CHAPTER – 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of the present study is to understand the dimensions of childrearing practices in urban families of Kerala and to understand its relation to other variables. This chapter deals with the research design, objectives of the study, formulation of hypotheses, definition of major concepts, universe, sampling, tools of data collection, methods of statistical analysis, limitations, and ethical considerations.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is meant to describe the family environment, quality of marital life, parenting style and child rearing practices in urban families of Kerala. It also purports to establish the extent and nature of relationship between these variables in an endeavor to understand its influence on child rearing practices in urban families. The research design used in this study is descriptive in nature. The descriptive design helps to study in depth the characteristics concerning individuals, group and situation.

Each of these variables has different dimensions and these dimensions were analyzed separately. Influence of socio-demographic variable on these variables was analyzed. Child rearing practice was the independent variable and the influence of parenting style, marital quality and family environment on child rearing practice comprises the total study.
3.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The child’s physical and psychological growth takes place within the family at the start of its life. The family is the major environmental influence. From the home, the child’s feelings of adequacy and security, concept of self and the world around begins. The most important asset of a child as it begins life is to have emotionally healthy and confident parents. Child rearing is a positive and nurturing activity. It emerges as probably the most fundamental and universal concern of society. It normally involves the children and parents in lifelong interaction. The basic requirements for normal psycho-social development of a child include a warm and accepting environment with stable parents who provide proper interaction and opportunities for consistent discipline, supervision and support.

However, the family in contemporary society has undergone change in its functions and in structure. The process of industrialization and urbanization has led to the migration of young men and women to the cities to earn their living. Child rearing becomes the responsibility of the parents rather than other members of the family. The young parents who have no training will have to depend on their own ways and means to find solutions to the problems they face in child rearing. The family size is small and the influence of parents becomes more intense. The changes taking place in the functions and structure of family altered the proper child rearing practices. The employment status of parents, the changes in life style and the decline in number of offspring increased the significance of child rearing.

Child rearing is the critical medium for the growth of child into effective citizens. It is an essential skill acquired by the parents and it depends on various factors.
like parental relationship and family environment. Parent’s marital relationship and family environment have an important role in the development of behaviour and formation of a positive attitude in the child. Intrusion of modern life, changes the values and attitude towards the sacred nature of marital relationship which in turn influencing child rearing practices.

The state of Kerala is in a rapid path of urbanization. The villages are disappearing and small towns are coming up everywhere. In the changing scenario of urban life style the parents of present generation strongly needs an in depth awareness of childrearing practices. Men and women are often alone while performing their childrearing responsibilities. The role of grandparents and other experienced elders have diminished. Extensive research is necessary to understand the various patterns of child rearing in current situation and the factors influencing child rearing. This will continue to develop our understanding of improving outcomes for children’s behaviour. The present study is an initiative to evolve appropriate suggestions for better child rearing and there by leading to child development.

3.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to study the Child Rearing Practices in Urban Families of Kerala

1. To understand and measure dimensions of child rearing practices namely overprotection, esteem building, disciplinarian, normal, harsh, ridicule and rejection of parents in urban families of Kerala

2. To measure the marital quality of parents in urban families of Kerala
3. To study the parenting styles adopted in urban families of Kerala
4. To assess the family environment in urban families of Kerala
5. To find out the relationship between the child rearing practices of parents in urban family and their
   a) marital quality of parents,
   b) family environment of the respondents
   c) parenting style of parents in urban families
6. To assess the influence of selected socio demographic variables on
   (a) child rearing practices of the respondents,
   (b) marital quality of parents,
   (c) family environment of the respondents and
   (d) parenting style of parents in urban families
7. To evolve appropriate measures for better child rearing practices in urban families of Kerala

3.4. HYPOTHESES

1) There is significant difference in the dimensions of child rearing practices between father and mother
2) There is significant difference in the dimensions of child rearing practices between families having different levels of marital quality
3) There is significant relationship between child rearing practices of parents and
   a) marital quality of parents
   b) family environment
c) types of parenting style of the respondents

4) There is significant difference among father and mother with respect to their level of marital quality, family environment, and parenting style

5) There is significant relationship between marital quality of parents and
   (a) family environment of the respondents
   (b) parenting style of the respondents

6) There is significant difference in child rearing practices in families with single child with that of families with more than one child

7) There is significant influence on child rearing practices by selected socio demographic variables
   a) education of parents
   b) age of parents
   c) family size
   d) income of the family

3.5. DEFINITIONS OF SIGNIFICANT CONCEPTS

Child rearing practices: According to Newman (1999) child rearing refers to the actions parents take that enable their children to develop a sense of personal identity, learn what people in their particular culture believe, and learn how people are expected to behave. Through support, control, modeling, moral lessons, and direct instruction, parents socialize their children so that they can be transformed from helpless infants into more or less knowledgeable members of society.

