



**PERCEIVED PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND SUICIDAL IDEATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Parental Attitudes play important roles in suicidal behavior among adolescents. The present study was carried out to examine the role of perceived parental attitudes in suicidal ideation. For this purpose Parent-Child Relation Questionnaire (PCRQ) developed by Singh (1984) and The Scale for Suicidal Ideation (SSI) developed by Beck *et al.* (1979) were administered on a sample of 75 boys and 75 girls (N = 150) with mean age of 16.687 (SD = .956), who were randomly selected from different schools of Aligarh. The results of the study showed that there is strong significant negative correlation between positive parental attitudes (i.e., loving, protecting, and disciplining attitudes from both mother and father) and suicidal ideation, and strong significant positive correlation between negative parental attitudes (i.e., dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes from both mother and father) and suicidal ideation among adolescents. Further, the result of the t-test showed that boys perceived higher mother's rejecting attitudes and father's dominating attitudes as compared to girls, and girls perceived father's attitudes as more loving as compared to boys. Moreover, there was no significant difference found between boys and girls on suicidal ideation and other parental attitudes. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis showed that mother's protecting attitudes was significant negative predictor of suicidal ideation for total sample, and mother's loving attitudes as a significant negative predictor for total sample as well as for both boys and girls, separately. Additionally, father's disciplining attitude was an important and significant negative predictor of suicidal ideation for total sample and when gender was taken into consideration it was significant negative predictor only for girls and not for boys. Mother's punishing attitudes was significant positive predictor of suicidal ideation for total sample, and mother's rejecting attitudes was significant positive predictor for total sample as well as only for girls. The results of the study have implications for counselors and health professionals who may include in their intervention programmes the strategies to bring changes in the parenting behavior. Community level programmes for prevention of suicidal thinking may also be organized to make the parents aware of their role in children's negative approach towards life.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The problem of suicidal behavior and suicidal ideation is becoming more rampant among adolescents all over the world. As cited by Shain (2016) the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of students in grades 9 through 12 in the United States indicated that during the 12 months before the survey, 39.1% of girls and 20.8% of boys felt sad or hopeless almost every day for at least 2 weeks in a row, 16.9% of girls and 10.3% of boys had planned a suicide attempt, 10.6% of girls and 5.4% of boys had attempted suicide, and 3.6% of girls and 1.8% of

boys had made a suicide attempt that required medical attention. In India more than one lakh persons (1,33,623) in the country lost their lives by committing suicide during the year 2015, and around 32.8% suicide victims were youths in the age group of 18 to below 30 years and around 7% suicide victims were below 18 years (National Crime Records Bureau, 2015). Both completed suicide as well as suicidal behavior/ or attempted suicide are often preceded by suicidal ideation. According to Bush and Pargament (1995) suicidal behavior is often preceded by thoughts, threats, and unsuccessful attempts at suicide. According to Nock *et al.* (2009) suicidal ideation is a self-destructive thought of planning to end one's life and is the most powerful predictor of suicide attempts and suicide.

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### **Parental Attitudes**

Parents play an important role on their child's development by positively developing or punishing certain behaviours that can encourage or discourage certain interests or ability which in turn influence their personality, well being, career, and variety of behaviours. The family shapes the social integration of the child more than a formal school. Turnbull (1983) has identified four basic parental roles- parents as educational decision makers; parents as parents; parents as teachers and parents as advocates.

According to Chauhan and Ahmad (2007) the two distinctive roles of parents include both mothering and fathering. A child bestows on both mother and father together or independently, the responsibility of upbringing him/her. It is important to note that most of the children have a fairly definite clearcut concept of 'father' which differs markedly from their concept of 'mother' (Meltzer, 1943). Studies showed that while the impact of fathers on adolescents was stronger in girls than in boys (Jaycox & Repetti, 1993; Shek, 1998a), the mother-adolescent relationship had a stronger impact on adolescent developmental outcomes than did the father-adolescent relationship (Gould *et al.*, 1998; Shek, 1999).

Therefore, it appears to be of utmost importance to study perceptions regarding their fathering and mothering separately on different modes of parenting. While attitude manifested by parents is of great significance in the dynamics of behaviour perhaps an even more important aspect is how child perceives the parenting extended to him/her. Research indicates that children's perceptions of the parent-child relationship are more meaningful than parents' reports of the parent-child relationship (Hoffman & Lippitt, 1960; Rosenthal, 1963). Children's perceptions of their parents' behaviors also have been found to be more important than actual parental behaviors (Acock & Bengtson, 1978). Bharadwaj (1996, as cited in Chauhan & Ahmad, 2007) points out that this aspect has unfortunately remained a neglected phase of research. What the parents feel is one part of the picture, what is communicated to the child and what is perceived by the child is the actual reality for him/her. It is this phenomenological experience which will determine his reactions, attitudes and feelings.

### **Types of Parenting Style**

Child rearing attitudes and parenting styles are a result of the parent-child interactions (Baumrind, 1971). Baumrind (1973) described three basic parenting styles, which are authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. *Authoritarian* parenting is based on strict rule enforcement and obedience. This type of parenting style is very controlling (Baumrind & Black, 1967). *Permissive* parenting is represented by quite the opposite behavior. Permissive parents are very tolerant and understanding. In permissive parenting style punishment is seldom used. Society views these parents as "not caring" and uninvolved (Baumrind, 1971). The child is permitted to make the decisions and the parent enforces few rules. *Authoritative* parenting is a compromise between the previously discussed styles of parenting. Open communication and reasonable demands on the child are made (Coopersmith, 1967). This method of parenting is considered the best solution to child rearing. All of the family members experience open communication and encourage the child's individuality and independence (Baumrind, 1971).

