

## Association between self esteem of rural teenage girls and their family background variables

V.N. PATNAM, V.D. SHINDE AND V.S. BHALERAO

Accepted : March, 2009

See end of the article for authors' affiliations

Correspondence to:

**V.N. PATNAM**

Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Marathwada Agricultural University, PARBHANI (M.S.) INDIA

### ABSTRACT

The self esteem of one hundred and fifty rural teenage girls of randomly selected 4 villages of Marathwada region was assessed by administering Self Esteem Inventory. their families SES was assessed based on SES scale and their background information was elicited conducting personal interviews with the girls and their parents. A higher percentage of the (41 - 45 %) rural teenage girls were assessed to have either average or low levels of self esteem irrespective of their socio economic status. It was found that SES, type, size and social status of family and parental age and education significantly influenced the self esteem of rural teenage girls irrespective of their socio economic status.

**Key words :** Self esteem, Teenage girls, Self Esteem Inventory

Self-esteem is the most basic and important psychological requirement of people. The degree of self-esteem one possesses influences every major aspect of life as it has profound effect on one's own thinking, emotions, desires, values, choices and goals. Deficits in one's self esteem contribute virtually to all psychological disorders problems. Self-esteem means one's mental perception of one's qualities and abilities but not just one's physical features. It is stable sense of personal worth or worthiness. Self is very important psychological organization gets developed in the process of socialization. During the middle childhood; self-esteem takes on the hierarchical structure. Gradually as children move into adolescence their source of self definition becomes selective. Although parents remain influential, in teenage peers become more important to them who act as a source of feedback and self-validation. With entry to the period of adolescence, several new dimensions of self esteem are added like close friendships, romantic appeal, physical appearance. job competence etc. Although all adolescents experience confusion and tensions in this period, girls self regard drops down as compared to the boys and it hardly catches up. The first drop occurs between the age of 9 yrs and 15 yrs. Girls loose self-confidence in them and in their abilities. Teenage girls are more vulnerable to feelings of self-depression, inadequacy and helplessness and they are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their counterpart boys. Rejection, disappointment and failures are a part of daily life. Life is not always fair and even one's best efforts are not always successful. High esteem assists a person in weathering the storm and helps her/him to get through down turns in life. High self esteem is never be given to a person by another person or society.

It must be earned or developed by the individuals for themselves. Hence this research work was taken up to study the association between self esteem of rural teenage girls and their family background variables.

### METHODOLOGY

A sample of randomly selected 150 teenage girls and their parents from the four randomly selected villages of Parbhani district, Marathwada region of Maharashtra State was studied. Out of it, 75 each were from middle and low socio economic status families. Their age ranged between 15 yrs and 18 yrs. Battle's self esteem inventory revised by Anand Kumar was administered on girls for assessing their self esteem levels. The background information of the teenage girls and their families was collected through personal interviews based on interview schedule. The sample girls' SES was assessed by administering Kulshrestha's Socio-economic status scale.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1 denotes that irrespective of the SES of the rural teenage girls was found that 45 per cent rural girls were assessed to have average level of self esteem followed by low level self esteem (41%) and high self esteem (13%). In middle SES group higher percentage (61 %) of the rural girls rated to have average level self esteem followed by low level self esteem (20%) and high self esteem (19%). The corresponding percentages of the girls in low SES group were 29, 63 and 8. Statistical analysis indicates that significantly higher percentage of middle SES group rural teenage girls found to have average level of self esteem as compared to their counterparts in low SES group. While it was vice versa

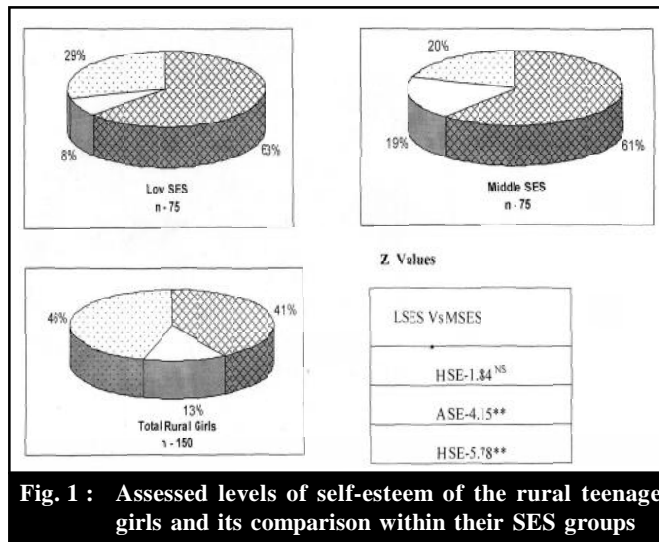


Fig. 1 : Assessed levels of self-esteem of the rural teenage girls and its comparison within their SES groups

