



MIND THE GENERATION GAP: THE PROBLEM OF DISPARITIES IN MORAL AND ETHICAL VALUES BETWEEN ADULT-ADOLESCENT DYADS

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ABSTRACT:

The prominent impression left by the popular and scholarly generation gap idiom is that of the unified teenage tyranny, the emerging youth, is alienating drastically from both of its elders and society in almost every perceivable way and it is the difference of opinions between the generations in regard to beliefs, behaviours, habits, moral values, attitudes, and life styles etc. in which the moral values play a pivotal role in carving the character development with the ideals, virtues, honesty, goodness, true manliness of adolescents to form the essence of real dignified living, as it is a phase when crucial changes in moral development take place but of late they are given a short shift as ends alone matter most and means matter scant look and is an addendum when it comes to the generation gap. This article seeks to study the disparities in moral and ethical values between the teens and their parents and its repercussions as there is impending need to enhance the moral and ethical values for their success in life. The present study employed a survey based quantitative method with the sample consisting of 483 students and 422 parents realised through random sampling from 16 institutions across seven districts of Andhra Pradesh, India. The Moral Values Inventory designed by Dr.Surabhi Aggarwal (2021) had been administered to the respondent subjects and the statistical parametric measures of Means, S.d's, and t'- values were used to analyse the results. The study results revealed that there is significant difference in the dependent variable moral and ethical values between the parent-child dyads and the students low moral and ethical values score entails interventional strategies for the corrective action from the concerned to step-up the moral and ethical values of the disenfranchised youth. This study has ventilated that character building could be emphasised on moral values enhancement and also presents the analysis, interpretation, implications and recommendations of the one, albeit pivotal, of the many spheres examine-of the moral and ethical values.

KEY WORDS: *Generation gap, Moral and ethical values, alienated youth*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of youth society leading to storm and stress arising out of the dilemma to take sides between self and society, an almost a daily perplexity amongst adolescents that may encompass not only conflict with in the family but a general alienation from adult society and hostility towards values. The concept of generation gap implies extensive intergenerational disparities and the rapidity of change in today's western society as the dominant cause (Davis, 1940; Mead, 1947; Mannehim, 1952), and it also occurs due to the disparity in ages, genders, cultures and races that create varied values and attitudes to similar matter (Choom Yong, Rashad Yazdanifrad, 2013), basing on several factors prevailing at that particular period with their own set of values, views and wants to uphold the principles they believe. Adolescence is a distinct group with their unique needs and concerns which is a critical period with growth spurt and it is also an emotional, cultural and social process and as such it is said, adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture. (Conger and Peterson). Moralism, a sociocultural paradigm refers to the doctrine of duties of life, principles and conduct adhering to what is right and virtuous that plays an important role in the dynamics of social relations and it is an empathetic perspective, which involves person to consider the effects on people close to them whereas ethical thinking is similar to moral thinking but includes a much broader area of people that are distant and even new. The moral and ethical values are considered as deserving and desirable attributes of one's character which are held in high esteem by the society and according to Dewey the moral education, like intellectual education has its basis in stimulating the active thinking of the child about moral issues and decisions. In one of the studies it is evinced that there is correlation between the ethical conduct of youth and their university environment which bring changes in character and personality development and the university and home environment influenced the student's moral deterioration and social illnesses (Munazza Sulthana, Syed Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari, 2020). But the emerging youth are diverted to different immoral activities which adversely affect the present society as well as the future generations. The majority people of the day were of the impression that the institutions of learning and the parents are eager and enthusiastic for ranks than rectitude, leaving to fate the moral values, the inference of which is marked by violence, greed, theft, drug addiction, and terrorism, still widening the generational disparities. The rise of violence, cheating, brutality, maladaptive and socially disapproved behaviours like the drug addiction, lovers mockery against others in case of love failure like acid attacks and killing brutally normally more against ladies, students massacre with gun culture for silly reasons, killing mercilessly/brutally and cyber-crimes etc. to exemplify few, are phenomenal in these days of economic and material development, manifesting the severity of the situation of moral and ethical values status in today's teens, and the roots of this problem is not a recent phenomenon, its traces can be indented in the society of the past, the magnitude of which has spread over largely in recent days. Also endorsing it, one of the study disclosed that less emphasis on the moral conduct of students at secondary and higher secondary levels, lack of parents interest in building their children's character and least efforts by the religious scholars and government institutions in morale building is prevailing, necessitating to promote social, behavioural, emotional and moral competencies that enhances confidence, self-efficiency, identity, loyalty, spirituality and prosaically norms in them through positive building constructs approach (Munnazza Sultana, Syed Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari, 2020). In this big task the agencies such as family, school, society, religious and government institutions have to play a prominent role in developing permanent ethical and moral values from the base phase of an individual, the adolescents to aid them in facing future challenges in life and would contribute to a larger extent toward the proper refinement of human character so as to bailout from the quicksand of immoral and antisocial behavioural acts and provide road map for their better future vis-à-vis minding the problem of generation gap, as there can be no high civility without a deep morality.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The prime constituents of the generational disparities shared from the normal adolescent process of identity formation as well as from society's impact on the youth as consumer, the adolescents confused state during the identity formation phase by concentrating on solidarity with in their ranks and the showdown of this solidarity through their unique values determines much of the gap between emerging youth and adult patterns of thinking and behaving (Irving B Weiner, 1971), also the tendency of parent-child dyads towards modern values and the sense of identity crisis, has slowly been increasing as a result of their detachment from previous generations (Parvaneh Danesh et al; 2014). In a study it is found that seniors, aged 65 plus had strong social consciousness and high levels of ethical behaviour and the aging is positively related to both spirituality and social ethics, which in turn are correlated with each other. The aging process itself appears to be a more important explanation of generational differences in spirituality than cohort and period effects (David o Moberg, 2003). When dwell deep in to the ground level realities, the youth's moralism studies divulged from the study of Bunn, Caudill and Gropper (1992) that the students take it casual and common, the cheating acts, they do not consider it as serious though they know that it is wrong and an offence (as cited in Teixeira and Rocha, 2006) and it is also disclosed from the study of Graham, Monday, O'Brien and Metzgar (1994) that students are having more cheating behaviour who evaluate academic

