CHAPTER – 7
FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS
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Child rearing practice is prime responsibility of the family. Proper child rearing practices give opportunity for the best development of the child than any other facilities. The aim of the present study was to understand the child rearing practices in urban families of Kerala. The specific objectives were to find out the marital quality of parents, to study the parenting style adopted in urban families of Kerala, to assess the family environment of urban families, and to understand the relationship between child rearing practices and parenting style, marital quality of the parents and family environment.

The data collected from three Corporations of Kerala. Statistical processing and tests yielded significant results for the study in arriving at valuable conclusions as per the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

This chapter presents the major inferences drawn from the data analysis. It also depicts some workable suggestions which have been derived based on the study.

The researcher would like to initially present the socio demographic details of the respondents. In the matter of the Age of the respondents, around 65 per cent of the female respondents were in the age group of 31-40 and 66 per cent of the male respondents were in the age group of 36 – 46 years. Regarding Religion, 55 per cent of the samples are Hindus by religion followed by around 26 per cent of Christians and only 19 per cent of them are Muslims.
When it comes to age at marriage 53.18 per cent of the male respondents were married when they were in the age group of 26-30 years and around 58.92 per cent of the female respondents were in the age group of 21–25 years. Considering the number of children, 66.9 per cent of the parents have two children and 55.7 per cent of them have one boy child and 48.7 per cent had one girl child. In the matter of family type and size, about 61 per cent of the families were nuclear families and almost 52% of the families had only 4 members in their family. When it comes to the type of marriage, 91.4 per cent marriages were same caste marriages and 88.2 per cent of them were arranged marriages.

It is noted from the analysis that, around three percentage of the total respondents were illiterate and regarding the higher education 29.6 per cent of the male respondents completed their SSLC and 26.4 per cent of them were graduates. Only 18.2 per cent of the mothers had completed SSLC and 29.3 per cent of them were graduates. Among the total respondents 32.5 per cent of the families were in the monthly income of Rs.5000-10000 and 28 per cent of the respondents have income below Rs.5000. Only 12.1 per cent of the respondents have income above Rs.20000.

7.1. CHILD REARING PRACTICES AND SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

While analyzing the distribution of parents according to the level of dimensions of child rearing practices, it is observed that majority of the parents following high levels of overprotective, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices and low levels of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices.
It is observed from the table that there was no significant difference in the dimensions of overprotection, disciplinarian and esteem building between father and mother. In the dimensions of harsh and ridicule, father and mother was significantly different.

While analyzing the correlation between age and child rearing practices, it is seen that age and the dimensions of harsh and ridicule are positively correlated, which implies that as age increases parents adopting harsh and ridicule practices increase or vice versa.

While focusing on the variation of dimensions of child rearing practices among different religions, it is found that, except the dimension of disciplinarian all other dimensions vary according to the religion of the parents. There is also found to be statistically significant difference between the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions with respect to dimensions of child rearing practices.

While considering the correlation between family size and dimensions of child rearing practices, it is observed that harsh, ridicule and rejection practices and family size is positively correlated which indicates that as family size increases, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices also increase.

It is also known that there is no significant difference among the different dimensions of child rearing practices with respect to the sex of the child.

While analyzing the dimensions of child rearing practices with respect to the number of children, it is found that family with more than one child have more disciplinarian, esteem building, normal, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices, whereas
family with one child has more overprotection. However, there is found to be no significant difference between the two groups, with respect to these dimensions.

It is further noted from the table that, only disciplinarian dimension has significant difference among the different family type. Disciplinarian practices were more among the joint families than nuclear and extended families.

It is revealed that there exists significant difference among the normal, harsh and rejection dimensions of child rearing practices with regard to the family income.

It is further noted from the table that there is no significant difference among the dimensions of child rearing practices of parents with regard to their education.

It is also known that there is significant difference among the different regions like Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin and Kozhikode corporations with respect to the dimensions of child rearing practices.

7.2. CHILD REARING PRACTICE AND ITS RELATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

While analyzing the correlation between the authoritative parenting style and dimensions of child rearing practices, taking into consideration the fathers only, it is seen that the dimensions of disciplinarian, esteem building and normal are positively correlated which implies that as authoritative parenting style increases, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices increases or vice versa. Dimensions of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are negatively correlated with authoritative parenting style.
Considering the mothers, here we see that as authoritative parenting style increases, overprotection, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices increases. Likewise there is negative correlation between dimensions of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices and authoritative parenting style.

