Generational Differences Regarding Educational Career and Personal Aspirations of Adolescents

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Abstract:
The young people perceive themselves as a group apart from the established older generation. This isolation of age groups has led to a teenage sub-culture wherein parents lose some influence and peer opinions become highly valued. Adolescents spend so much time with members of their own age groups in schools and colleges that it is not surprising to find values and customs drawn from peers rather than parents. The ideas, attitudes and feelings of adolescents are usually based upon the volatile mixture of adult maturity and juvenile innocence. For this reason, the views of adolescents often conflict with those of their elders.
However, this just concern of parents is perceived by their adolescent children as an imposition of adult standards. They view their parents' ideas and values as outdated and prefer not to discuss their peer-group activities with parents. The two generations drift apart in terms of communication. This communication gap is another important contributor to the generation gap. The parents prefer to make some future plans regarding the educational career of their children and force them to achieve the goal without knowing the real capacity of their children. This leads to generation gap.

Key words: Generational Differences, Adolescents, Generation Gap, Aspirations, Education

1. Introduction

Intergeneration conflict is based on a conflict of interests more fundamental. The younger generation all over the world has much in common to hold dear and fight for. The old look backwards. They are bound to develop a vested interest in the status quo. The young looks forwards. They have heavy stakes in the future. Generation gap never continues, but it comes to an end at a certain age. Therefore they continue to look to parents for basic values and guidance in the more important areas of life, such as personal and career goals. Disagreement does occur, but in superficial issues. Adolescents are idealistic and in their quest for an identity, they feel almost compelled to disagree with their elders. They demand a control in population, communal harmony and a better world to live in. With time as they gain self-esteem and maturity most adolescents reach an understanding of universal realities and return to the values they once questioned.

A significant contributor to the generation gap is socio-cultural change. In most societies socio-cultural change is perceptible process. Exceptions to the rule are limited to a few simple structured tribal societies in isolated localities in which social change is paced almost imperceptibly. In such a society, there is very little difference in the cognitive, affective and behavioural life-styles of the young and the old. It is also true that such a society undergoes stagnation and eventually, either has to accept change or fade out.

To analyze these kinds of social events and youth movements, the term generation gap has been frequently used. Even terms like generational conflict and intergenerational conflict are used to reflect the youth revolt against the gerontocracy. It is well understood that intergenerational differences may range all the way from a mere feeling on the part of young people that the older generation has a set of beliefs, attitudes, ideas and ways of behaviour which are not like their own, through mild disapproval and may vary from resentment to acute tensional differences and overt conflict.

A simplistic model of generation gap would assume that lapse in time brings about social change. This is responsible for the generation gap. However this explanation is too simplistic. The generation gap cannot be related to merely a lapse in time. It depends upon the life experiences that the generations undergo during that lapse in time. If the two generations are similar in their life experiences, the gap will be less or even negligible. But if the two generations differ considerably in their life experiences in terms of

exposure to education, urbanization and the mass media, there will arise a wide generation gap. The simplistic model assumes an even rate of gap between generations, which is only possible in a hypothetical static study.

In reality, the generation gap occurs in an uneven rate between different generations. A dynamic model of generation gap would explain the generation gap as a function of the levels of exposure of the two generations to varying intensities of education, urbanization and the mass media. In this sense, the generation gap is a natural and necessary phenomenon of any dynamic society and it offers a brighter future for that society. The dynamic model assumes that dissimilarities in ideas between younger and older generations is a universal phenomenon. The social dynamics of every society undergoing technological and cultural change exhibit some degree of generational gap. Furthermore the tempo of social change is directly correlated with dissimilarity in perceptions and behaviour patterns among the generations. This means that the faster a society changes, the wider distance between the older and younger generations.