Maccoby and Martin (1983) determined four types of parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful. *Authoritative parents* are understanding but disciplined in child development; on the other hand, *authoritarian parents* have a rigid, obedient, and insistent style of discipline. *Neglectful parents* have inadequate interaction with their children and are insensitive to their children's needs. *Indulgent parents* are accepting, and support their children's autonomy (as cited in Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 491; Steinberg, 2007, pp. 158-159).

Family is the only place where children and teens gain most competence and noteworthiness. Teenagers whose parents are authoritative and indulgent have higher social, academic, and success self-esteem compared to teenagers with authoritarian and neglectful parents (Martinez *et al.*, 2007).

### **Parental Attitudes and Suicidal Ideation**

Cutler *et al.* (2001) investigated the reasons behind adolescent suicidal behavior and have come up with different explanations. Apart from their other explanations the one explanation is "*strategic suicide*", in which unhappy suicidal adolescents try to signal to other people that they suffer from unhappiness or want to punish others for it. The assumption here is that the strategic suicidal adolescent does not see death as the outcome of his or her suicide attempt and does not intend to complete the act of suicide. According to this explanation, the suicide attempt is a way for suicidal adolescents to communicate with their parents, and signal to them their true unhappiness, and a way of trying to convince the parents to pay more attention to them and contribute more of their resources to them. Sometimes parents' attitudes toward their children make the young individual believe that self-harm is the only way to punish their parents and get their attention. The role of positive parental attitudes (i.e., described as loving, protecting, and disciplining attitudes etc. from mother and father) and negative parental attitudes (i.e., dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes etc. from mother and father) in suicidal ideation are described in the following section.

### **Positive Parental Attitudes and Suicidal Ideation**

Studies have shown the significant contribution of low parental acceptance, low family support, and family conflict to adolescents' self-esteem, hopelessness and suicidal ideation (Perkins & Hartless, 2002; Shagle & Barber, 1995). Hooven (2013) in a study suggested that parent education and family support programs, which are designed to improve parents' overall problem solving, communication and conflict resolution skills, and improve family relationships and strengthen bonds, can make an important contribution in the overall youth suicide prevention effort. Social support for parents, in itself may, be an important factor in promoting parental effectiveness.

Suicidal adolescents perceive their families as less caring, more overprotective, and more rigid than non-suicidal adolescents (Miller *et al.*, 1992). The perceptions of restrictive parenting and low parental care were found to significantly predict adolescents' depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (Stewart *et al.*, 1999). According to de Man *et al.* (1993) adolescents with suicide ideation perceive their parents' child-rearing regimes as controlling and lacking in warmth. Excessive parental control as perceived by adolescents may result in low self-esteem and a low internal locus of control as

well as high levels of stress, depression, and anomie. These variables are in turn associated with suicide ideation (de Man, 1987–1988). Lower parent care is also associated with suicidal thoughts (Martin & Waite, 1994; Peck, 1983). Similarly, many studies also found perceived maternal and paternal warmth and control in child rearing, to be associated with suicidal ideation (e.g., Lai & McBride-Chang, 2001; Wong *et al.*, 2002). Stephen Allison *et al.* (1995, as cited in Kaur & Rani, 2012) there was a high level of suicidal behavior reported with suicidal adolescents perceiving their parents to be significantly less caring, more critical, and more overprotective.

Dubow *et al.* (1989) found marital discord and use of physical discipline by parents to be significant associates of non-fatal suicidal behaviors (NFSB).

In Chinese families, there is a more rigid hierarchical structure than in families in other countries (Shek & Lai, 2000). University students are more apt to obey their parents due to elders' parentalism. Parents force students to follow their demands, and they do not respect students' thoughts and desires. In parents' minds, the only parenting behavior that is good for students is to satisfy their need for clothing, food, housing and transportation. If students act against their parents' will, they are punished or even scolded and beaten. Chinese parents often have highly ambitious goals for their children, which are often manifested in parental discipline of their children's studying. Parents burden their children with the pressure to learn. Studies in other countries have shown that suicidal ideation is associated with parenting methods (Hashimoto *et al.*, 2014). Thus, it may be that improper parenting increases the risk of suicidal ideation in children.

Zhai *et al.* (2015) in a sample of 5183 Chinese university students, which included 2645 males and 2538 females, found participants with suicidal ideation had significant similarities: they had poor family structures and relationships, their parents had unstable work, and their parents used improper parenting styles.

Cheng *et al.* (2009) in a stratified random sample of 9015 students from 100 junior middle schools in Beijing, Hangzhou, Wuhan and Urumqi in China found that suicide risk tended to decrease significantly when 'days of missed classes or school without permission were less than one', and when students thought students in their school were kind and helpful most of the time or always', 'parents or guardians checked to see if homework was done most of the time or always', 'parents or guardians understood their problems and worries most of the time or always' and 'parents or guardians really know what they are doing with their free time most of the time or always'.

### ***Negative Parental Attitudes and Suicidal Ideation***

Family factors, such as poor parent-child relationship and family conflict (Cox, 1999; Steinberg, 1990) have been widely documented as the significant contextual correlates of adolescent depression and suicide. Kienhorst *et al.* (1990), in their cross sectional survey of 9393 Dutch adolescents, had found poor perceived relationship with the parents to be a significant risk factor of suicide. Adolescents having more conflicts with their parents, were found to report more psychiatric symptoms, lower self-esteem, and lesser hope, purpose and satisfaction in life (Shek, 1997, 1998b). King and Merchant (2008) argued from the result of psychological autopsy studies of young people's suicides that adolescents

