



PROMOTING EFFECTIVE PARENTING PRACTICES TO EMPOWER PARENTS

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Abstract

The traditional Indian parenting is shaped by the cultural and religious values of the land, generational wisdom, and life experiences. The goal of parenting is comprehensive development of children and it integrates the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual components of an individual's growth. It includes both the personal and social dimensions of human growth and development; The aim of this research is to promote effective parenting practices to empower parents. The objectives of this study were to compare the parenting scores of fathers and mothers and to list down child-rearing tips that can help one feel more fulfilled as a parent. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data. A total of 131 parents participated in this research out of which 77 were fathers and 54 were mothers. The tool used for research was the Self report Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ), Frick, P. J, 1991. The data was analyzed through SPSS using Standard Deviation, ANNOVA to study the significance between parenting styles. There were no significant differences between mothers and fathers on inconsistent discipline and corporal punishment. However, mothers had significantly lower scores on poor monitoring/supervision than did fathers; at the same time, this difference was not significant. This paper lists down child-rearing tips that can help one feel more fulfilled as a parent

Key Words: Effective Parenting, Empowering Parents, Child-Rearing.

Introduction

Effective parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his or her full potential as a human being. It is a style of raising children that increases the chances of a child becoming the most capable person and adult he or she can be. Effective parenting has never been more important to a family's success than today. A parent's role is one of the most important jobs one would ever have. The parent is responsible for taking care of their children and make sure that they have all the tools they need to grow into successful and adjusted adults. Even the best parents have room for improvement.

The care-giving approach adopted by parents is influenced by interactions between personal and environmental factors. These include a) children's characteristics; b) parents' characteristics; and c) the broader social context in which the family is living. The quality of parenting children receive during the early years affects three key determinants of later success in school: their cognitive potential, their social skills, and their behavioral functioning. Considering the fact that parenting skills can be acquired and passed on from one generation to another, continuous efforts to improve the quality of care-giving are important. To be an important influence or role model in a child's life there are important skills involved for effective parenting and for the wholesome development of a child within a family setting. The parent is the child's first and most significant teacher. Children learn important information about themselves from their parents. Children's behavior and belief in themselves is strongly influenced by their parents' reactions.

A critical role of parenting in the lives of children provides a strong incentive to policy-makers and researchers to design programs that take advantage of these intimate and powerful familiar processes. Research has proved that parent support programs can have important positive effects on both parenting behaviors and the social and emotional development of young children. Effective parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his or her full potential as a human being. It is a style of raising children that increases the chances of a child becoming the most capable person and adult he or she can be. Even the best parents have room for improvement. The care-giving approach adopted by parents is influenced by interactions between personal and environmental factors. These include a) children's characteristics; b) parents' characteristics; and c) the broader social context in which the family is living.

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Review of Literature

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The Self report Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) by Frick (1991) describes five parenting styles. **Parental involvement** refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and her child's life. Parent Involvement is the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development. The most effective forms of parent involvement are those, which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home and creating a **Supportive Learning Environment at Home**. **Positive parenting** reinforces what the child is doing right rather than concentrating on what the child is doing wrong. It increases the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated. It supports the child's positive deeds and qualities through enthusiasm, descriptive encouragement, and natural, logical rewards. **Poor Parental Monitoring and Supervision** refers to parents' not having the knowledge of the where about of their child at home or school and who their child's friends are. Youth who perceive less parental monitoring may be more likely to engage in a number of risk behaviors, including sexual risk taking and substance use. **Inconsistent Discipline** is defined as unpredictable parental punishment for similar incidents of child misbehavior or termination of discipline due to lack of energy to follow through or in response to coercive behavior by the child. Corporal Punishment is not an effective means of child discipline. Research shows that most children who are slapped or spanked misbehave again within minutes. Positive Discipline advocates recommend using a "time-in" approach that calls for calming, quietly connecting, and talking to the child immediately after a transgression.