with respect to their low self esteem. It is surprising to note that only 8 to 18 per cent rural teenage girls found to have high self esteem. These findings are in line with the finding reported by Nalini and Shankar in 1987.

Table 1 denotes that in middle SES group, 53-63 per cent each rural girls in nuclear families found to have high, average and low self esteem levels followed by joint families (28-42%). In middle SES group the type of family of the rural teenage girls did not have any influence on girls' self esteems. In low SES group 67 per cent rural girls belonging to joint families assessed to have high self esteem followed by nuclear type families (33%). With regard to average level self esteem of teenage girls 54 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively belonged to nuclear and joint type families. Fifty nine per cent teenage girls in

nuclear families rated to have low level self esteem followed by joint and extended families. Overall, it can be concluded that the types of family of the rural teenage girls belonged to, did matter much in fostering their self esteem except in middle SES group.

Table 2 indicates that in middle SES group 50-73 per cent teenage girls belonging to medium size families were found to have high, average and low levels of self esteem, while remaining per cent of them (13-35%) belonged either to small or large size families. In low SES group 66, 68 and 72 per cent teenage girls were found to have high, average and low levels self esteem, respectively. While in the large and small size families, 13 - 33 per cent and 10 - 18 per cent teenage girls were rated to have high and low levels of self esteem, respectively. It is apparent from the results that the percentage of low self esteem girls in medium size families were significantly higher than their counterparts in small and large size families in middle SES group. The reasons for this could be that the teenage girls' basic needs might not have been fulfilled by parents in low SES group due to family constraints.

Fig. 2 indicates that seventy one per cent teenage girls having high self esteem found to have fathers in the age range of 50 - 59 yrs followed by 40 - 49 yrs (21 %) and 60 - 69 yrs (7%). The corresponding percentages of fathers of average self esteem girls were 52, 20 and 27 and the fathers of low self esteem girls were 60, 20, 20. Significantly a higher percentage of the high and average self esteem girls' fathers age was 50 - 59 yrs as compared to their counterparts in 40 - 49 yrs and 60 - 69 yrs age

Table 1 : Comparison between types of family of rural teenage girls and their levels of self esteem

Family types of the girls	SES and percentages of self esteem levels of the sample girls											
	Middle SES (75)			Z Values			Low SES (75)			Z Values		
	HSE girls (14) (a)	ASE girls (46) (b)	LSE girls (15) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c	HSE girls (6) (a)	ASE girls (22) (b)	LSE girls (47) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c
Nuclear (d)	57.14 (8)	63.04 (29)	53.33 (8)	0.39NS	0.67N	0.27N	33.33 (2)	54.54 (12)	59.5 (18)	-	0.38N	-
Joint (e)	42.85 (6)	28.26 (13)	40.00 (6)	0.94NS	0.84N	0.10N	66.66 (4)	45.45 (10)	34.04 (16)	-	0.86N	-
Extended (f)	-	8.69 (4)	6.66 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	8.51 (4)	-	-	-

Figures in parentheses indicate number of teenage girls \*\* and \* indicates significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively  
NS - Non significant SE - Self esteem

Comparison within self esteem levels of teenage girls					
	In Middle SES		In Low SES		
	N vs J	N vs J	H SE	ASE	LSE
H SE	ASE	LSE	H SE	ASE	LSE
0.80	3.60**	0.71 <sup>NS</sup>	1.21 <sup>NS</sup>	0.59	2.50*