The adolescent questions his parents, criticizes their attitudes and refuses to accept what he considers to be unreasonable. Quite possibly, he may be wrong some of the time; this is only to be expected, for he is still young and lacks the maturity that comes with age and experience. Not understanding their son, the parents perceive the change in the behaviour to represent arrogance. They attribute the change to his having been spoilt or possibly to his mixing with bad company. They become more restrictive, punitive and authoritarian. When parents fail to understand the intellectual, emotional and social growth that their child is experiencing in the process of developing his individuality a generation gap arises.

2. Review of Literature

According to K. Davis (1940:523-535) the stage of adolescence is thereby set for conflict, evasion and deceit. For mass of parents toleration is never possible. For the mass of adolescents sublimation is never sufficient. He said that the parent-youth conflict is unavoidable and is the result of three factors:

- The basic birth-cycle differences between parent and child,
- The decreasing rate of socialization with the coming of maturity, and
- The resulting intrinsic differences between parents and children in the physiological, sociological and psychological planes of behaviour.

There again arises conflict between the generations so far as the family expectations and performance is concerned. Therefore Bossard J (1996:222) says, "Nature of the parent's occupation is the pressure upon the child to measure up to the level of family expectations and family performance". Such pressures are manifest in such families, where the parents are engaged in occupations of high status. These pressures are particularly strong in those cases where the parent is highly conscious of his position. This is also, according to Bossard J (1996:223) "the case with families of lower status. This is also very strong in selected professions, such as the ministry and teaching".

When adolescents develop new idealism the conflicts begin in families. Hence Farnham M.F. (1951:34) said that, "his new idealism is intense and often rigid and uncompromising. The notions of justice and injustice, loyalty and treachery, devotion and inconsistency, love and hate, fair play and dishonesty all stand and in violent contrast and with great force". Further he said that this is the time of absolute right and absolute wrong. Compromise is abhorrent. There will be complete intolerance for anything that violates the ideals and principles to which the child is now committed.

Jacobson R. and Others (1975:841-852) in their study tested the existence, universality and specific locus of the generation gap empirically through a comparative intra family study of fathers and their college children. They concluded that the generation gap is apparently not a ubiquitous, universal family characteristic.

Gousgounis, N. (1994) in the study evaluated relations concerning parental influence and adolescent sexual behaviour and attitudes. The study reveals that parents do not influence some important aspects of attitudes toward abortion. On the contrary intra family communication has been associated with accurate knowledge of sexual issues. A progressive family model is tested, presented mainly by females, who declare proequity in gender relations. A generation gap seems to exist more for young boys than girls.

Kling, Z. (1995:43-66) said that the electronic media with its influence on family socialization for the younger generations, created a sort of structural gap in family life.

Wechter S. (1983:97-104) noted that as adolescent children mature and attempt to distance themselves from their families of origin, various conflicts and tensions emerge within the family system.

Hoffman and Weiss (1987:163) and Schwardz and Suroff (1979:404) noted that excessive family conflict resulted in poor college adjustment of the children.

3. Objectives

- To understand the generation gap in relation to the educational career and personal aspirations of adolescents.
- To know the generation gap in relation to familial relationships of adolescents.

4. Methodology

This study was conducted in Dharwad-Hubli corporation area. The study is based on sample survey. This corporation area is selected because it is fairly representative of the characteristics of urban life of Karnataka State. Dharwad is a well known educational centre with three universities and many colleges. It is also administrative headquarters of the district. It has been undergoing modernization steadily during the last few decades.

The researcher prepared two sets of interview schedules one for the students and another one for their respective parents. With the help of personal interview schedule the researcher personally visited the colleges and approached the students during college hours and collected the required information from the students. Similarly after getting the home addresses of the students the researcher visited their houses personally and collected the information from their fathers through this method. To select the samples 'purposive sampling method' was used. The researcher selected 300 students and their respective fathers.

5. Limitations of the Study
The present study is subjected to some limitations. This study is confined only to first year Bachelor Degree students of urban area.