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Child rearing is a process. It involves planning, formulating, and implementing a program of bringing up children in a certain way that is in line with the requirement of the family and society. In this process the child learns the moral values, ethical issues, expectations from him by the family and society, and a set of patterns of behavior which are essential for the proper growth and development of the child that would contribute positively to the family and the society. This process involves inculcating in children certain values, attitudes, opinions and beliefs through direct teaching, modeling, and imitation. These acquired patterns of behavior are reinforced by the parents by praise and reward and where the child learns wrong patterns of behavior, the same is punished. Thus, through the process of rewards and punishment the child rearing practices inculcate in children the required appropriate behaviors and conduct that are in line with the social norms and family norms (Russel, Feder, Glover, Miller, Palmer. 2011). Child rearing practices over a period of time become the styles of parenting practices. Parenting styles in the western literature is defined as aggregates or constellations of behaviors that describe parent child interactions over a wide range of situations and that are presumed to create a pervasive interactional climate (Gryczkowski, Jordan, & Mercer, 2010).

Therefore, to sum up parents tend to exhibit variations based on a variety of factors, including culture, personality, parental background, educational level, socioeconomic status, family size, religion, etc. Parenting styles vary from culture to culture, the value system stands divided on some of the major facets of parenting, exemplified by the comparison of the Indian style with that of the West.

Aim: To promote effective parenting practices to empower parents

Objectives

1. To compare the parenting scores of fathers and mothers.
2. To list down child-rearing tips that can help one feel more fulfilled as a parent.

Methodology

Sample selection & size: Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data.

A total of 131 parents participated in this research out of which 77 were fathers and 54 were mothers.

Data Collection: Participants were administered the Self report Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ), Frick, P. J, 1991.

Tool for research: The tools used for research was the Self report Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ), Frick, P. J, 1991.

Statistical tests: The data was analyzed through SPSS using Standard Deviation, ANNOVA to study the significance between parenting styles.

Results and Discussion

1.Sample Description

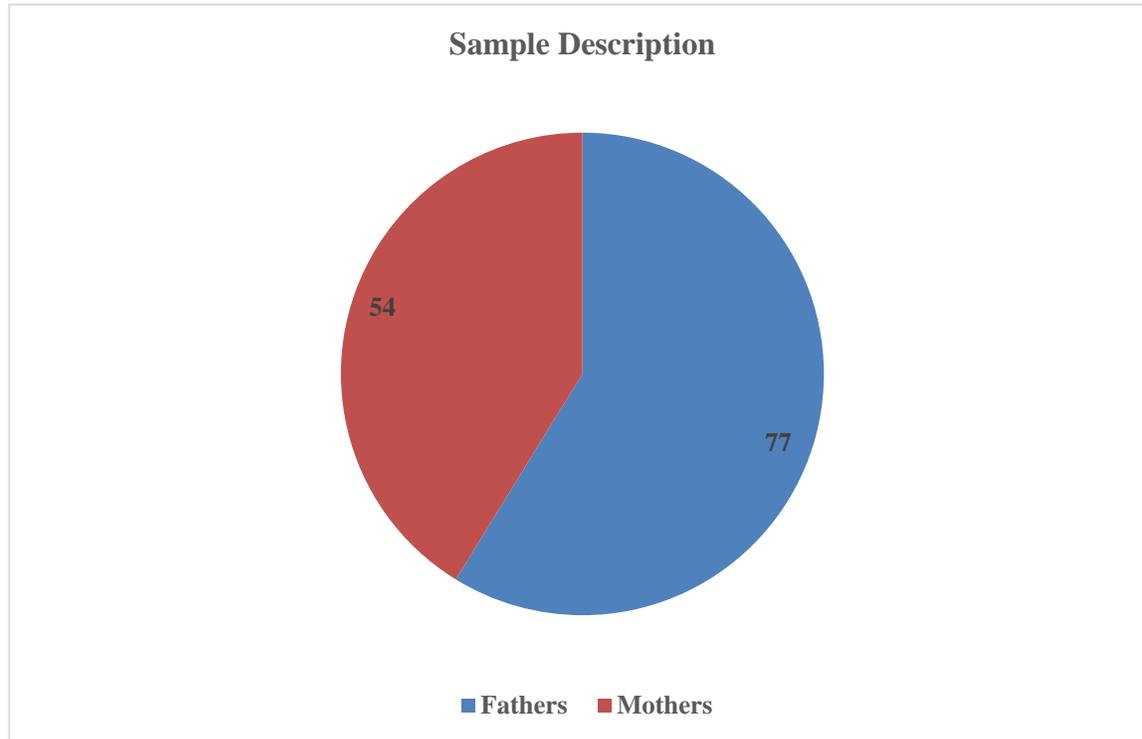


Fig.1.Sample Description

The above figure depicts that 77 fathers and 54 mothers participated in this research. A larger number of fathers participated in this research.