**Table 2 : Comparison between sizes of family of rural teenage girls and their levels of self levels**

Family size of the girls	SES and percentages of self esteem levels of the sample girls											
	Middle SES (75)			Z Values			Low SES (75)			Z Values		
	HSE girls (14) (a)	ASE girls (46) (b)	LSE girls (15) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c	HSE girls (6) (a)	ASE girls (22) (b)	LSE girls (47) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c
Small (d)	35.71 (5)	13.04 (6)	13.33 (2)	13.33 (2)	2.70**	-	-	18.18 (4)	10.63 (5)	-	-	-
Medium (e)	50.00 (7)	63.04 (29)	73.33 (11)	0.85 <sup>NS</sup>	0.74 <sup>NS</sup>	1.30*	66.66 (4)	68.18 (15)	72.34 (34)	0.09 <sup>NS</sup>	0.33 <sup>NS</sup>	0.29 <sup>NS</sup>
Large (f)	14.28 (2)	23.91 (11)	13.33 (2)	-	-	-	33.33 (2)	13.63 (3)	17.02 (8)	-	-	-

Figures in parentheses indicate number of teenage girls \*\* and \* indicates significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively NS - Non significant SE - Self esteem

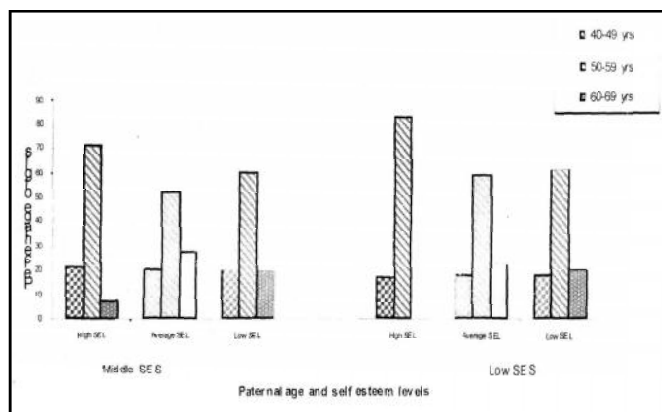
**Comparison within self esteem levels of teenage girls**

Family size of the girls	Middle SES			Low SES		
	H SE	A SE	L SE	H SE	A SE	L SE
S vs M	0.81 <sup>NS</sup>	5.76**	4.17	-	-	7.87**
M vs L	-	4.23**	-	-	-	6.79**
S vs L	-	2.26	-	-	-	1.96**

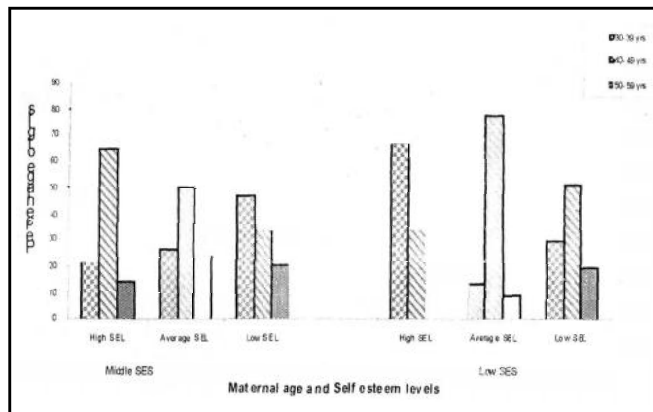
groups. The results indicate that paternal age found to have significant influence on teenage girls' self esteem to some extent in middle SES group. In low SES group a majority of the teenage girls having high self esteem found to have fathers in the age group of 50 - 59 yrs followed by 40 - 49 yrs. On the other hand 59 per cent teenage girls having average self esteem found to have fathers in the age group of 50 - 59 yrs followed by 60 - 69 yrs (23%) and 40 - 49 yrs (18%). The corresponding percentages of fathers of low self esteem girls were 61, 20 and 18. Significantly a higher percentage of the teenage girls having high and average self esteem found to have fathers in the age group of 50 - 59 yrs as compared to the fathers in remaining age groups. In contrast to it significantly a higher percentage of the teenage girls having

low self esteem found to have 50 - 59 yrs old fathers as compared to the remaining age groups. Even in low SES group paternal age found to have significant influence to some extent on the self esteem levels of teenage daughters.