6. Analysis and Interpretation
In the course of transition from childhood stage to adolescence the style of life of adolescent children also undergoes change. It is also transition from tradition to modernity. During this stage the frequent visit to hotels and films starts, this may not be tolerated by the parents. Because of this habit the children develop some antisocial activities in their behaviour to gather money to fulfill the need. It further may lead to conflicts with the parents and other members of the family. Therefore this habit of frequent visit to restaurants and films vary with the nature of the family and sex of the children. Nuclear families are more progressive as compared to Joint families. Hence an attempt is made to understand the intergenerational conflict regarding frequent visit to restaurants and films.
The following Table 1 provides information pertaining to conflict regarding frequent visit to hotels and films of the children in relation to the nature of the families.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children			Parents		
		Joint family	Nuclear family	Total	Joint family	Nuclear family	Total
1.	Yes, always	40 (66.6)	65 (27.1)	105 (35.0)	44 (73.3)	89 (37.1)	133 (44.3)
2.	Sometimes	09 (15.0)	121 (50.4)	130 (43.3)	08 (13.3)	122 (50.8)	130 (43.3)
3.	No objections	11 (18.3)	54 (22.5)	65 (21.7)	08 (13.3)	29 (12.1)	37 (12.3)
	Total	60 (100.0)	240 (100.0)	300 (100.0)	60 (100.0)	240 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 1: Nature of family and opinion regarding objections for frequent visit to restaurants and films

The data clearly indicates the intergenerational conflict regarding visiting the hotels and films frequently. Among all the students majority of students and fathers opined that the parents impose objections for visiting to hotels and films. Majority of the respondents who do not impose any restrictions are mainly belonged to nuclear families. The conflict regarding this aspect is more in joint families than in nuclear families.
Among the respondents of joint families 66.6 per cent (40) students and 73.3 per cent (44) fathers have opined that there is always objection for frequent visit to restaurants and films, 15.0 per cent (09) students and 13.3 per cent (08) fathers are of the opinion that the parents sometime restrict their children's visit to hotels and films. Remaining 18.3 per cent (11) students and 13.3 per cent (08) fathers have opined that in their families there are no restrictions and objections for frequent visit to hotels and films for their children. The data clearly show that even today and majority of joint families have maintained their orthodox nature.
As compared to joint families today nuclear families are more progressive so far as free movement of children is concerned. Among the respondents of nuclear families 27.1 per cent (65) students have opined that their parents always impose restrictions for frequent visit to hotels and films, where this opinion is supported by 37.1 per cent (90) fathers, 50.4 per cent (121) students and 50.8 per cent (122) fathers have opined that in their families the parents sometime impose restrictions for frequent visit of the children to hotels and films. Remaining 22.5 per cent (54) students and only 12.1 per cent (29) fathers have opined that there are no objections to visit restaurants and films in their families.
Thus the data indicates the discontinuity between the children and parents regarding the frequent visit of the students to the restaurants and films. As far as nature of the family is concerned nuclear families are more progressive and achieved modernity than joint families, which are still traditional and orthodox. This show in joint families there is over protection, which leads to a prolongation of dependence and prevents the development of self-reliance in the child. It makes the child loose confidence in him and gives rise to a low level of ego strength and a low level of aspiration, which also makes him excessively sensitive to criticism.
Thus as far as sex of the respondents is concerned there is more freedom to boys than girls in our society. This shows the discrimination among students based on sex is still in our modern society irrespective of radical social change. It is because girl's free movement either with boys or girls is forbidden. Therefore there emerges conflict between girls and their mothers regarding various aspects.
Family as a basic and fundamental unit of socialization process influences almost all activities of human beings. In this process the parental ambitions into the child is central aspect of frustration among youths. Parents always have some future plans for the better advancement of their children. Many parents force the children to achieve the expected goals of the parents, which further leads to conflict between children and parents. Because many children do not inclined to parental goals. During this stage of transition from dependence to independence the views of youths are different from their parents due to difference of interest toward future life. Hence in this study an attempt is made to understand the conflict regarding making future plans for their children.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	Yes	189 (63.3)	273 (91.0)
2.	No	98 (32.7)	15 (05.0)
3.	No opinion	13 (04.3)	12 (04.0)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 2: Opinion regarding making future plans for children