Taking into account both parents together, it is observed that, as authoritative parenting style increases, overprotection, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices increase and harsh, ridicule and rejection practices decreases.

While finding out the correlation between dimensions of child rearing practices and authoritarian parenting style, taking into consideration the fathers only, it is noted that as parents become more authoritarian in their parenting style, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices increase.

While analyzing the mothers only, here again we see that as parents become more authoritarian in their parenting style, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are increasing.

While considering all the parents, it is seen that as parents become more authoritarian in their parenting style, disciplinarian, harsh, ridicule and rejection practice also increase.

The table reveals that for the fathers, permissive parenting style and dimensions of overprotection, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are positively correlated.

Considering the mothers, it is observed that disciplinarian dimension is negatively correlated with permissive parenting style and positively correlated with harsh and ridicule practices.
In the case of both parents together, it is observed that disciplinarian dimension is negatively correlated with permissive parenting style and positively correlated with harsh, ridicule and rejection practices.

While analyzing the correlation between marital quality and dimensions of child rearing practices among fathers, it is seen that overprotection, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices are positively correlated with marital quality, while dimensions of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are negatively correlated with marital quality.

In the case of mothers, it is noted that disciplinarian and normal dimensions are positively correlated with marital quality while harsh practices are negatively correlated with marital quality.

While analyzing parents together, it is seen that overprotection, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices are positively correlated with marital quality, while dimensions of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are negatively correlated with marital quality.

While finding out the correlation between family environment and child rearing practices, it is noted that family environment and harsh practices are negatively correlated which implies that as family environment becomes more conducive harsh practices decrease.

Considering the mothers, it is noted that family environment and dimensions of esteem building and normal are positively correlated while dimensions of harsh,
ridicule and rejection practices are negatively correlated which implies that as family environment becomes more conducive harsh, ridicule and rejection practices decrease.

The analysis further depicts that for ‘family environment’ for the parents together, it is seen that dimensions of esteem building and normal are positively correlated with family environment while dimensions of harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are negatively correlated which implies that as family environment becomes more conducive harsh, ridicule and rejection practices decrease.

It is found from the table that dimensions of child rearing practices vary for different levels of marital quality. There is also found to be statistically significant difference between levels of marital quality with respect to dimensions of child rearing practices. Further overprotection, disciplinarian, esteem building and normal practices are more among parents with high marital quality while harsh, ridicule and rejection practices are more among parents with low levels of marital quality.

It is also found there is significant difference among the different levels of conducive family environment with respect to the dimensions of child rearing practices viz. disciplinarian, esteem building, normal, harsh, ridicule and rejection practices.

It is found that authoritative parenting style is positively, significantly associated with the marital quality of parents whereas the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were negatively, significantly associated with the marital quality of parents. Which implies that as the marital quality of the parents increases the adoption of authoritative parenting style increases and authoritarian and permissive parenting style decreases.
It is noted that authoritative parenting style is, significantly associated with the family environment as perceived by the parents. Table clearly indicates that there exist a negative significant association between authoritarian and permissive parenting styles and family environment and positive significant association between authoritative parenting style and conducive family environment.

It is observed that there exists a positive and significant association between family environment and marital quality.

7.3. PARENTING STYLE AND SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

In parenting styles, majority of the parents, both father and mother, were using authoritative parenting styles. Among the authoritative parenting styles there was significant difference between father and mother. It was found that mothers prefer authoritative parenting styles than fathers.

In the dimensions of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles there was no significant difference between father and mother.

Parents who used authoritative style, they follow most of its characteristics, but parents of authoritarian and permissive styles follow only some specific characteristics of that corresponding style. This means, most of the parents using only the medium range of authoritarian parenting style and most of the permissive parents were in the low range.
There was no significant relationship between age of the parents and different dimensions of parenting styles.

Authoritative parenting style was more prominent among Hindus and it had significant difference with Christians and Muslims.

Authoritarian parenting style was highest among Christians than Muslims and Hindus and the difference was significant.

As the size of the family is increasing parents choose authoritarian parenting style than any other style and permissive parenting styles was also an option.

Authoritative parenting style was used in families where family members were less in number.

There was no significant difference between parenting style and type of family.

The authoritative, authoritarian and permissive style had no significant difference with sex of child present in a family.