Child rearing practices are the parental activities that are aimed at shaping the behaviour of the child in the process of growing up.
In the present study child rearing practices refers to the practices of parents in rearing and educating their children in the dimensions of overprotection, esteem building, disciplinarian, normal, harsh, ridicule and rejection. These dimensions are measured with the help of the child rearing practice inventory by Chamundeshwari et al. (1982).

- Overprotection: parent who is too anxious to protect child from being hurt, in a way that restricts their freedom.
- Disciplinarian: parent who believes in using rules and punishments for controlling children.
- Esteem building: parents help the child to develop a feeling of being happy and proud with their own character and abilities.
- Normal: parents who adopt practices in which they have intimate time with children but not giving too much affection or rejection, assigning duties and children sharing problems with them.
- Harsh: parents who use practices which is too strong, cruel, unkind and rough and likely to damage the children's abilities.
- Ridicule: Parent's unkind comments that make fun of children or make them looks silly
- Rejection: parents who refuse to accept or consider any argument, claim, decision, offer or suggestion from children.

Parenting style: Darling and Steinberg (1993) define parenting style as the overall climate of parent child interaction – an affective context of sorts that sets the tones for the parent’s interaction with the child.
In this study, parenting style is defined as the method or pattern of parent child interaction in authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles. The parenting style and dimensions questionnaire developed by Robinson et al, 1995 was used to measure the parenting style of the parents in urban families.

- Authoritative parenting style: Parents who are controlling as well as giving warm and receptive to child.
- Authoritarian parenting style: Parents who are less warm in interactions with children and more controlling of their children.
- Permissive parenting style: Parents who are non-controlling and non-responsive to their children, while make few if any demands on children.

**Marital Quality:** It is a global measure of one’s subjective evaluation of marital satisfaction (Lewis and Spanier, 1979).

Marital quality refers to the quality of the relationship between the spouses which includes the understanding, rejection, satisfaction, affection, despair, decision making, discontent, dissolution potential, dominance, self-disclosure, trust and role functioning as assessed by Marital Quality Scale developed by Shah (1995).

- Understanding: spouses need (a) cooperation in maintaining relationships with one's parents, (b) comfort when upset, (c) appreciation when sacrifices are made, (d) sharing of feelings and thoughts, (e) understanding of each other's values.
- Rejection – with its components of dominance and hostility exhibited by one spouse towards the other. Unhealthy dyadic interpersonal interactions between
the couple, characterised by high dominance of one of the partner on the spouse on one hand and fault finding, mocking, blaming, humiliating and depreciating on the other indicating hostility.

- **Satisfaction**: Satisfaction in sexual functioning and understanding of the sexual needs by the spouse.
- **Affection**: The degree to which feelings of emotional closeness are expressed by the couple.
- **Despair**: A state of having lost all hope for a better marital relationship.
- **Decision making**: Processes regarding financial issues, children, vacations and involvement of partner in decision making for home and for personal problems.
- **Discontent**: Assessed lack of fulfillment of certain needs of sex and relationship with parents. Two aspects reflected in this factor are problems in sexual interaction and problems in maintaining relationship with the family of origin.
- **Dissolution potential**: It evaluates the possibility of marriage ending in divorce is entertained at all by the subject or not.
- **Dominance**: Control of certain activities of the marital unit by only one spouse with a unilateral decision reflects dominance by one of the spouses in certain areas of marriage.
- **Self-disclosure**: The items assess sharing of mistakes, long term plans for the family and perception of trust of spouse in self.
- **Trust**: Attribution concerning partner’s benevolence and honesty are important for trust. A person believes another person to be benevolent and honest.
- **Role functioning**: Assessing performance of role in one’s own role set and expectation of how spouse will perform his/her role set.
**Family environment:** It is defined as the conditions that affect the behaviour and development of family members. (Hornby, 2005)

In this study family environment refers to the condition or situation within the family that affect the interaction, relationship and development of its members which is measured in the dimensions of cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance and caring, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control by the family environment scale developed by Bhatia and Chadha (1993).