From the above table it is evident that a majority of the parents think that drawing the plans for the advancement of their children is the main duty of parents. But at the same time many children do not agree with this opinion. They expect sufficient freedom to make future plans for themselves, 91.00 per cent (273) fathers and 63.3 per cent (189) students opined that the parents must make some future plans for educational and occupational life of the children. But 32.7 per cent (98) students are of the opinion that it is not the parents' duty to make plans for children's future life. Because they develop their own aspirations regarding their education and occupation, but this opinion is supported by only 5.0 per cent (15) fathers. Remaining 4.3 per cent (15) students and 4.0 per cent (12) fathers have not given any response regarding this aspect.

Thus above clearly indicates that many parents make future plans for their children. It is mainly because many parents, who failed to achieve their goal in their life, attempt to reach it through their children. It means many parents hope that the child will attain heights that he or she failed to attain. Therefore they project some plans for their children.

At the same time the parents, who failed to achieve their educational and occupational goals due to personal failure or financial problem, force their children to realize their goal, although the children have no interest in that field. This leads to psychological frustration among the youths, because many parents do not think about dissimilarity between the ambitions of the parents towards their children and realistic capacity of the child and moreover the opportunities in the society. Today many youths acquire different values and attitudes and different preferences about future life. Therefore there emerge intergenerational conflict between the children and their parents.

The following Table 3 provides information regarding children's efforts to fulfill the future plans projected by the parents for the children.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	Yes, must fulfill	146 (48.7)	160 (53.3)
2.	No	31 (10.3)	09 (03.0)
3.	Try best of their capacity	123 (41.0)	124 (41.3)
4.	No opinion	-	07 (02.3)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 3: Opinion regarding children's efforts to fulfill the future plans

From the above table it is evident that the future plans for the children may be fulfill. As efforts to fulfill the projected plans are concerned there is no more conflict between the children and the parents. Among all the respondents 48.7 per cent (146) students and 53.3 per cent (160) fathers are of the opinion that the children must make efforts to fulfill the future plans, although they are above the heights of the children's capacity. Similarly 41.0 per cent (123) students and 41.3 per cent (124) fathers have opined that the children make efforts to fulfill the projected plans best of their capacity. If the plans are beyond the level of the children's they never make efforts to reach those goals. 10.3 per cent (31) students and 3.0 per cent (09) fathers have said it is not necessary to fulfill the goals always. Remaining 2.3 per cent (07) fathers have not given any opinion regarding the efforts to fulfill the future plans.

The data shows that many parents also progressive so far as fulfilling the plans of the parents for the children, who also agree with the capacity of the children. Because parents have to force their children when there are so many opportunities to fulfill the aspirations. Otherwise, it invites the deviant behaviour among children. Today children do not tolerate the great pressure upon them for high achievement without understanding the real capacity of the children, which leads to feel frustrate and exert dissatisfaction and intergenerational conflict, because there is no similarity between parent's ambitions and children's aspirations.

The process of socialization varies with sex of the children in some families. In some families parents give first preference to male child, whereas in other families it is to girl children. Sometimes this aspect also leads to intergenerational conflict. When children leave homes for college, stress not only occurs from a need to achieve personal independence and to adopt to the changing circumstances of college life. At the time children develop their own complex personal demands and force their parents to satisfy them. In fulfilling the demands sometimes some parents make discrimination between the boys and girls. Hence here an attempt is made to understand the discrimination in fulfilling the demands of their children.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	Sons	07 (02.3)	19 (06.3)
2.	Daughters	93 (31.0)	59 (19.7)
3.	Equal preference	190 (63.3)	212 (70.7)
4.	No opinion	10 (03.3)	10 (03.3)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 4: Opinion regarding quick satisfaction of children's demands

