me ... they will not do anything that is wrong.

The dispute resolution process here is one that is assumed to proceed over time and to entail the active involvement of all parties. Thus, the adolescent suggested that as part of the dispute resolution process, his parents would talk to the girl's parents. As in the earlier example, it is seen as the duty of the parents to provide this guidance to their children. It also reveals that the child assumes that the parent has his/her own best interests at heart. In readily deferring to his parents even when he does not agree with their decision, the son not only expresses his conviction that his parents have his welfare in mind, but also is concerned, in turn, about their welfare and about not hurting them.

Conclusions and Implications

On the whole, the results revealed that nuclear, upper middle class families in the contemporary urban Indian context adopted a blend of patterns where the "modern" and the "traditional" coexisted. Families appeared to adapt to "modern" settings/demands, yet retained traditional values/practices.

Parents were accepting of their adolescents' activities (for example, mixed group parties) as well as allowed them space to articulate their own interests and preferences. For example, in the marriage partner selection scenario, adolescents expressed their preferences and parents tried to understand these and then went on to highlight the pros and cons of the situation. Reflecting the larger cultural norm of marriage being an event where the family's involvement is considered highly significant, both parties tried to convince the other of the appropriateness (or otherwise) of the selection. The disengagement and separation of parents from the lives of their adolescent children that is emphasised in middle class European/American contexts and elsewhere in certain Western cultures, was not experienced here. In contrast, the involvement of parents in the everyday life activities of adolescents was not only well accepted, but was also expected.

The results suggested that the "modernising" pattern seen in the upper middle class strata created a climate that was more conducive to the articulation

of individual preferences, than would be the case in cultural groups which did not experience such social changes. Adolescents in such contexts grow up in a more permissive and liberal atmosphere where their parents recognise their wish/desires. This was seen in the mixed group socialisation scenario, where most of the respondents believed that parties were a "present day norm" and parents who did not allow their children to go were being "conservative" and "backdated". In the marriage partner selection scenario, caste was no longer such an important issue for individuals belonging to the upper social class. Other factors like social status, education, family background, and career prospects took precedence. In the words of a mother of a girl, "Even after getting married within one's own caste, our child may or may not get happiness, so getting stuck up about caste is not good".

However, it was seen that in both the resolution strategies and the final outcome, Hindu Indian cultural outlooks continued to be primary in shaping individual perceptions and behaviour. Parents socialised their children to endorse values of interdependence and family cohesion. Ultimately, not only the primary interest of all the family members was a concern for others, but also harmony in relationships. Such concerns remain important throughout one's life, especially in parent-child relationships. Adolescents operated from an image of parents' role as that of not only knowing what was best, but also as having a responsibility to guide their children. They were to be trusted to do/advise what was good for the adolescent. Their permission needed to be sought and they should be treated with respect. Likewise, parents, too, accepted this image and viewed their role positively.

In terms of more general implications, the results bear on understanding the nature of collectivistic cultural systems. These findings lend support to recent claims (for example, Miller, 2002) that earlier work on individualism/collectivism misconstrued the nature of many collectivist systems in portraying them as entailing the subordination of the self to the group and the assertion of power by individuals with more authority in the social system over their subordinates. As observed in this study, the interaction between adolescents and their parents was characterised by responsiveness to the feelings and welfare of all parties involved. The finding that adolescents frequently deferred to their parents in the final resolution of the conflicts was not indicative of their relinquishing their personal interest in the service of family goals, but a means, through deferring to the perceived wisdom and authority of their parents, to promote their own welfare and that of the larger family. Equally, parents' actions were not characterised by an assertion of power over their children but by exercising what they regarded as their duty as parents to assume the role of active guardians of their children's welfare.

In addition, these results highlighted the importance of adopting a more process-oriented perspective on parent-adolescent dispute resolution in future research. As observed here, focusing solely on the final resolution obscured the extent to which both parties accommodated the perspective of the other, even as they argued for their own viewpoints, and in which dispute resolution involved active efforts by the parties involved, including soliciting the input of and interacting with other parties in the disagreement or part of the family system. The focus here not only highlighted the flexibility and active nature of decision-making in collectivist and not solely in individualistic cultural settings, but also emphasised the need to understand conflict resolution at the level of the larger family system rather than at the level of individual decision makers.

Importantly, the results bear on the theme of socialisation of responsibility and on issues of universality versus cultural variability in processes of adolescent development. The results pointed to common developmental shifts, as adolescence was marked by the assumption of greater responsibilities and by what were perceived to be enhanced cognitive and social competencies. As in Western societies and as assumed in contemporary psychological theories, adolescence was regarded as a period of transition to adulthood and of preparation for fuller participation in adult life and assumption of adult roles and responsibilities. However, the findings suggested that this transition could proceed without the separation, tension, and push for autonomy from parents evident in the US and in certain other Western cultural settings. In this study, adolescents' reliance on parents' advice was not regarded as a sign of immaturity or as a threat to individual self-direction, but as a source of welcome support and guidance in helping to insure a successful transition to adulthood.

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Innovations in educational organisations have not been researched as intensely as business and industrial organisations in India. If innovations are to flourish in schools, it is critical that the mechanisms which can sustain and encourage them be understood clearly. The present study examined the innovations adopted in four schools and thereby uncovered the system and processes which were conducive to their sustenance. The four schools located in different parts of the country, have utilised a range of innovations at school level in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum, evaluation, administration and resource mobilisation. Findings indicated the important role of leadership in adopting innovations in schools. Subsequently, openness in vertical and horizontal communication and establishing a wide network with individuals and institutions outside also appeared to be critical. The innovative schools had also developed a well-defined and documented system of review and monitoring, and mobilising community support. These schools had established procedures for teachers' training and growth, and instituted decentralised and participative systems of management. Implications of these findings for management of innovations in schools are discussed.

Identifying a Framework for Initiating, Sustaining and Managing Innovations in Schools*

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The process of innovations has been a topic of intense research and study for many years (Anderson & King, 1993; Damanpour & Evan, 1984; Van de Ven & Rogers, 1988). Most of these researches have been conducted in Europe, the UK and the USA in business and industrial organisations. Compared to these, research on innovation in the area of education has received much less attention even in the Western world and far less in India. Furthermore, the attention focused on innovation in education in the Indian context has been largely related to efforts made by individual teachers. This has highlighted how creative efforts could contribute to the development of pedagogies

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