- **Cohesion** – Degree of commitment, help and support family members provide for each other.
- **Expressiveness** – extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly, express their feelings and thoughts directly.
- **Conflict** – Amount of openly expressed aggression and conflict among the members
- **Acceptance and caring** – Extent to which the members are unconditionally accepted and the degree to which caring is expressed in the family.
- **Independence** – Extent to which family members are assertive and independently make their own decisions.
- **Active recreational orientation** – Extent of participation in social and recreational activities. For eg. going to movies, sports, events etc., having hobbies, and involving in recreational activities.
- **Organization** - Degree of importance of clear organization structure in planning family activities and responsibilities.
- **Control** – Degree of limit setting within a family.
*Urban Family*: Census of India 2001, define urban area as all statutory places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee etc., with a minimum population of 5000, with at least 75% of male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq.km.

In this study, urban family means a household of parents (an adult father or mother within the age group of 25-55 years who currently have primary responsibility for the care and development of one or more biological children), and children (within the age group of 6 – 11 years) with or without close relatives living in corporation areas, specifically Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin and Kozhikode. (6 – 11 years is the transition period between childhood and adolescence. This period is critical for developing strong parent child relationship and sense of identity in children. In Middle Childhood parents continue to be the best socializing agents and must deal with new issues like promote responsible behaviour, formation of good habits, constructive use of leisure time, and deal with problems at school.)

*Socio demographic profile*: In this study, socio-demographic profile includes the details of the parents such as age, sex, religion, family size, education, and type of family, income of the family, type of marriage and years of marriage.

### 3.6. PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to test the feasibility of the study, to finalize the universe, and to decide the tools of data collection. The researcher held a series of discussion with experts who were involved in the field of child development and
family, and also with the experts in the research field. The discussion with the experts in the field and the information gathered through the review of literature formed the basis for limiting the area of study, tool selection and finalizing the sample. Discussion with the authors of the selected scales through direct meeting and through mails helped to finalize the tools. The researcher contacted the key functionaries in the selected three corporations namely Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin and Kozhikode and briefed them on the nature and significance of the study. They provided assistance in collecting the list of registered Residents Associations and the contact address of the president or secretary of these associations. This list was used in the selection of the respondents by appropriate sampling framework adopted for the study.

3.7. UNIVERSE

The universe of the study comprised of all parents in urban families registered in Residents associations of Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode corporations of Kerala. For getting regional representation three corporations namely Thiruvananthapuram (with 86 divisions) from south, Cochin (with 70 divisions) from central and Kozhikode (with 55 divisions) from North region were selected for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Divisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>Cochin</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Kozhikode</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7.1. Unit of the Study

The unit of study was both the parents of families in which father and mother were living together with children (6-11 years) in corporation areas, specifically Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode.

3.8. INCLUSION CRITERIA

- Families who are members of Residents associations registered in corporations
- Families living in urban area for not less than 10 years
- Families where both parents and children are staying together
- Families where parents having at least one child between the age group of 6 – 11 years

3.9. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Parents who are widowed, single, divorced and separated
- Parents with mental and physical disability
- Parents having children with physical and mental disability

3.10. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Multi stage sampling design was adopted as sampling procedure in this study.

The procedure of sampling was as follows. 10 divisions from Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, Cochin Corporation and Kozhikode Corporation selected by using the disproportionate stratified random sampling. The researcher collected the list of registered Residents Associations from the respective corporation offices. By using disproportionate stratified random sampling two Residents
Associations from each division selected. The Resident’s Associations registered under the corporations and who were given permissions were included in the study.

Samples for the study were determined by contacting the President of selected Residents Association and by obtaining information from them on details of respondent’s family. Residents Associations were preferred to other methods (viz., voters list) because of the possibility of ensuring the respondents were fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and also for easy entering into the families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Residents Association President has the list of family members and from this list, the families who satisfied the inclusion criteria were selected. Using the information obtained after the screening, a list of families on each Residents Association was prepared. From those who consented to participate in this research
endeavour, 109 families from Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, 103 from Cochin Corporation and 102 from Kozhikode Corporation were proportionately selected by using simple random sampling method. Parents of these families are the respondents of the study.