The Table 4 gives information regarding quick satisfaction of children's demands. The data clearly indicates the parents make discrimination sometimes. A majority of the parents do not make any discrimination and give equal preference to both boys and girls. In the study some parents have either only male children or female children. The opinions of such parents are calculated under no opinion. Among all the respondents only 2.3 per cent (07) students and 6.3 per cent (19) fathers have opined that in their families the parents give first preference to sons not daughters. And 31.00 per cent (93) students and 19.7 per cent (59) fathers opined that in their families the parents give more preference to daughters but not sons. But against to these opinions, 63.3 per cent (190) students and 70.7 per cent (212) fathers have expressed that the parents in their families do not make any discrimination who give equal preference to both sons and daughters. And remaining 3.3 per cent (10) students and equal number of fathers have given no opinions, because they have only either male issues or female issues, who have no chance to make any discrimination.

Thus the above data indicates that there is no more conflict between the generations regarding this aspect. Although there is some intergenerational conflict, where majority of parents said that they satisfy sons demands immediately but a majority of students said that the parents quickly satisfy the demands of daughters. In this way there is also somewhat conflict between the generations.

Money is a central source of anguish in the home at this time. The nation that there is a delightful well somewhere from which one can dredge up all needed cash seems at times to be witch the adolescent wind. Hence they force the parents for pocket money. But most of the parents are against giving sufficient pocket money to their children. Because the parents think that the pocket money may be misused for bad habits such as smoking, chewing gutka, drinking, going to brothels, going to hotels with boyfriends or girl friends and the like. But slowly the trend is changing among elite class where the parents many times treat their children as friends. But is the conservative middle class and lower class families the parents oppose it on the ground they may misuse it. They also think that the adolescents do not know the importance of hard earned money. Moreover they are of the opinion that money without responsibility is very dangerous one particularly to teenagers. But teenagers need money for the satisfaction of their personal demands need money for the satisfaction of their personal demands and hence they force their parents for it. They never had to know the source of anything, for parents were omnipotent and represented infinite wells of satisfaction. Responsibility then, was a word unknown. Therefore an opinion regarding giving enough pocket money to children is collected.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	Yes, always	113 (37.7)	27 (09.0)
2.	Should give sometimes	140 (46.7)	213 (71.0)
3.	Should not give sometimes	40 (13.3)	28 (09.3)
4.	Don't give	06 (02.0)	30 (10.0)
5.	No opinion	01 (00.3)	02 (00.7)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 5: Opinion regarding giving enough pocket money to children

The Table 5 provides information regarding giving enough pocket money to the children. The table clearly indicates the intergenerational conflict as far as pocket money is concerned.

Among all the respondents 37.7 per cent (113) students have opined that the parents must give enough pocket money to their children always, but this opinion is supported by only 9.0 per cent (27) fathers. Similarly, 71.0 per cent (213) fathers are of the opinion that parents should give pocket money to their children sometimes only, which is supported by 46.7 per cent (140) students. But 13.3 per cent (40) student are of the opinion that the parents should not give pocket money sometime, whenever they are not unable to give, but they are of the opinion that the parents must give many times. This opinion is supported by 9.3 per cent (28) parents. But only 10.00 per cent (30) parents and 2.0 per cent (6) students have opined that the parents should not give pocket money to the children. They are of the opinion that parents only satisfy the demands of the children, if possible. Remaining 0.3 per cent (1) students and 0.7 per cent (2) fathers have not given any response to this question.

Thus the above data clearly shows the conflict between the younger and older generations regarding the issue of giving enough pocket money to the children.

At the same time an attempt is also made to understand whether pocket money given to the students is sufficient or not. Because for many students they given pocket money is not sufficient to satisfy their personal demands and aspirations.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	Yes, sufficient	32 (10.7)	125 (41.7)
2.	Totally insufficient	78 (26.0)	23 (7.7)
3.	Sometimes sufficient	112 (37.3)	36 (12.0)
4.	Sometimes insufficient	78 (26.0)	27 (09.0)
5.	No opinion	-	89 (29.7)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 6: Opinion regarding whether pocket money is enough or not

The Table 6 provides information regarding the pocket money given to children is sufficient or not.