dishonest leniently than those who evaluate it strictly (as cited in Bernardi et al (2004). Furthermore Youth are also responsible for a significant portion of retail fraud and theft in USA and the research on ethical judgement results indicate that as adolescents mature, ethical judgement too improves, In addition the adolescents ethical judgement was influenced negatively by the materialism and love of money but the parents rearing styles and their religiosity were happened to be the significant deterrents to their unethical behaviour (Laura A Flurry, Krist Swimberghe, 2016). In yet another study there existed significant attitudinal differences between the generations on 29 items pertaining to the drug use, police and military authority, and power, sexual behaviour and religion etc., and there was generation gap revealed from the data (Richard M Lerner, James Pendorf, Anne Emery, 1971) and there is positive correlation in autonomy values and openness, while the autonomy values have been found statistically significant predicting openness through generations as per the regression analysis (Barbora Povazanova , Petra Lajciakova).The study results were found to be statistically significant in all four dimensions of technology-oriented ethical behaviours viz; the invasion of the right of privacy, defamation, self-enrichment and loafing during office hours among pre-millennial, millennial and post-millennial and the mean value of self-enrichment is also highest for post-millennial (Shivangi Varma,Naval Garg Kybernetes, 2022) As regards the pace in generation gap in values, it is reported that the difference in values between the generations are small in a society where changes takes place slowly, on the other hand, a wide generation gap results in a society where such changes are quite rapid as the values of the younger generation undergo more rapid changes compared to those of the elders zeitgeist (Na Eun-Yeong, Cha Jae-Ho; 2000).

But the generation gap does not appear to be persistent in influence and intensity and seems to undulate and oscillate across time though the generational differences while always exist, (Tom William Smith, 2000). Thus in one of the studies it is revealed that both the mother- daughter dyads rated highly the instrumental values as honest, loving, forgiving and clean and the terminal values as salvation and family security complying to the traditional female values and there appears convergence of opinion between the two groups studied (Lisa K Barclay, Ann W Sharp, 1982) and the correlation and congruence between moral values and social acts are clearer in females than males, in rural inhabitants than urban ones and in students of the college level (1-4) than the college level of (5-8) (Scham Ahmed, Alazeb, 2013). Also the differences were insignificant in basic values like dedication to cause, conventional moralism, humanitarianism and intellectualism between the two generations in the family than between various college students in the same generation (Lillian E Troll, 1972). Yet in another study, though the morality of the fathers seems to have more impact on their adolescent children, there is no significant relationship on morality between the parents-adolescent dyads (Sharon Rose Medez, Lisa Anna Marte-Gayoles, 2021). Of late character education has emerged in the United States as a leading term for school efforts to implement programmes to promote citizenship education, moral and ethical values in view of its importance of the day.

METHODOLOGY

TABLE 1: Details of the study sample with coverage of area, institutions etc.