who died by suicide had significantly less frequent and satisfying communication with their mothers and fathers, with no evidence of more negative interactions with parents. In face-to-face interviews conducted with 1,249 first-year college students, Arria *et al.* (2009) found depressive symptoms, low social support, affective dysregulation, and father-child conflict to be independently associated with suicide ideation. Pillay and Wassenaar (1997) concluded that adolescents with a conflicting relationship with their parents show a high incidence of self-destructive behaviours. Hence, parent-child conflict was usually perceived to be one of the stressors contributing to suicidal ideation and attempt by adolescents in North America (Huff, 1999; Wright, 1985), England (Hollis, 1996), European countries (Tomori *et al.*, 2001) and Asian countries (Ho, Hong, & Heok, 1999). In USA, studies found that these conflicts significantly predicted adolescent suicidal ideation directly (Shagle & Barber, 1995), as well as indirectly through the mediation of self-esteem (Shagle & Barber, 1993), hopelessness and depression (Meneese *et al.*, 1992). Findings of the studies conducted by Lee *et al.* (2006) underscored the importance of both academic and family climate in understanding depression and suicide ideation among Chinese adolescents. They found low levels of family cohesion and support and high levels of parent-adolescent conflict to be positively related to depression and suicide ideation in both genders. Randell *et al.* (2006), among potential high school dropouts, showed that increased levels of suicide risk were associated with perceived conflict with parents, unmet family goals, and family depression; whereas decreased levels of risk were associated with perceived parental involvement and family support for school. Arun and Chavan (2009) in their study among 2402 students from classes VII to XII, revealed that students with academic problems and unsupportive environment at home perceived life as a burden and had higher rates of suicidal ideations.

Lai and McBride-Chang (2001) on a sample of 120 Hong Kong students aged 15–19 years, found that suicide ideation among adolescents was significantly associated with perceived authoritarian parenting, low parental warmth, high maternal over control, negative child-rearing practices, and a negative family climate.

Fotti *et al.* (2006) carried out a study on nationally representative sample of Canadian adolescents aged 12 to 13 years, and found that depression, poor peer relationships, decreased parental nurturance, and increased parental rejection were all significantly associated with suicidal ideation and attempts.

Wedig and Nock (2007) conducted a study which indicates that parental criticism is significantly associated with suicidal thoughts and behavior. In India, Sidhartha and Jena (2006) collected data from 2 schools in Delhi on 1205 adolescents (aged 12 to 19 years), and found that the risk factors predictive of suicidal ideation and suicide attempt were Hindu religion, female sex, older age, physical abuse by parents, perceived parental neglect, history of running away from school, history of suicide by a friend, death wishes and deliberate self harm.

Park (2010) in their study found that the experience of being emotionally and physically abused by a parent has significant effects on an adolescent's development process and has been shown to affect adolescent suicide behavior both directly and indirectly.

Yoder and Hoyt (2005) used a sample of 501 families from the Mississippi Delta region and found that family economic pressure was related to parental depressive symptoms, which, in turn, was related to parental hostile behavior and physical abuse. These parental behaviors were related to adolescent self-esteem and depressive symptoms, which, in turn, were related to adolescent suicidal ideation.

McGarvey *et al.* (1999) interviewed 296 incarcerated adolescents and found significant relationships between youths' self-esteem, hopelessness, and suicidal behavior and their bonding style. Youths whose parent(s) had a parental bonding style of affectionless control reported the greatest distress, and youths whose parent(s) had an optimal bonding style reported the least distress. Differences were found between bonding styles with the mother and with the father. Studies (Barber, 1992, 1996, 2002) have also shown that both the amount and the quality of parental control contribute to youth suicidality. Barber (1996) states that children need to be free from psychological control up to a certain degree in order to have a healthy development as a separate individual and a flourishing personal identity. At the same time, Barber (1993, as cited in Ahmadi, 2009) suggests that although a certain amount of psychological control is necessary for healthy development, a higher level of parental psychological control results in internalized problems such as loneliness, confusion, and depression, which could eventually lead to suicidal behavior.

In the light of a variety of previous studies following hypotheses were formulated in the present study:

1. Positive parental attitudes (i.e., loving, protecting, and disciplining attitudes from both mother and father) will have negative predictive relationship with suicidal ideation.
2. Negative parental attitudes (i.e., dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes from both mother and father) will have positive predictive relationship with suicidal ideation.
3. There will be significant difference between boys and girls in the level of suicidal ideation and parental attitudes.
4. Predictors of suicidal ideation for boys and girls will be different.

## METHOD

### Sample

The sample of the present study consisted of 150 Senior Secondary students (75 boys and 75 girls) with the mean age of 16.687 (SD = .956), who were randomly selected from different schools of Aligarh. All the respondents were unmarried, nonworking and with no apparent physical or mental illness. In general the subjects were having good health and did not suffer from any serious or chronic ailment. All students came from middle class and upper middle class (moderate) socioeconomic background.

### Measures/Tools

Apart from demographic questionnaire, the following measures were used in the present study:

**Parent-Child Relation Questionnaire (PCRQ):** In order to assess the parental attitudes or child rearing style, Parent-Child

Relation Questionnaire (PCRQ) developed by Singh (1984) was used for this research paper. The PCRQ consist of two forms labelled as F-form (father form) and M-form (mother form). Each form has six subscales i.e. loving, protecting, disciplining, dominating, rejecting, and punishing. Having 10 items in each subscale with a total of 60 items. Three response categories i.e. 'yes', 'no' and 'doubtful' have been provided against each question and for each response a score of 3, 1 and 2 have been assigned, respectively. Thus a maximum possible score on each scale is 30 and minimum 10 for both F form and M form.

Singh (1984) administered both forms of PCRQ on 100 subjects and found the values of test-retest reliability on Loving, Dominating, Rejecting, Protecting, Punishing, and Disciplining attitudes for mother form were as – .57, .55, .63, .65, .67, and .64, and for father form were as – .66, .60, .61, .58, .54, and .68, respectively for each the six dimensions. Singh (1984) conducted another study on 165 subjects and found the values of Split-half reliability coefficient for all the six dimensions that is Loving, Dominating, Rejecting, Protecting, Punishing, and Disciplining attitudes for M-Form were as – .64, .78, .79, .75, .68, and .65 and for F-Form values were as- .71, .84, .82, .69, .83, and .85, respectively.