3.11. TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION

The tools are carefully prepared after thorough examination of the available literature on the topic and surveyed the methods used for data collection in other studies. Discussions with experts helped to finalize the tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Tools Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio demographic Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rearing Practice Inventory (Chamundeshwari et al., 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style and Dimensions (Robinson et al., 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale on Marital Quality multidimensional scale By (Shah, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Environment Scale (Scale of Bhatia and Chadha, (1993) was used to assess the family environment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview schedule is used to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The other relevant variables in the study has been assessed systematically with corresponding scales and inventories.

3.11.1. Socio-demographic Schedule

This was put in the introductory part and consisted of basic background information to understand the socio-demographic background of the respondents. The 18 item questionnaire used for the study is given in Appendix A.

3.11.2. Child Rearing Practice Inventory

The child rearing practice inventory was developed by Chamundeshwari et al. in 1982. This inventory consisted of statements pertaining to the dimensions of child rearing practices adopted by parents in urban families to which they had to respond in one of the four options given for each statement. The inventory consisted of 35 items related to seven dimensions of child rearing such as over-protection, esteem building, disciplinarian, normal, harsh, ridicule and rejection. The cut-off point in this scale was the ‘normal’ which includes equal points from both sides. The 35 sub items were mixed up in such a way that, the first statement of the first item was followed by first statement of the second item and so on. Like wise the second statement of the first one was followed by the second statement of the second item and so on. The scoring was that, the parent can answer in per cent 100, 50, 25, 0. The scores so derived were summated for each item of the statement and the summated scores of an item totaled under each domains helps in the understanding of how the child was reared.
Based on the responses obtained from each item from the selected respondents, the reliability of the responses was tested by using Alpha reliability and it was found to be 0.75 which indicates the consistency of each item in measuring the child rearing practices.

3.11.3. Parenting Style and Dimensions Questionnaire

The Questionnaire consisted of 32 items. It describes about the three parenting styles namely Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive.

The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) (Robinson et al., 1995) which contains thirty-two statements regarding different parent reactions to child behaviour. The purpose of this measurement is to measure parenting styles along the continuum of Baumrind’s (1989) typologies of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. This questionnaire can be completed by both mothers and fathers of school-age children. Each parent rates themselves. There were 15 items for authoritative style, 12 items for authoritarian style and 5 items for permissive style. The scoring key of the PSDQ was used to classify parents into one of three parenting styles. The scoring key yielded an overall mean score in each category of parenting style and based on this score determined the parents particular style. For the authoritarian parenting style there were fifteen items that yield a score ranging from fifteen to seventy-five. The authoritative style includes twelve items with total ranging from twelve to sixty. The permissive style includes five items with a range of score of five to twenty-five. The parenting style with the highest mean determines a particular parent’s style. The reliability coefficients for mothers was 0.68, whereas the reliability coefficients for fathers was 0.70. The Cronbach’s alpha for authoritative, authoritarian and permissive
parenting styles are 0.86, 0.82 and 0.64, respectively (Robinson et al., 1995). The PSDQ has been validated cross-culturally (Robinson et al., 1996, 2001).

3.11.4. Scale on Marital Quality

Quality of marital life of parents in urban families were measured using marital Quality Scale developed by Shah (1995). The Marital Quality scale (MQS) is a multidimensional scale (Shah, 1995) which has 50 items in statement form, with male and female formats with a four point rating scale viz., usually, sometimes, rarely and never. The scale was designed to assess various aspects of marital life relevant to the Indian context. The twelve (dimensions) factors in MQS include, Understanding, Rejection, Satisfaction, Affection, Despair, Decision making, Discontent, Dissolution Potential, Dominance, Self Disclosure, Trust and Role functioning.

The scale had 28 positively worded items and 22 negatively worded items. The number of items on these factors range from 1 to 9. The factors understanding, satisfaction, decision making, trust and role functioning had only positively worded items. Factors of Rejection, despair, discontent, dissolution potential and dominance had only negatively worded items. Factors of Affection and Self Disclosure consist of both positively and negatively worded items.