Fig. 3 shows that in middle SES group 50 - 64 per cent mothers of high self esteem and average self esteem teenage girls were in the age group of 40-49 yrs followed by mothers of 30 - 39 yrs age (21 26%) and 50 - 59 yrs age group mothers (14 - 24%). Forty seven per cent mothers of low self esteem teenage girls age group was 30 - 39 yrs in middle SES group followed by 40 - 49 yrs mothers (33%) and 53 - 59 yrs old mothers (20%). There was no significant difference in the self esteem levels of teenage daughters based on their maternal age. However



**Fig. 2 : Comparison between paternal age and the self esteem levels of their teenage daughters with in SES groups**



**Fig. 3 : Comparison between maternal age and self esteem levels of their teenage daughters with in SES groups**

relatively a higher percentage of the mothers of teenage daughters having high and average levels of self esteem were in the age group of 40 - 49 yrs as compared to their counterparts in 30 - 39 yrs and 50 -59 yrs age groups which in turn indicate that maternal age seemed to influence teenage daughters' self esteem to a certain extent as warm mother-teenage daughters relations and interactions might be possible when their age difference between mothers and daughters is about 26 35 yrs.

On the other hand in low SES group 67 per cent mothers of high self esteem girls 77 per cent mothers of average self esteem girls and 51 per cent mothers of low self esteem teenage girls, respectively belonged to 30 - 39 yrs. 40 - 49 yrs, 50 - 59 yrs age group while 33 per cent mothers of high self esteem girls belonged to 40 - 49 yrs age groups followed by 30 per cent of 30 - 39 yrs age mothers of low self esteem girls and 14 per cent of mothers of 30 - 39 yrs old of average self esteem girls. Maternal age found to have significant influence on their teenage daughters' self esteem in low SES group. These findings are not inline with the findings reported by Deshpande and Patnam in 2004.

Table 3 indicates that in middle SES group 71 per cent high self esteem teenage girls' fathers found to be college educated followed by school educated (28%). The corresponding percentages of fathers of average and low self esteem levels teenage girls were 54 and 45 and 33 and 66, respectively. On the other hand in low SES group all the fathers of high self esteem girls found to be college educated. Fifty three per cent and 47 per cent fathers of average self esteem girls, respectively found to be college educated and school educated. The corresponding percentages of fathers of low self esteem girls were 30 per cent and 70 per cent. Paternal education found to have significant influence on the self esteem of rural teenage daughters which can be attributed that college educated fathers might have had better avenues for earnings and empowered with knowledge for meeting the needs of family and their children in particular.

Table 4 denotes that in middle SES group 57 per cent mothers of high self esteem teenage girls were school educated followed by college educated (43%). The corresponding mothers of average self esteem girls were 74 and 35 and the mothers of low self esteem girls were 93 and 7. Few significant differences were noted in the influence of maternal education on their rural teenage daughters' self esteem. Lower the level of maternal education, lower the self esteem levels of rural teenage girls. In low SES group about 50 per cent each mothers of high self esteem teenage daughters were college educated and school educated. The corresponding

**Table 3 : Comparison between paternal education and self esteem levels of their teenage daughters**

Educational levels of fathers of the girls	SES and percentages of self esteem levels of the sample girls					
	Middle SES (75)			Low SES (75)		
	H SE girls (14)	A SE girls (44)	L SE girls (15)	H SE girls (6)	A SE girls (19)	L SE girls (47)
College educated (d)	35.71 (5)	13.04 (6)	13.33 (2)	13.33 (2)	2.70* *	-
School educated (e)	50.00 (7)	63.04 (29)	73.33 (11)	0.85 <sup>NS</sup>	0.74 <sup>N<sub>s</sub></sup>	1.30*

Figures in parentheses indicate number of teenage girls  
 \*\* and \* indicates significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively  
 SE - Self esteem NS - Non significant

**Comparison within SES groups**

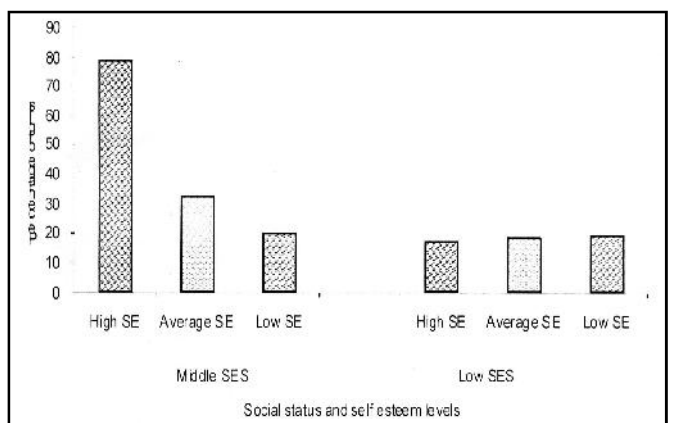
	Middle SES		Low SES	
	College educated	School educated	College educated	School educated
a vs b	1.19 <sup>NS</sup>	-	4.18**	-
b vs c	1.47 <sup>NS</sup>	1.46 <sup>NS</sup>	1.73 <sup>NS</sup>	1.73 <sup>NS</sup>
a vs d	2.21*	-	10.72**	-