2. Comparison of parenting scores of Indian Fathers and Mothers

Table 1. Comparison of parenting scores of Indian Fathers and Mothers

Parenting Styles	Indian Father		Indian Mothers		p-value	Significance
	N	Mean	N	Mean		
Involvement	77	33.99	54	33.70	0.698	Non-significant
Positive Parenting	77	21.18	54	18.89	0.000	Significant
Poor Monitoring	77	25.14	54	26.42	0.117	Non-significant
Inconsistent Discipline	77	17.08	54	17.67	0.383	Non-significant
Corporal	77	9.86	54	9.98	0.512	Non-

Punishment						significant
Other Disciplinary Practice	77	21.17	54	21.19	0.966	Non-significant

In the table above when we compare the parenting scores of Indian fathers and mothers the results show that there was a high significant difference in the positive parenting techniques used ($p=0.000$) by them. In a study done by King and Minium's (2003) the results revealed that mothers and fathers differed significantly in the two domains of positive parenting practices: Fathers reported lower parental involvement and less use of positive parenting than mothers. The effect size was large in the first case and medium in the second case. There were no significant differences between mothers and fathers on inconsistent discipline and corporal punishment. However, mothers had significantly lower scores on poor monitoring/supervision than did fathers; at the same time, this difference had a small effect size.

Level of involvement, poor monitoring, inconsistent discipline, corporal punishments used and other disciplinary practices were not significant. Although studies have shown that fathers are spending more time with their children than the previous generation Bianchi & Milkie, 2010. mothers still seem to be the primary care givers and father the support parent. There is evidence to support the positive influence of father engagement on offspring social, behavioral and psychological outcomes.

3. Child-Rearing Tips

Raising children is one of the toughest and most fulfilling jobs in the world — and the one for which you might feel the least prepared. Here are nine child-rearing tips that can help one feel more fulfilled as a parent.

1. Boosting Your Child's Self-Esteem

Children start developing their sense of self as babies when they see themselves through their parents' eyes. Your tone of voice, your body language, and your every expression are absorbed by your kids. Your words and actions as a parent affect their developing self-esteem more than anything else. Praising accomplishments, however small, will make them feel proud; letting kids do things independently will make them feel capable and strong. By contrast, belittling comments or comparing a child unfavorably with another will make kids feel worthless. Avoid making loaded statements or using words as weapons. Comments like "What a stupid thing to do!" or "You act more like a baby than your little brother!" cause damage just as physical blows do. Choose your words carefully and be compassionate. Let your child know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love them, even when you don't love their behavior.

2. Catch Children Being Good

Have you ever stopped to think about how many times you react negatively to your child in a given day? You may find yourself criticizing far more often than complimenting. How would you feel about a boss who treated you

with that much negative guidance, even if it was well intentioned? The more effective approach is to catch children doing something right: "You made your bed without being asked — that's terrific!" or "I was watching you play with your sister and you were very patient." These statements will do more to encourage good behavior over the long run than repeated scoldings. Make a point of finding something to praise every day. Be generous with rewards — your love, hugs, and compliments can work wonders and are often reward enough. Soon you will find you are "growing" more of the behavior you would like to see.

3. Set Limits and Be Consistent with Your Discipline

Discipline is necessary in every household. The goal of discipline is to help kids choose acceptable behaviors and learn self-control. They may test the limits you establish for them, but they need those limits to grow into responsible adults. Establishing house rules helps children understand your expectations and develop self-control. Some rules might include: no TV until homework is done, and no hitting, name-calling, or hurtful teasing allowed. You might want to have a system in place: one warning, followed by consequences such as a "time out" or loss of privileges. A common mistake parents make is failure to follow through with the consequences. You can't discipline kids for talking back one day and ignore it the next. Being consistent teaches what you expect.

4. Make Time for Your Children

It's often difficult for parents and children to get together for a family meal, let alone spend quality time together. But there is probably nothing kids would like more. Get up 10 minutes earlier in the morning so you can eat breakfast with your child or leave the dishes in the sink and take a walk after dinner. Children who aren't getting the attention they want from their parents often act out or misbehave because they're sure to be noticed that way. Many parents find it rewarding to schedule together time with their kids. Create a "special night" each week to be together and let your kids help decide how to spend the time. Look for other ways to connect — put a note or something special in your kid's lunchbox. Adolescents seem to need less undivided attention from their parents than younger children. Because there are fewer windows of opportunity for parents and teens to get together, parents should do their best to be available when their teen does express a desire to talk or participate in family activities. Attending concerts, games, and other events with your teen communicates caring and lets you get to know more about your child and his or her friends in important ways. Don't feel guilty if you're a working parent. It is the many little things you do — making popcorn, playing cards, window shopping — that child will remember.