The intrafactor correlations were very low many being close to zero or zero. Many of the intercorrelations are negative, so it is impossible for one individual to receive a high score or low score consistently on all variables (Singh, 1984).

**The Scale for Suicidal Ideation (SSI):** Suicidal ideation among the students was assessed with the help of 19 item self-report Scale for Suicidal Ideation. This scale is a 19-item clinical research tool developed by Beck *et al.* (1979) for assessing and quantifying the degree of suicide intent in populations/ samples of suicide ideators / contemplators. Each item consists of three alternative statements graded in intensity from 0 to 2. The instrument's total score is the sum of the individual item scores and may range from 0 (low ideation) to 38 (high ideation). In other words, a positive rating (>1) on any of the ideation scale's 19 items is considered as a potential indicator of suicide ideation.

Beck *et al.* (1979) on a sample of 90 patients who were hospitalized for self-destructive rumination, showed in an item analysis that each item had a positive correlation with the total scale score and that 16 of the 19 coefficients were significant (i.e. the item-total score correlations ranged from .04 to .72). Coefficient alpha, KR-20 (Cronbach, 1951) was obtained .89. They found the interrater reliability coefficient of SSI was .83 ( $p < .001$ ) on the sample of Twenty-five of the 90 consecutively admitted patients.

Beck *et al.* (1979) also demonstrated different types of validity (i.e. concurrent validity, discriminative validity, and construct validity etc.) for SSI.

### Procedure of Data Collection

Prior to the data collection, the authorities of the educational institutes were approached for their permission and cooperation to collect data from their students. The data were collected in class room situations. After getting the willingness of subjects a congenial rapport was established to make them comfortable. Subjects were instructed to go through the instructions written in the questionnaires before answering each questionnaire and were asked not to leave any item

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unanswered. They were also asked to be free to ask if they had any queries. There was no time limit fixed for filling up the questionnaires. However, they were asked not to take unnecessarily long time. Most students completed the questionnaires within approximately 35 to 40 minutes i.e. time allotted for one period. The general testing conditions were satisfactory and the procedure was uniform throughout the data collection.

## Data Analysis

SPSS 16.0 of Windows software was used for the statistical analyses. To determine sample characteristics and standard descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and Pearson correlation coefficient were used. In order to test main effects, a three step hierarchical linear regression analysis predicting suicidal ideation was used.

## RESULTS

Means, Standard Deviations, Standard Error of Mean and obtained range of scores with possible score of the variables are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 150)

Variables	Mean	SD	SEM	Obtained Range	Possible Score
<b>Suicidal Ideation</b>	11.573	6.208	.507	0-32	0-38
<b>Mother's Attitudes</b>					
M-Loving	21.533	6.202	.506	10-30	10-30
M-Protecting	20.940	4.166	.340	13-30	10-30
M-Disciplining	20.187	2.945	.240	14-26	10-30
M-Dominating	19.087	4.514	.368	10-28	10-30
M-Rejecting	17.947	5.806	.474	10-30	10-30
M-Punishing	19.313	5.793	.473	10-30	10-30
<b>Father's Attitudes</b>					
F-Loving	21.107	4.607	.376	10-30	10-30
F-Protecting	20.720	4.914	.401	10-30	10-30
F-Disciplining	19.720	3.625	.296	10-28	10-30
F-Dominating	19.413	5.034	.411	10-30	10-30
F-Rejecting	17.600	5.725	.467	10-30	10-30
F-Punishing	18.833	4.590	.375	10-28	10-30

Note. M = Mother, F = Father

The correlation coefficient of the perceived parental attitudes with the suicidal ideation for boys, girls, and total sample are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Correlations between Parental Attitudes and Adolescent Suicidal Ideation

	Suicidal Ideation		
	Boys (n = 75)	Girls (n = 75)	Total Sample (N = 150)
<b>Mother's Attitudes</b>			
M-Loving	-.869	-.865	-.864
M-Protecting	-.806	-.759	-.785
M-Disciplining	-.696	-.589	-.635
M-Dominating	.768	.781	.779
M-Rejecting	.835	.855	.849
M-Punishing	.821	.871	.842
<b>Father's Attitudes</b>			
F-Loving	-.821	-.866	-.847
F-Protecting	-.836	-.797	-.818
F-Disciplining	-.775	-.801	-.783
F-Dominating	.807	.787	.802
F-Rejecting	.703	.822	.769
F-Punishing	.768	.820	.791

Note: All coefficients are significant at a .01 level. M = Mother, F = Father

In line with expectations, parental attitudes scores are found to have highest correlations with the suicidal ideation among adolescents. An inspection of Table 2 reveals significant negative correlation between parental loving, protecting, and

disciplining attitudes and adolescents' suicidal ideation. Whereas, suicidal ideation was significantly positively correlated with parental dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes, i.e., adolescents perception of their mother's and father's attitudes as dominating, rejecting, and punishing was associated with increased level of suicidal ideation.

Table 3 reflects the results of the t-test between male and female students with regards to suicidal ideation and perceived parental attitudes.