Among all the respondents only 10.7 per cent (32) students and a majority 41.7 per cent (125) fathers are of the opinion that the pocket money given to the students is totally sufficient to meet their demands. But majority 26.0 per cent (78) students and 7.7 per cent (23) fathers have opined that the pocket money given to children is totally insufficient. Therefore these children are always in conflict with their parents, 37.3 per cent (112) students and 12.0 per cent (36) fathers are of the opinion that the given pocket money is sometimes sufficient. Many times these children are in conflict with their parents for sufficient pocket money. Among remaining respondents 26.0 per cent (78) students and only 9.0 per cent (27) fathers have opined that the pocket money is sometimes insufficient, but many times the children satisfy their demands in the given pocket money or the parents may give somewhat sufficient pocket money. But remaining 29.7 per cent (89) fathers do not know whether the given pocket money is enough or not.

Thus the data indicates that many times the given pocket money is insufficient, where the intergenerational conflicts are more in such families. By knowing this fact in modern society the aspirations and ambitions of the children are always an increase. But parents have not extended their financial assistance to satisfy the increasing demands of the children. Therefore money is the central source of conflict in every family irrespective of class, caste and nature of the family.

Really speaking in almost all families in general and in conservative and orthodox families in particular, the parents oppose teenage girls and boys going to movies with their respective boy and girl friends. Because the adolescent boys and girls are more emotional, passionate and highly irrational, where mutual attraction between the persons of opposite sex may further lead to physical relationships, which can, no doubt, spoil their life. Now-a-days the girls and boys in the name of friendship move from one movie theatre to another, from one park to another in most sexy dresses. It is said that the skin relation is more stronger than reason. With the touch of emotion and passion man's reason and intellect vanish. He/she becomes made for each other. Hence here an attempt is made to understand whether parents give permission to their children to watch a movie in theatre with their boy friend/girl friend.

Sl. No.	Opinions	Children	Parents
1.	May watch	111 (37.0)	55 (18.3)
2.	No permission	162 (54.0)	237 (79.0)
3.	No objection	27 (09.0)	08 (02.7)
	Total	300 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 7: Opinion regarding permission to watch a film in theatre with boy/girl friend

The Table 7 reveals the data pertaining to the permission to watch a movie in theatre for the children with their boyfriend or girl friend.

From the above table it is evident that a majority of the parents do not allow their children to watch a film in theatre with the friend of opposite sex. Among all the respondents 37.0 per cent (111) students have opined that their parents may give them permission to watch a movie with the friend of opposite sex in theatre. But only 18.3 per cent (55) fathers may give permission to watch a move with their boy friend or girl friend, 54.0 per cent (162) students have opined that their parents never allow them to go films with their friends. But 79.0 per cent (237) fathers never allow their children to go to films with boy friend or girl friend. This data shows the conflict between the generations regarding watching a movie in theatre with their boy friend or girl friend. Among remaining respondents 9.0 per cent (27) students have opined that their parents give them full freedom to watch a movie in theatre with their boy friend or girl friend. But among fathers only 2.7 per cent (08) fathers allow their children to go to films along with their friends of opposite sex.

Thus, the data clearly indicated that the students are moving progressive whereas their parents are still orthodox and conservative, who object their children to move freely. This is also source of conflict in families. If parents do not allow them to go, the children watch film in theatre with their boy friend or girl friend apart from the restrictions. This is what love feeling is moving powerful than blood relationships. To conclude it is fairly said that the parents oppose the teenagers fearing emotional act. It is very difficult to regulate one's own emotions particularly among adolescents, who are highly emotional and passionate. They are afraid of their social status and prestige. The parents oppose the teenagers because they misread the genuine friendship.

7. Conclusion

In the present day Indian caste ridden orthodox society, the parents are more afraid of their social status and prestige than anything else. They read in the newspapers, periodicals and electronic media every day the cases of kidnapping, elopements etc. Therefore taking into consideration the social bondage the parents oppose them. It may be due to lack of proper understanding of their own adolescent children's character.

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