For a positively worded item ‘usually’ was given a score of 1, ‘Sometimes’ a score of 2, ‘Rarely’ a score of 3 and ‘Never’ a score of 4. The reverse scoring was followed for the negatively worded items. The total score was summation of scores obtained on individual items. The scale provides two types of scores. Total scale score and scores on the 12 factors of the scale. Total marital quality score ranges between 50-
200. Higher score indicates poor quality of marital life. Overall range of marital quality further divided into three classes viz. Good (Total score ranges between 50-100), average (Total score ranges between 101-150) and poor (Total score ranges between 151-200). The scale had an internal consistency of 0.91 and a test- retest reliability of 0.83 over a six weeks interval.

**3.11.5. Family Environment scale**

The family environment scale of Bhatia and Chadha, (1993) was used to assess the family environment of the respondent’s families. This scale of 69 items contains eight subscales namely Relationship dimensions, Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict, Acceptance and Caring, Personal growth dimension, Independence, Active recreational orientation, System maintenance dimension, Organization and Control.

The items were answered on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The items were scored as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive items</th>
<th>Negative items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scoring key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub scales</th>
<th>Raw score</th>
<th>Qualitative norms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>61 and above</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46 to 60</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
45 and below  Low
Expressiveness  40 and above  High
    28 to 39  average
    27 and below  low
Conflict  52 and above  low conflicts
    38 to 51  Average conflicts
    37 and below  high conflicts
Acceptance and caring  55 and above  High
    41 to 54  Average
    40 and below  Low
Independence  41 and above  High
    38 to 40  Average
    37 and below  Low
Active recreational  34 and above  High
Orientation  26 to 33  Average
    25 and below  Low
Organization  10 and above  High
    7 to 9  Average
    6 and below  Low
Control  18 and above  High
    14 to 17  Average
    13 and below  Low

The reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.95.

3.12. PRETEST

The tool of data collection consisting of four scales and few questions in the socio-demographic data sheet was pretested between 20th February and 5th March 2008. The researcher administered the tool of data collection to 15 families in Cochin Corporation. The researcher interviewed 30 parents, (both father and mother) of
Cochin Corporation to understand the appropriateness and to get familiar with the administration of tools. The researcher achieved some preliminary insights into the different dimensions and variables of the study.

According to the PSDQ tool developed by Robinson et al. (1995) each parent rates themselves and the parenting style of their spouse, if applicable. At the time of pre-test, researcher felt parent’s difficulty to rate the parenting styles of their own and their spouse. Hence, the researcher decided to collect the data about parenting style of the respondents only.

3.13. COLLECTION OF DATA

The actual data collection started in the first week of April 2008 and was completed in December 2008. Data collection was done in three corporations namely Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin and Kozhikode. Interviews were conducted with the help of the finalized schedule. Data was collected by interviewing the parents by visiting the randomly selected houses. It took almost nine months to collect the data from 628 respondents (314 couples).

3.14. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data processing was started with coding of the data. The socio-demographic data sheet was a pre-coded one. For the scale items the score value for each item was given as the code. The coded data were then entered into excel worksheet. This was necessary as the factors of all the scales had to be counted separately for determining the values for each dimension independently.
**Statistical Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test conducted</th>
<th>Purpose of test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t-test</td>
<td>• To test the significant difference in child rearing practices, parenting style, family environment and marital quality among father and mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Way ANOVA</td>
<td>• To compare child rearing practices, parenting style, family environment and marital quality in different religion, type of child, family type, income group and education group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To test the significant difference in the dimensions of child rearing practices in different levels of family environment and marital quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>• Correlation analysis was done to test the relationship of child rearing practice with age and family size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To find out the relationship of child rearing practice with parenting style, marital quality and family environment, correlation was worked out.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the data entry was over and editing done to check for mistakes, the excel file was converted into SPSS programme files for analysis in SPSS. Analysis of the study was done by using the Statistical Package SPSS. Both descriptive and analytical statistical techniques had been used for data analysis. The data analysis was predominantly done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 13.0. Descriptive statistics like frequency tables and diagrams were used to present this data. Percentage analysis and Tests like independent t test, Karl Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses proposed in the study.
3.15. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

• The study was conducted among three corporations only.
• Families who were registered in the Residents associations were only selected.
• Sample from all parts of urban culture was not included in the study, like families in urban slums.

3.16. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The respondents were informed in detail regarding the study and their consent was obtained before the study. Confidentiality was strictly observed regarding the responses. All participants were informed regarding the investigator’s availability for further clarification and guidance.