**Table 3** Gender Differences in the Study Variables

Study Variables	Gender				t-value (df=148)	95% CI	
	Boys (N=75)		Girls (N=75)			Lower	Upper
	M	SD	M	SD			
Suicidal Ideation	12.533	6.196	10.613	6.111	1.911	-.066	3.906
M-Loving	21.000	5.773	22.067	6.599	1.054	-3.067	.934
M-Protecting	20.507	4.085	21.373	4.229	1.277	-2.208	.475
M-Disciplining	20.227	3.270	20.147	2.603	.166	-.874	1.034
M-Dominating	19.733	4.542	18.440	4.421	1.767	-1.53	2.740
M-Rejecting	19.040	5.545	16.853	5.893	2.341*	.340	4.033
M-Punishing	19.653	5.313	18.973	6.254	.718	-1.192	2.552
F-Loving	20.360	4.459	21.853	4.661	2.005*	-2.965	-.021
F-Protecting	20.253	4.957	21.187	4.859	1.164	-2.517	.650
F-Disciplining	19.560	3.757	19.880	3.507	.539	-1.493	.853
F-Dominating	20.373	5.296	18.453	4.595	2.371*	.320	3.520
F-Rejecting	18.667	5.318	16.853	6.004	1.958	-.017	3.643
F-Punishing	19.240	4.901	18.427	4.249	1.086	-.667	2.293

Note. \*p < .05, two tailed. M = Mother, F = Father, CI = confidence interval.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that there were significant gender differences in perceived mother's rejecting attitude, father's dominating attitude and father's loving attitude. The mean score of perceived mother's rejecting attitudes were significantly higher among boys (Mean = 19.040) as compared to girls (Mean = 16.853, t-value = 2.341, p < .05). Similarly, the mean score of perceived father's dominating attitudes were significantly higher among boys (Mean = 20.373) as compared to girls (Mean = 18.453, t-value = 2.371, p < .05). Whereas the mean scores of father's loving attitudes for boys (Mean = 20.360) was significantly lower than girls (Mean = 21.853, t-value = 2.005, p < .05).

These results indicate that girls perceived more loving attitude from fathers as compared to boys. Whereas, boys perceived more dominating attitudes from their father and rejecting attitudes from their mother as compared to girls. No significant difference were found between boys and girls on suicidal ideation, parental protecting, disciplining and punishing attitudes. Moreover, no significant differences were found between boys and girls on mother's loving and dominating attitudes and father's rejecting attitude. If we look at the results of the t-test in the light of the hypotheses formulated for the present study, it is revealed that our third hypothesis which stated that there will be significant difference between boys and girls in the level of suicidal ideation and perceived parental attitudes, is partially confirmed.

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to examine the role of parental attitudes in predicting suicidal ideation. Consistent with Cohen and Cohen (1983), all variables within a given set were entered simultaneously. For the first step, demographic variables (viz., gender, percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, father's and mother's education and family background of students belonging to urban and rural areas) were entered into the regression equation.

The inclusion of jointly the six dimensions of mother's attitudes and jointly the six dimensions of father's attitudes as the main-effect variables—viz., loving, protecting, disciplining, dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes were involved in the second and third steps, respectively. Results of these analyses are presented in Tables 4 through 6.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis for the total sample are presented in Table 4. In the first step the block of demographic variables (i.e. gender, percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, father's education, mother's education, and family background) was entered. Noteworthy, percentage in preceding grade examination ( $\beta = -.409$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-5.593$ ,  $p < .001$ ), father's education ( $\beta = -.168$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-1.991$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and mother's education ( $\beta = -.292$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-3.727$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were found to be significant predictors of suicidal ideation, as demonstrated in step 1. These variables accounted for a significant 56.4% ( $R^2 = .564$ ,  $F = 37.219$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variance in suicidal ideation. The effect of these variables was, thus, controlled for further analysis.

After controlling for demographic variables mother's attitudes was entered at step 2, which added significantly to the variance accounted for by the demographic variables and explained an additional 26.3% of the variance ( $F$ -change =  $35.082$ ,  $p < .001$ ), significantly improving the prediction in the severity of suicidal ideation. However, it is noteworthy that, out of six dimensions of mother's attitudes, the main effect of only mother's loving, protecting, rejecting, and punishing attitudes was significant ( $\beta = -.298$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-3.272$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\beta = -.139$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-1.993$ ,  $p = .048$ ,  $\beta = .226$ ,  $t$ -value =  $2.441$ ,  $p = .016$ , and  $\beta = .194$ ,  $t$ -value =  $2.146$ ,  $p = .034$ , respectively), indicating that mother's loving and protecting attitudes were strong negative predictor of suicidal ideation with lower mother's loving and protecting attitudes predicting high suicidal ideation. Mother's rejecting and punishing attitudes were, however, positive predictors of suicidal ideation, indicating higher level of mother's rejecting and punishing attitudes predicting high suicidal ideation.

**Table 4** Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis for Total sample (N = 150).

Variables	Step1 $\beta$	Step2 $\beta$	Step3 $\beta$
Gender <sup>a</sup>	-.007	-.022	-.017
PPGE	-.409***	-.138**	-.117*
Father's Education <sup>b</sup>	-.168*	-.002	-.002
Mother's Education <sup>c</sup>	-.292***	-.064	-.072
Family (Urban/Rural) <sup>d</sup>	.003	.052	.041
M-Loving		-.298***	-.211*
M-Protecting		-.139*	-.047
M-Disciplining		-.014	.072
M-Dominating		-.063	-.188*
M-Rejecting		.226*	.104
M-Punishing		.194*	.115
F-Loving		-.114	-.114
F-Protecting		-.141	-.141
F-Disciplining			-.186*
F-Dominating			.138
F-Rejecting			.038
F-Punishing			.009
<b>Constant</b>	36.337***	22.557***	29.660***
<b>R</b>	.751	.910	.922
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.564	.827	.851
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	.564	.263	.024
<b>F change</b>	37.219***	35.082***	3.477**
<b>F</b>	37.219***	60.078***	44.289***

Note.  $\beta$  = Standardized regression coefficient. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; <sup>a</sup>Gender (1 = Male, 2 = female), <sup>b</sup>Father's education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>c</sup>Mother's Education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>d</sup>Family background (1 = Urban, 2 = Rural); PPGE = Percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination, M = Mother, F = Father.

