

Do Indians follow Helicopter Parenting...?

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Abstract: The Indian Education system is somehow responsible for encouraging Helicopter Parenting in India. It's a status symbol if one's child has cracked the IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) or is a product of IIM (Indian Institute of Management). To achieve this status in society, parents monitor their child's educational activities, class assignments and try to instil the grain of competitiveness in the child's mind, hoping to make him better than others. This competitiveness is evident when parents come to argue with teachers for one or two marks, which they feel is unjustly deducted from their ward's answers scripts. With such level of competitiveness at 5th or 6th grade, a child slowly, unconsciously either becomes like their parent -competitive or starts getting stressed at every exam in order to perform better. Thus, the whole process of enjoying education and learning becomes a futile struggle to get more and more marks which means more and more of mugging up of the books rather than understanding and application of knowledge. This study is to determine if Indians are Helicopter parents or is there a change in their parenting style .

Index Terms – Parenting, Helicopter Parenting, Millennial parents.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is a country where families follow patriarchal ideology and an Indian family is closely knit unit where the parents play a very important role. Parenting style of Indians has been Helicopter Parenting style through ages. This is deep rooted in our society and culture as well. So, son of a priest became a priest, a goldsmith's son became a goldsmith, one was hardly given the option to pursue another job or career. A child's career, life partner and his every aspect of life was governed and monitored by one's parents who were in turn governed and monitored by their parents. Revolting against one's parent lead not only to family discord and diminishing values but in extreme cases honour killing and other crimes.

This study is to gauge the impact of Helicopter Parenting and has the Parenting skill of modern Indian parents changed in the last few decades. Helicopter Parenting means hovering over a child's head and monitoring his day to day activities, like his educational activities, social activities and developmental activities.

To understand this concept, we need to understand Millennial Parents and their parenting skills. Furthermore, we need to understand Millennial Children and their developmental process. Parents who were born in the seventies and later are to be considered as the Millennial parents as they are educated workforce of the country and are multitasking their roles and responsibilities towards their family and their work with efficiency. The millennial parents have value system of their previous generation but are walking step to step with the new generation too. So, they need to be ultra - cautious and smart when rearing their next generation.

It's a known fact that parents feel responsible for their children's upbringing, social behaviour and education. Joint family system of the erstwhile years had its own advantage where parents were not solely responsible for a child's rearing, as grandparents and other adults of the family were there to guide and care for the child. But millennial parents mostly live in nuclear families in cities far from their native place and rarely find their own family support. So, when they become parents, they depend mostly on websites for parenting tips. Bookish knowledge about parenting is often too idealistic to be followed in real life.

So Millennial parents train their children to excel in everything they do i.e. in education, sports, extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities etc. In their endeavour to provide the best for their children they ensure their children are disciplined, are well prepared for anything in their lives. Hence, this approach towards parenting correct or incorrect, this fact has to be established for coming to a proper conclusion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2010, a study by researcher **Neil Montgomery**, a psychologist at Keene State College in New Hampshire, found that overprotective parents might have a lasting impact on their child's personality by prolonging childhood and adolescence. Approximately 300 college freshmen were surveyed about their level of agreement with statements regarding their parents' involvement in their lives. The results showed that 10 percent of the participants had helicopter parents. The

research also revealed that students with helicopter parents tended to be less open to new ideas and actions, and were more vulnerable, anxious, dependent, and self-conscious.

A 2016 study from the National University of Singapore published in the *Journal of Personality* indicated that children with intrusive parents who had high expectations for academic performance, or who overreacted when they made a mistake, tend to be more self-critical, anxious, or depressed. The researchers termed this as “maladaptive perfectionism,” or a tendency in children of helicopter parents to be afraid of making mistakes and to blame themselves for not being perfect. This happens because the parents are essentially—whether by their words or actions—indicating to their kids that what they do is never good enough.

Another 2016 study evaluated questionnaires about parenting completed by 377 students from a Midwestern university. Students responded to statements about the type of parents they have, how often they communicate with their parents, and how much their parents intrude in their lives. The students also completed a number of tests to discern their decision-making skills, academic performance, and symptoms of anxiety and depression. Results showed that higher overall helicopter parenting scores were associated with stronger symptoms of anxiety and depression.

