

# Fathers role in molding his sons adolescence



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Over the years so many theories have made it evident that the father is a role model to his children, especially his son during the adolescence years. But none have discussed in what manner he affects, what are the domains in which he is influential and what factors play role to have these effects. Even after being the third in the mother-child dyad, how come the father becomes so important once the child is in his/her puberty, more importantly the son. This paper is an attempt to analysis the findings of the earlier studies done in this domain, to summate their findings and conclude the role of the father in molding his adolescent son's life.

According to Freudian psychoanalytical view the father is considered to be a fear instigating factor in a son's life due to which he identifies with him. In a research study based psychoanalytical view of role of father as " being the one who castrates" shows the importance of identification with him as a gender role model for son for healthy development of sexual orientation later in life (Ceccarelli and Horizonte, 2003). This study explains that the lack/absence of a father who demands respect from the son and lay strong secure base for him to project his oedipal complexes by constantly defining limits, can lead to " the construction of the ' nostalgia of the father's protection' as the transformation of this father into the symbolic father" and his projection of his need for a father figure onto his sexual partners and also defining his sexual preference (the cases described in the study were of sons who had homosexual orientation). Therefore a male role model needs to be present for the son to develop sexual preferences which invariantly becomes prominent during the pubertal years, as the boy experiences new bodily changes. According to Zoja (2001) in his book ' The Father: Historical,

Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives' with Jungian analytical view, points that a single mother can assume the role of a father in preadolescent years of the child because the woman has been able to reconcile her role of mother with her role of lover, but later due to change in group dynamics and development of concept of gender-identity in adolescent years, need for an actual male father figure arises, for these adolescents form 'gangs' which 'have a crude and regressive masculine psychology' and its unconscious function is to challenge the father' just as the gangs of animals are placed in masculine hierarchy. Sipsma, Biello, Cole-Lewis and Kershaw (2010) show that sons of adolescent fathers were 1.8 times more likely to become adolescent fathers than were sons of older fathers, as they lacked proper father figure in their life as their father themselves have not been mature enough to provide them with the strong security which is associated with a father. Adolescent boys with their father-present have higher male sex-role preferences than father-absent boys, though both father-present and father-absent adolescent boys imitate male sex-role and female sex-roles which is not in correlation to their sex-role preferences. Moreover the masculine preferences are well established by age seven, more in father-present boys than in father-absent ones (Bandaines, 1976), showing clearly the role model that a father assumes quite early in his son's life. According to findings of Almeida and Galambos (1991), father's acceptance of adolescent son increases with time, and as they get more involved in each other life, a better understanding may develop helping the adolescent child to deal with his conflicts. Moreover in single-earner families fathers tend to spend more time with their sons than their daughter which may be it being easy to identify with the same sex both ways. Thus it is clear that the presence of

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fathers who involve in their adolescent sons' can lead to better feeling of acceptance in the child.

Jones, Kramer, Armitage and Williams (2003) showed that the perceived quality of father-son (and mother-son) relation was negatively correlated with psychological separation: better the perceived quality, the less psychologically separated they were. Adolescent boys with non-resident fathers who had more frequent contact with their fathers experienced less psychological separation and more of overall healthy separateness. studies show that males who experience separation from their fathers early in life (before age 5yrs), even though they developed unhindered masculine preferences, experience high rate of low self-esteem and self-confidence, while those who are separated from their fathers later in life due to divorce of parents are less likely to marry and more likely to have common-law relationships (Covell and Turnbull, 1982).

Robertson (1999) in his study found out that, variation in family structure, lack sense of attachment to family or parents, lack of shared leisure experiences with adolescent sons beyond age 10yr, and lack of interest in the adolescent son's live, especially by fathers lead to increased rated of delinquency in these boys. In a study done on African-American adolescent males involved in delinquent activities showed that, there was a detrimental effect of low socioeconomic-status on the delinquent activities of father-absent pubertal boys than those living in dual-parent families. Moreover the study showed that the parental monitoring done by the fathers was inversely correlated to the delinquent acts of the adolescent as these adolescent

males benefited from being in a dual-parent family where they received paternal supervision besides maternal control (Paschall et al. 2003).

With emergence of adolescence, drugs-use becomes a major concern and the experimenting youth become easy prey to such addiction. In such times the father can be a major influential factor in his son's life, who can either make him more prone to adapt to the habit or easy for him to stay away from such indulgence. Brook et. al.(1983) findings show that affectionate, emotionally supportive, attentive, involved in their son's life and engaging in meaningful conversation fathers have sons who don't smoke. Moreover fathers of nonsmokers have higher expectations from their sons and help to cultivate their ideas therefore may be encouraging their need for independence, which foster in their son's a sense of competence and achievement. On the other hand adolescent boys who smoked were unable to identify with their fathers' beliefs and values and more identified with the stereotypical ' macho-masculine roles' and that helped them to compensate for the poor paternal masculine role, which tend to spend less quality as well as quantity of time with their sons, and most of them smoke themselves. Apart from these the smokers differed from the nonsmoker adolescent boys on many personality traits; they tend to be less frustration tolerant, less compliant to family situations, less responsible and more rebellious and impulsive. The smoking behavior helps them to compensate for the feeling of low self-esteem, which develops due to a poor paternal role model. In another study Brook et. al (1981) found that adolescent marijuana users are less likely to perceive their fathers as less affectionate and child-centered, and they lack paternal control.

Another domain in which fathers make a big contribution to adolescent sons is the area of subjective well-being and values-judgments. James R. Barclay (1980) in his study defines the role of a father in his adolescent son's development of values as that of, ' the masculine role model, the communicator (listening to different views and offering problem-solving methodologies), the moral model (striving to live somewhere between the absolutist and complete relativist) and the fallible reinforcing agent'. Further studies show that ' fathers' support is positively related to the psychological well-being of adolescent boys,' especially those who are constantly bullied at school or by their peer group. (Flouri and Buchanan, 2002). In men positive parenting(by both or either parents) " influenced psychological functioning by lowering psychological maladjustment in adolescence and increasing the odds of being partnered in midadulthood, it ' protected' against psychological distress by promoting educational attainment and physical health in adolescence and young adulthood, and by increasing the odds of being religious and partnered in midadulthood, and it predicted life satisfaction by lowering psychological maladjustment in adolescence." (Flouri, 2003)

Thus the involvement of father in a child's adolescent years, especially the son is more important so as to provide him with better gender role; help in developing better self-esteem and confidence, overall feeling of subjective-wellbeing and trust in long term commitments; and thus keeping a check on child's maladaptive behaviors such as that of engaging in early sexual relations, committing delinquency and abusing substances.

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