The entry of the third and final block of variables (i.e. positive and negative dimensions of father's attitude) in step 3, added relatively little but significantly ( $\Delta R^2 = .024$ ,  $F$ -change =  $3.477$ ,  $p < .01$ ) to the variance accounted for by the earlier variables in the severity of suicidal ideation bringing the total proportion of explained variance to 85.1%. However, it is noteworthy that the main effect of only father's disciplining attitude was significant ( $\beta = -.186$ ,  $t$ -value =  $-2.583$ ,  $p = .011$ ) with lower perceived father's disciplining attitude predicting high suicidal ideation. Father's loving, protecting, dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes did not contribute significantly to the prediction of suicidal ideation.

If we look at the results of the regression analysis in the light of the hypotheses formulated for the present study, it is revealed that our first hypothesis which stated that positive parental attitudes (i.e., loving, protecting, and disciplining attitudes from both mother and father) will have negative predictive relationship with suicidal ideation, was partially accepted as in terms of mother's attitudes only two, out of three positive dimensions of parental attitudes, i.e. loving and protecting attitude emerged as significant predictors of suicidal ideation. In terms of father's attitudes only one out of the three positive dimensions of parental attitudes disciplining attitudes emerged as significant negative predictors of suicidal ideation. Similarly, our second hypothesis was partially confirmed as only two out of the three dimensions of negative parental attitudes i.e. mother's rejecting and mother's punishing attitudes emerged as significant positive predictors of suicidal ideation.

Similarly, hierarchical regression analysis was also performed for boys and girls samples, separately. The results of the analysis for boys sample are set in Table 5.

**Table 5** Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis for Boys (N = 75).

Variables	Step1 $\beta$	Step2 $\beta$	Step3 $\beta$
PPGE	-.393***	-.146*	-.113
Father's Education <sup>a</sup>	-.166	.035	.011
Mother's Education <sup>b</sup>	-.264*	-.015	-.041
Family (Urban/Rural) <sup>c</sup>	.043	.113*	.088
M-Loving		-.361**	-.275
M-Protecting		-.157	-.062
M-Disciplining		-.038	.058
M-Dominating		-.027	-.152
M-Rejecting		.150	.133
M-Punishing		.188	.179
F-Loving			-.082
F-Protecting			-.223
F-Disciplining			-.077
F-Dominating			.083
F-Rejecting			-.038
F-Punishing			-.003
<b>Constant</b>	35.175***	24.149***	28.627***
<b>R</b>	.714	.911	.921
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.510	.831	.849
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	.510	.320	.018
<b>F change</b>	18.235***	20.186***	1.181
<b>F</b>	18.235***	31.401***	20.401***

Note.  $\beta$  = Standardized regression coefficient. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; <sup>a</sup>Father's education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>b</sup>Mother's Education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>c</sup>Family background (1 = Urban, 2 = Rural); PPGE = Percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination, M = Mother, F = Father.

## Perceived Parental Attitudes and Suicidal Ideation Among Adolescents: A Correlational Study

School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>b</sup>Mother's Education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>c</sup>Family background (1 = Urban, 2 = Rural); PPGE = Percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination, M = Mother, F = Father.

In the first step the block of demographic variables (i.e. percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, father's education, mother's education, and family background) was entered. Noteworthy, percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination and mother's education ( $\beta = -.393$ , t- value = -3.599,  $p < .001$  and  $\beta = -.264$ , t- value = -2.303,  $p < .05$ , respectively) were found to be significant predictors of suicidal ideation, as demonstrated in step 1. Demographic variables accounted for a significant 51% ( $R^2 = .510$ ,  $F = 18.235$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variance in suicidal ideation. The effect of these variables was, thus, controlled for further analysis.

After controlling for demographic variables mother's attitude was entered at step 2. There was a substantial increase of .320 in  $R^2$  ( $F$ -change = 20.186,  $p < .001$ ), indicating the significant contribution of mother's attitudes in explaining variance in suicidal ideation to be as much as 32%. However, it is noteworthy that, the main effect of only one out of the six dimensions of mother's attitudes i.e. mother's loving attitudes emerged as significant predictors of boys' suicidal ideation ( $\beta = -.361$ , t- value = -2.807,  $p = .007$ ), with lower mother's loving attitude predicting more suicidal ideation. However, the main effect of mother's protecting, disciplining, dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes did not contribute significantly to the prediction of suicidal ideation in boys (Table 5).

The prediction of suicidal ideation was marginally enhanced with the entry of last and third block of variables (i.e. positive and negative dimensions of father's attitude) in step 3, and did not add significantly to the amount of variance accounted for in suicidal ideation ( $\Delta R^2 = .018$ ,  $F$ -change = 1.181,  $p = .329$ ). As can be seen from  $\beta$  values in Table 5, none of the dimensions of father's attitudes made a significant contribution to the prediction of suicidal ideation among boys.

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis for girls sample are set in Table 6. Again, in the first step the block of demographic variables (i.e., percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, father's education, mother's education, and family background) was entered. Percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination and mother's education ( $\beta = -.412$ , t- value = -4.226,  $p < .001$  and  $\beta = -.335$ , t- value = -2.985,  $p < .01$ , respectively) were found to be significant predictors of suicidal ideation, as demonstrated in step 1. Demographic variables accounted for a significant 60.1% ( $R^2 = .601$ ,  $F = 26.385$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the variance in suicidal ideation. The effect of these demographic variables was, thus, statistically controlled by entering them in the first step.

After controlling for demographic variables mother's attitudes were entered at step 2. Entering mother's attitudes at step 2, added significantly to the variance accounted for by the demographic variables and explained 23.3% of the variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .233$ ,  $F$ -change = 15.064,  $p < .001$ ), significantly improving the prediction of suicide ideation. However, only two out of six dimensions of mother's attitudes i.e. mother's loving and rejecting attitudes were significant predictor of suicidal ideation in girls ( $\beta = -.282$ , t- value = -2.022,  $p = .047$ ,

$\beta = .306$ , t- value = 2.197,  $p = .032$ , respectively), indicating lower level of mother's loving attitudes and higher levels of mother's rejecting attitudes predicting high suicidal ideation.