S.no	Sample details	Total no.	Districts covered	Place of institutions: High schools/ Plus 2/ Degree colleges
1	Students (13—19) Years	483	Tirupati, Chittoor, Nellore, Prakasam, Bapatla, Kadapa and Rayachoti. (7 Districts)	*Venkatagiri, Chittoor, Nellore, L.N.Puram, Piler, and Madanapalli. **Gudur, Punganur, Podalakur, Pamur and Rayachoti.
2	Parents (43—49) Years	422		@Kavali, Addanki, Kadapa, Badvel and Proddatur (16 institutions)

*High Schools, **Plus 2, @Degree colleges

Study Sample

As a measure to assess the generational differences on moral and ethical values of adolescents a survey based quantitative method had been adopted. A random sampling technique had been followed for the study sample comprised of 483 teenage students with age group of 13 to 19 years and 422 parents of age group of 43 to 49 years which is above 3% of the study population from 16 institutions covering government and private high schools and colleges across seven districts of Andhra Pradesh, India. There were 224 (46.4%) boys and 259 (53.6%) girls in the student's category and 208 (49.3%)

males and 214 (50.7%) females in the parent's category in the sample. Care had been taken to cover the whole district evenly by selecting the institutes from the Mandal, Division and District headquarters so as to have homogeneously distributed sample.

Tools Used

Moral values Inventory, a one dimensional construct designed by Dr. Surabhi Aggarwal (2021) comprising of 40 statements with five point Likert type response scale as Always, frequently, sometimes, rarely and never, was adopted for the present study. Higher scores indicate that the subjects are possessing higher moral and ethical values and vice-versa. The test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be 0.89 which indicates good internal consistency, and the scale was found to possess content, face as well as cross validity.

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected using the self-assessment moral values inventory in a paper- pencil format duly explaining the guidelines in detail that there are no right or wrong answers, answer honestly and appropriate for them without any hesitation apart from providing the detailed instructions in the front page of the inventory and it took approximately about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The institute authorities and the students have been informed well in advance about the objective of the data collection and while collecting the data all the ethical code like informed consent from the subjects, maintaining the confidentiality of the data collected etc., have been followed.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

TABLE 2: Means, SD's, and t- Value of moral and ethical values between generations

Source	N	Mean	S.D	t- Value	Significant level
Parents	422 (46.6%)	147.06	22.39	5.083	0.001
Students	483 (53.4%)	140.17	18.40		

The present study deals with the analysis of generational disparities in moral and ethical values between the young and their elders from the data shown in the table 2 with quantitative measures expressed as means, standard deviations and t- values to examine and measure the variance through statistical package/model. The analysis was done on the basis of unequal 'n' model as we could able to collect the parent's data to an extent of 422 only in view of their absence as against the adolescent's data of 483. Student's t- test with $p < 0.01/0.05$ levels was used to test the significant level and mean variances between the independent groups. The above results with clear difference in composite scores of the adolescents (140.17) to that of their parents (147.06) and t-value of 5.083, discloses that there is statistically significant difference in respect of the dependant variable moral and ethical values between the emerging youth and their parents. The current study endorses the previous research findings that there existed significant attitudinal differences between the generations on 29 items pertaining to the drug use, police and military authority, and power, sexual behaviour and religion etc. (Richard M Lerner, James Pendorf, Anne Emery, 1971) and the disparities in moral reasoning were found when the context or 'story pull' of the ethical dilemmas presented is considered (James and Dawn R, Elm 2018), though very few of the earlier studies differed with the present findings especially in females that the mother-daughter dyads are complying to the traditional female values and there appears congruence of opinion between the two groups studied (Lisa K Barclay, Ann W Sharp, 1982) The low scores recorded in the mean of the adolescents over their parents on moral and ethical values confirm that the upcoming generation is lagging in major constituents of moral and ethical values like true manliness, justice, ideals, virtues and honesty etc. This may be due to the fact that the parents are lacking control over the children due to over protection, pampering, unavailability from their side and the present days ambience around them with unintentional social influences, temptations and absence of proper mechanism to drive them in a right track from the childhood itself for primary effect in them resulting in failing to cope keep in line with the acquisition and retention of the good moral and ethical values when compared to the previous generations with extended family pattern.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The findings from the analysis of the data has ventilated some salient features that have implications for both the parents group and the academicians to mind the ambience and provide network to contain the present day's immoral and anti-social activities of youth. It is also demonstrated that the moral and ethical values had their role in averting the probable danger of adverse problems encountering in the life span of an individual especially the adolescents for them-selves and to others from their side and it is high time that the concerned to take up remedial measures in view of the present spearheaded situation. This study has the implications for the educational authorities and the government to integrate the moral and ethical values as part of their responsibility in the schools and colleges by providing a counselling psychologist as pre-active measure vis-a-vis initiating drastic actions against the culprits as deserved suffering not to repeat such cruel acts besides making the parents instrumental in the present task so as to enrich and refine the moral and ethical values for smooth and successful life of young blood of the nation as our value is the sum of our values as stated/ quoted by Joseph and George Sheehan

CONCLUSIONS:

From the above findings it can be concluded that the adolescent's generation is low in moral and ethical values compared to their elder's generation and the generation gap is existing on moral and ethical values

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