**Comparison within self esteem levels of teenage girls**

	Middle SES			Low SES		
	H SE	A SE	L SE	H SE	A SE	L SE
d vs e	-	0.84 <sup>NS</sup>	1.91 <sup>NS</sup>	-	0.20 <sup>NS</sup>	4.35**

percentages of mothers of average self esteem daughters were 23 and 77, and mothers of low self esteem teenage daughters were 21 and 79. The similar trend of maternal influence on self esteem levels of teenage daughters was found in low SES group.

Fig. 4 indicates that in middle SES group, 79 per cent teenage girls having high self esteem found to have belonged to very good social status families followed by fair (14%) and good status(7%) families. Thirty two - 35 per cent each teenage girls of average self esteem found



**Fig. 4 : Comparison between social status of families and the self esteem levels of rural teenage girls**

**Table 4 : Comparison between maternal education and self esteem levels of their teenage daughters**

Educational levels of the girls	SES and percentages of self esteem levels of the sample girls											
	Middle SES (75)			Z Values			Low SES (75)			Z Values		
	HSE girls (14) (a)	ASE girls (46) (b)	LSE girls (15) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c	HSE girls (6) (a)	ASE girls (22) (b)	LSE girls (47) (c)	a vs b	b vs c	a vs c
College educated (d)	42.85 (6)	35.08 (12)	6.66 (1)	0.46 <sup>NS</sup>	-	-	49.99 (3)	22.64 (5)	21.27 (10)	-	0.09 <sup>NS</sup>	-
School educated (e)	57.13 (8)	73.90 (34)	93.33 (14)	1.08 <sup>NS</sup>	2.15*	2.43*	4.99 (3)	77.26 (17)	78.70 (37)	-	0.09 <sup>NS</sup>	-

Figures in parentheses indicate number of teenage girls \*and \*\* indicates significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively  
NS - Non significant SE - Self esteem

**Comparison within self esteem levels of teenage girls**

	Middle SES			Low SES		
	H SE	A SE	L SE	H SE	A SE	L SE
CE vs SE	0.85 <sup>NS</sup>	5.48**	-	-	4.36**	6.72**

to hail from very good and good levels of social status families followed by fair (28%) and poor (4%). On the other hand 20 - 40 per cent teenage girls having low self esteem hailed from very good and good social status families followed by fair (20%) and poor (20%). Significantly a higher percentage of the high self esteem teenage girls and a lower percentage of the low self esteem girls hailed from very good social status families, which indicates that social status family significantly influenced the self esteem of rural teenage girls. On other hand in low SES group 36 - 66 per cent teenage girls having all the three levels of self esteem hailed from good social status families followed by fair social status (16 - 34%). good social status (16 - 19%) and poor social status (10%) families. In low SES group social status of family found to have no significant influence on the self esteem levels of teenage girls.

**Conclusion:**

SES, type, size and social status of family, parental age and education significantly influenced the self esteem of rural teenage girls irrespective of their socio economic status.

**Authors' affiliations:**

**V.D. SHINDE AND V.S. BHALERAO**, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, College of Home Science, Marathwada Agricultural Sciences, PARBHANI (M.S.) INDIA

**REFERENCES**

- Anand Kumar** (1988) Battele's Self-Esteem Inventory For Children. Published by Prasad Psychological Corporation, Varanasi, 1-15
- Deshpande, R.M.** and Patnam, V.N. (2004) Self esteem of teenage girls: their characteristics and influencing factors. Dissertation submitted to Marathwada Agricultural University, Parbhani, 40 - 50
- Kulshrestha, S.** (1988) Socio-Economic Status Scale (Rural) published by National Psychological Corporation, Agra, 1 - 5
- Nalini** and Shankar, B.R. (1987) Sociological background variables of self esteem in adolescents. *Indian J. of Behaviour*, 1 (2),12-22

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*