**Table 6** Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis for Girls (N = 75).

Variables	Step1 $\beta$	Step2 $\beta$	Step3 $\beta$
PPGE	-.412***	-.135	-.106
Father's Education <sup>a</sup>	-.152	-.001	.014
Mother's Education <sup>b</sup>	-.335**	-.139	-.118
Family (Urban/Rural) <sup>c</sup>	-.050	-.021	-.020
M-Loving		-.282*	-.220
M-Protecting		-.083	-.015
M-Disciplining		.009	.094
M-Dominating		-.119	-.203
M-Rejecting		.306*	.025
M-Punishing		.205	.117
F-Loving			-.127
F-Protecting			-.044
F-Disciplining			-.267*
F-Dominating			.123
F-Rejecting			.204
F-Punishing			-.011
<b>Constant</b>	37.290***	20.612**	27.898***
<b>R</b>	.775	.914	.932
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	.601	.835	.868
<b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>	.601	.233	.033
<b>F change</b>	26.385***	15.064***	2.427*
<b>F</b>	26.385***	32.314***	23.809***

Note.  $\beta$  = Standardized regression coefficient. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; <sup>a</sup>Father's education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>b</sup>Mother's Education (1 = Uneducated/Below High School, 2 = High School, 3 = Graduate, 4 = PG & Non Professional, 5 = PG & Professional), <sup>c</sup>Family background (1 = Urban, 2 = Rural); PPGE = Percentage of marks in preceding Grade examination, M = Mother, F = Father.

The prediction of suicidal ideation was also enhanced with addition of the third block of variables (i.e. positive and negative dimensions of father's attitude) in step 3, adding 3.3% of the total proportion of explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .033$ ,  $F$ -change = 2.427,  $p < .05$ ) accounted for in the severity of suicidal ideation. However, it is noteworthy that only father's disciplining attitude was significant predictor of suicidal ideation ( $\beta = -.267$ , t- value = -2.651,  $p = .01$ ) with lower father's disciplining attitudes predicting high suicidal ideation in girls. Father's loving, protecting, dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes did not contribute significantly to the prediction of suicidal ideation (Table 6).

Thus, our Fourth hypothesis which stated that predictors of suicidal ideation for boys and girls will be different is partially proved. A comparison of the results for boys and girls is provided in the following paragraphs.

Demographic variables were found to account for a significant 51% of the variance in suicidal ideation among boys and 60.1 of the variance among girls. Boys and girls with lower percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, lower levels of mother's education were equally likely to show more suicidal ideation.

Mother's loving attitudes had negative predictive relationship with suicidal ideation for both boys and girls. Whereas for girls, perceived father's disciplining attitudes had significant negative predictive relationship with suicidal ideation.

Out of the mentioned parental negative attitudes, only perception of mother's attitude as rejecting added significantly to the prediction of suicidal ideation among girls.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of risk factors (i.e. negative parental attitudes) and protective factors (i.e. positive parental attitudes) in suicidal ideation of adolescents. Adolescents' perception about their mother's attitude and their father's attitudes have emerged as potentially significant predictors of suicidal ideation among adolescents, even after controlling for the effect of demographic variables such as gender, PPGE, father's and mother's education, and urban and rural family background of adolescents, and have accounted for as large as 26.3% and 2.4% of the variance, respectively. The results of correlational analyses shows that perceived positive parental attitudes (i.e., loving, protecting, and disciplining attitudes from both mother and father) are significantly negatively associated with suicidal ideation and perceived negative parental attitudes (i.e., dominating, rejecting, and punishing attitudes from both mother and father) are significantly positively associated with suicidal ideation. The finding of the present study, that is increased level of parental loving attitudes is associated with low level of adolescents suicidal ideation, are supported by earlier findings which indicate that adolescents with suicide ideation perceive their parents' as lacking in warmth (de Man *et al.*, 1993; Lai & McBride-Chang, 2001; Wong *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, Peck (1983) and Martin and Waite (1994) also found that lower parent care is also associated with suicidal thoughts.

The findings of regression analyses of this study demonstrate that adolescents who perceive their mother's attitude as less loving are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. Connor and Rueter (2006) also found that maternal warmth predicted adolescent suicidality. Additionally, Kim and Cain (2008) reported that adolescents' perceived low maternal warmth and higher intergenerational acculturation conflicts with fathers were significant predictors for adolescent depressive symptoms.

It is also observed from the findings of correlational analyses of this study that adolescents with low parental protecting attitudes are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. Findings of regression analyses for total sample demonstrate that adolescents who perceive their mother's attitude as a less protecting are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. Aggarwal and Mishra (2005) found that apart from various dimensions of parenting, protection significantly affects the self confidence of the students. Love, protection, moderate degree of demand inculcated the feelings of security and emotional support. Similarly, Garg (1996) found the role of perceived parenting of over protection in the development of a few emotional competencies like adequate expression and control of emotions and encouragement of positive emotions.

Moreover, results of correlational analyses also showed that adolescents with low parental disciplining attitudes are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. Previous studies showed that (Heaven *et al.*, 2004; Zuniga de Nuncio *et al.*, 2003) low parental warmth or care, high parental rejection, high parental control, overprotection, parental harshness, inconsistent discipline, hostility, and high family conflict are

related to depressive symptoms in adolescents. Similarly, Srivastava (1995) suggested that several aspects of parental behaviors like love, discipline and dominance had a positive effect on the pupil's academic achievement whereas rejection and punishment had a negative effect. Marjory and Laurence (1999) found in their study that democratic discipline, parental love, responsiveness, involvement and non-coerciveness had a strong association with adolescent psychosocial development as measured in global self-esteem, feelings of internal control and ability, and susceptibility to negative peer pressure. Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (1984) in their study showed that poor parental discipline and monitoring have been consistently linked to antisocial behavior in children and adolescents. The findings of regression analyses of the present study showed that for total sample as well as for girls, adolescents with low disciplining attitudes of fathers are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation.