5. Be a Good Role Model

Young children learn a lot about how to act by watching their parents. The younger they are, the more cues they take from you. Before you lash out or blow your top in front of your child, think about this: Is that how you want your child to behave when angry? Be aware that you're constantly being watched by your child. Studies have

shown that children who hit usually have a role model for aggression at home. Model the traits you wish to see in your child: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance. Exhibit unselfish behavior. Do things for other people without expecting a reward. Express thanks and offer compliments. Above all, treat your child the way you expect other people to treat you.

6. Make Communication a Priority

You can't expect children to do everything simply because you, as a parent, "say so." They want and deserve explanations as much as adults do. If we don't take time to explain, children will begin to wonder about our values and motives and whether they have any basis. Parents who reason with their children allow them to understand and learn in a nonjudgmental way. Make your expectations clear. If there is a problem, describe it, express your feelings, and invite your child to work on a solution with you. Be sure to include consequences. Make suggestions and offer choices. Be open to your child's suggestions as well. Negotiate. Children who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out.

7. Be Flexible and Willing to Adjust Your Parenting Style

If you often feel "let down" by your child's behavior, perhaps you have unrealistic expectations. Parents who think in "should" (for example, "My child should be potty-trained by now") might find it helpful to read up on the matter or to talk to other parents or child development specialists.

Children's environments have an effect on their behavior, so you might be able to change that behavior by changing the environment. If you find yourself constantly saying "no" look for ways to alter your surroundings so that fewer things are off-limits. This will cause less frustration for both of you. As your child grows, you'll gradually have to change your parenting style. Chances are, what works with your child now won't work as well in a year or two. Teens tend to look less to their parents and more to their peers for role models. But continue to provide guidance, encouragement, and appropriate discipline while allowing your teen to earn more independence. And seize every available moment to make a connection!

8. Show That Your Love Is Unconditional

As a parent, you're responsible for correcting and guiding your child. But how you express your corrective guidance makes all the difference in how a child receives it. When you have to confront your child, avoid blaming, criticizing, or fault-finding, which undermine self-esteem and can lead to resentment. Instead, strive to nurture and encourage, even when disciplining your child. Make sure they know that although you want and expect better next time, your love is there no matter what.

9. Know Your Own Needs and Limitations as a Parent

Face it — you are an imperfect parent. You have strengths and weaknesses as a family leader. Recognize your abilities — "I am loving and dedicated." Vow to work on your weaknesses — "I need to be more consistent with

discipline." Try to have realistic expectations for yourself, your spouse, and your children. You don't have to have all the answers — be forgiving of yourself. And try to make parenting a manageable job. Focus on the areas that need the most attention rather than trying to address everything all at once. Admit it when you're burned out. Take time out from parenting to do things that will make you happy as a person (or as a couple). Focusing on your needs does not make you selfish. It simply means you care about your own well-being, which is another important value to model for your children.

Conclusion

It is perhaps time for parents to understand that parenting is not about power exercising duty. It is a duty concerned with and oriented towards empowerment and development of child through unconditional love and acceptance, open and consistent communication, autonomy granting, regulation, inductive rationalizations for parent-child bonding and internalization of moral, social and cultural values Living in urban circumstances creates specific demands for children, parents and families. These shifting patterns coupled with the rapid changes in Indian culture indicate the need to renew ideas about parenting and childhood in India, without losing sight of the persistent patterns.

Infants derive comfort from fathers too therefore the role of a father is just as important when it comes to raising children. It is imperative that mothers give fathers certain responsibility. Couples should discuss and communicate anxieties about their children. Sooner or later, as the father gets more involved in the upbringing of the children, he will realize the importance and significance of this involvement. Give father and child him time and space, so they can work out their relationship and equations by themselves. A father who is actively involved in his child's life (not just financially) by shouldering responsibilities and contributing to decisions on child-raising, plays a tremendous role in determining whether the child will grow up having strong family ties and a healthy, well-balanced attitude, or not. Such participation not only lays the foundation for a healthy bond between father and child, but also leaves the mother with more time on her hands for other work - and play!

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