According to that study, helicopter parenting “was also associated with poorer functioning in emotional functioning, decision making, and academic functioning. Parents’ information-seeking behaviors, when done in absences of other [helicopter parenting] behaviors, were associated with better decision making and academic functioning.”

In addition, the journal *Cognitive Therapy and Research* published research in 2017 suggesting that helicopter parenting can trigger anxiety in kids who already struggle with some social issues. A group of children and their parents were asked to complete as many puzzles as possible in a 10-minute time period. Parents were allowed to help their children, but not encouraged to do so.

Researchers noted that the parents of children with social issues touched the puzzles more often than the other parents did. Though they were not critical or negative, they stepped in even when their children did not ask for help. Researchers think this indicates that parents of socially anxious children may perceive challenges to be more threatening than the child thinks they are. Over time, this can diminish a child’s ability to succeed on their own and potentially increase anxiety.

Thus, these studies clearly indicate that Helicopter Parenting is more of a bane than boon. In my research about Is Helicopter parenting harmful, this point is proved but in India this type of parenting is in practise for a very long time.

III. RESEARCH METHOD: SURVEY CREATED AT <https://www.ferendum.com/en/PID372510PSD2021772019>

I conducted a survey on 40 + Indian parents to study how many of them were aware of their parenting skills. 33 parents participated in the survey. Mostly parents with teen aged children and the following result was obtained. The following questions were asked:

1. Do you have children?

Ans: 33 parents participated in the poll and answered in affirmative.

2. Are you actively involved in your child's social, interpersonal and educational activities?

Ans: Out 33 (**20.9 %**) of the participants agreed to being actively involved in their child's social, educational and interpersonal life.

3. Do you keep a tab on your child's friends?

Ans: 24 out of 33 parents agreed to keeping a tab on their Child's friends. That is 15.7% of parents do keep a track of their child's friends.

4. Do you feel let down if your child does not share his everyday information with you?

Ans: Out of 33 parents (**10.8 %**) of the parents felt let down if the child did not share his everyday information with the parent.

5. Do you continuously try to assist your child in his study activity and keep giving suggestions?

Ans: **13.1 %** agreed to assist the child instead of allowing them to do their study activity.

6. Do you keep discussion about your child when you meet friends in any social gathering?

Ans: 10 (**6.5 %**) agreed to discuss about their child's progress to friends and family.

7. Do you ever miss Parent-Teacher Meetings of your child's school?

Ans: Only 6 participants replied to this question i.e. (**3.9 %**) of the parents missed going to PTMs others ensured they meet the teachers.

8. Are you upset by your child's performance in school?

Ans: 7 (**4.6 %**) agreed to this.

9. Do you criticize your child regularly?

Ans: 2 (**1.3 %**) Only 2 parents out of 32 agreed to criticizing a child for poor performance, this might be a good response but not be actual response of Parents because of various factors.

10. Are you stressed because you find parenting a difficult task?

Ans: 3 (**2.0 %**) 3 parents agreed to parenting being a stressful job.

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above poll we can come to the conclusion that Indian parents do keep a track on their child's development and progress in their social, educational and interpersonal spheres and ensure the child is at par with others in this competitive world. But the number is not so alarming the reason could be the participating parents have teenage children of today's generation who are very clear about how much parental involvement is acceptable by them, bar a few.

The following conclusions were made:

- It can be safely concluded that Parental skill of Indians from this particular survey show a drastic change , modern parents are not too obsessive about their children as they were maybe when the kids were younger.
- It can be safely assumed that Helicopter Parenting is acceptable up to some level in guiding children but in long term neither is it useful nor advisable for the children because it creates anxiety and self-doubt in children as they lose confidence to do their own work with freedom. Parent need to give the child space to learn their skill in their own way through trial and error, to protect a child from facing failure is the worst thing a parent can do to a child.

Hence, in this study, which aimed at finding whether Indian Parents were following Helicopter Parenting or not could not be established as the results of the poll did not record any drastic percentage of parents hovering over their child's life whether Social or cultural or educational. This shows that parenting style cannot be generalised to any one ethnic group or generalised to any common factor, it's an individual style which a parent develops through one's own experience of how one had been parented by their parents or through learning, observing and deliberating about the type of parenting they would like to adapt for their children .

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