Results of correlational analyses showed that adolescents perceiving their parents' attitude as dominating are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation.

The findings of the correlational analyses of this study showed that adolescents who perceived their parents' attitude as rejecting are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. Moreover, results of regression analyses for total sample and girls' sample indicated that mother's rejecting attitudes positively predicted suicidal ideation, as adolescents who reported higher level of suicidal ideation perceived their mothers as more rejecting. This finding is consistent with the results of the previous study conducted by Fotti *et al.* (2006) on a sample of Canadian adolescents. They found in their study that depression, poor peer relationships, decreased parental nurturance, and increased parental rejection were all significantly associated with suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts. Similarly, Donath *et al.* (2014) conducted a study on 9th grade students (N = 44,610) of different school types in Germany, and found that three parental variables showed a relevant association with suicide attempts in adolescents – (all protective): mother's warmth and father's warmth in childhood and mother's control in adolescence (Step I). In the full model (Step III), Authoritative parenting (protective) and Rejecting-Neglecting parenting (risk) were identified as significant predictors for suicidal attempts. Sidhartha and Jena (2006) also found that apart from many other risk factors, perceived parental neglect was one of the included predictive factor of suicidal ideation and suicide attempt in adolescents. Additionally, Singh *et al.* (2012) also found in their study that active or passive suicidal ideation was associated with early traumatic experiences of adolescent like physical abuse and self-reported affectionless parental control and neglectful parenting.

Further, the results of this study demonstrate that adolescents with high level of parental punishing attitudes are more likely to experience higher level of suicidal ideation. In their study, Kim *et al.* (2003) found that depressed youths were subject to harsher and less consistent parenting, compared to youths who were not depressed. Result of hierarchical regression analysis for total sample of the present study showed that higher level of mother's punishing attitudes predicted high level of suicidal ideation. Eamon (2002) also found that mothers' use of physical punishment predicted depressive symptoms among children.

Though, in the present research, the effect of the demographic variables was controlled through the hierarchical regression analyses, their contribution in the prediction of suicidal ideation cannot be ignored. These variables accounted for 56.4% of the total variance in suicidal ideation in the total sample, 51% of the variance in boys sample, and 60.1% of the variance in girls sample. Result of t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between boys and girls on suicidal ideation. Similarly result of regression analysis for total sample indicated that gender was not significant predictor for suicidal ideation. These results are not corroborated by the recent research conducted by Ibrahim *et al.* (2017) who found among 232 youth in Malaysia suicidal ideation was higher among male participants compared with female participants. Moreover, it is clearly revealed from the present study that percentage of marks in preceding grade examination, father's education, and mother's education were found to be negative predictors of suicidal ideation in total sample. However, when gender was taken into consideration, it is noteworthy that percentage of marks in preceding grade examination was a stronger predictor of suicide ideation than mother's education in both Boys and Girls. It is clearly revealed from these results that low performance in the preceding examination may lead to negative ideas about life, and Lower percentage of marks significantly predicted suicidal ideation among adolescents. This finding is consistent with a more recent study conducted by Shaheen and Jahan (2017). Additionally, father's education and mother's education has negative impact on suicidal ideation, indicating high risk for those whose father's educational level and specially mother's educational level is low. This finding was partially supported by Tang *et al.* (2009) study in which low maternal education was found to be one of the several factors associated with suicidal attempt among adolescent students. The result of correlational analysis of the present study showed that students who belong to rural family background have higher suicidal ideation as compared to students who belong to urban family background. This finding contradicted the recent study conducted by Davaasambuu *et al.* (2017) among 5,393 adolescents in Mongolia, which showed that adolescents who lived in urban areas were at higher risk for suicidal plans and behaviors than those who lived in rural areas; however, the patterns of suicidal risks were similar. Albers and Evans (1994) among a sample of 1,728 eighth and tenth grade southern Nevada students, did not find any difference between rural and urban adolescents. However, results of regression analyses of the present study indicated that family background did not significantly contribute to the prediction of suicidal ideation among adolescents.

## CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the results of the hierarchical analysis support the role of mother's rejecting and punishing attitudes as a risk factor for total sample. But exploring samples by gender reveals that mother's rejecting attitudes was potentially significant risk factor only for girls and not for boys. As far as protective role is concerned, mother's loving and protecting attitudes and father's disciplining attitude were found to protect them from suicidal ideation. When gender was taken into consideration the role of mother's loving attitudes as a protective factor was useful predictor for both boys and girls group. Additionally, father's disciplining attitude was the important and significant negative predictor of suicidal ideation only for girls and not for boys.

The present study have important implications for parents in the field of parental socialization. According to Maccoby and Martin (1983), parents help their children develop the skills, knowledge and behaviors to function in society through the process of parental socialization. Parents influence the development of their children through the socialization process in at least three ways: (1) as direct instructors of skills, rules, and strategies, (2) by providing indirect socialization in the course of day-to-day interactions with their children, and (3) by managing their children's experiences and social lives, thus providing and controlling opportunities for socialization. Parents need to utilize a variety of parenting skills/activities when interacting with their children and performing these three major activities of parental socialization.

The results of the study have implications for counselors and health professionals who may include in their intervention programmes the strategies to bring changes in the parenting behavior. Community level programmes for prevention of suicidal thinking may also be organized to make the parents aware of their role in children's negative approach towards life.

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