Authoritative style was dominant in families which had family income more than Rs.20000.

Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles had no significant relation with income of the family.

Authoritarian parenting style was more prominent in families whose parents had only school education
7.4. MARITAL QUALITY AND SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

- Majority of the spouses were in the category of high level of marital quality. Compared to fathers a slightly higher percentage of marital quality was found among the mothers. But the difference is not significant.

- The dimensions of satisfaction, affection, decision making, dominance, trust and role functioning had significant difference between fathers and mothers.

- There was no significant relationship between age and marital quality of the spouses.

- Majority of the dimensions of marital quality had significant relationship with religion.

- Only three dimensions, dissolution potential, dominance and role functioning had significant relation with size of the family.

- Marital quality was high among the extended families than nuclear and joint families.

- Income of the family was a determinant factor in marital quality.

- There was no significant relation between marital quality and education of the parents.
7.5. Family Environment and Socio Demographic Variables

- Majority of the parents perceive their family environment as highly conducive. Majority of mothers perceive family environment more conducive than fathers.

- The perception of father and mother regarding the level of cohesion was significantly different.

- Except the dimension of organization, all other dimensions of family environment were significantly different among father and mother.

- Among the total respondents majority of them were at an average level of expressiveness and Mothers were more expressive than fathers.

- Conflict and control are more experienced by mothers than fathers.

- The dimensions of cohesion, acceptance and caring and independence had significant negative relation with age of the parents.

- The dimensions of family environment had significant relationship with religion of the parents.

- The size of the family had significant negative relationship with family environment.

- The dimension of independence in family environment was more among extended families than joint families.

- Sex of the child influences the family environment.
• There was no significant relationship between family environment and income and education of the parents.

7.6. PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS - EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Social work discipline offers specialized courses on family and child welfare. By reviewing the existing curricula of Family and Child Welfare specialization in various Indian Universities it is understood that it is concentrating on basic concepts related to family, needs and problems of the family and policy and programs in general. It gives little attention to in-depth concepts like child rearing and the intervention programs for better child rearing. It is included in the curricula of some Universities in the form of family life education or family enrichment programmes. So the Family and Child Welfare Specialization in Social Work curriculum can include a module on child rearing practices. The field work practicum can give special thrust to child welfare and can work through the anganwadis to reach the families in community.

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The present study is bound to open doors for programs targeting parents of young children in Kerala. Families can be helped for better child rearing practices through social workers in different agencies like family counseling Centre’s, family welfare associations, social workers in community based organizations etc.

A major role of social worker is counseling and providing information of better child rearing practices to parents. In the study it has been mentioned that marital quality
and family environment have significant role in adoption of better child rearing practices. In order to deal with the psycho social problems in marital life and in family environment, the need of professional counselors become imperative. The services of the family counselors may be made available to the parents to deal with the problems in families. The problems in marital life and factors which lead couples to divorce negatively affect children. By equipping the social workers at family court with professional knowledge on the impact of child rearing practices, they can create awareness in parents those who are approaching for divorce due to marital and family problems.

The social worker at family counseling centre can organize family intervention programmes to strengthen family resources and support systems. Social workers can organize programs at groups in communities focused on specific parenting issues, such as appropriate discipline, antisocial behaviour and stages of child development. They can also arrange programmes aimed at specific populations of parents, such as parents with children at critical periods of development, single and divorced parents, parents with low incomes and programs targeted to specific populations of children, such as children with disabilities. The social worker can organize these interventions at Residents Associations, schools, health centres and hospitals, agencies for children and family, self help groups and community centres.

Social workers at family counseling centres, schools and agencies for children can develop programs to impart parenting skills and emphasize on developing self esteem, self concept, identity formation, self reliance and self confidence in children. Psycho social needs such as interpersonal relationships, emotional support, and quality time to spend with children and meaningful daily recreational activities have to be
carried out. It is the responsibility of the social worker to educate the parents the importance of these psycho social needs in families and to assist in obtaining skills to perform them as fully as possible. It is important that parents know about the basic requirements needed to achieve a better quality of life.

In job training of ICDS supervisors and health workers can include a special module on child rearing practices which will equip them to organize programs with groups in communities focusing on specific parenting issues to specific populations of parents and children. Community organizers can conduct family life education programmes through anganwadis by organizing the mothers in the community and can conduct awareness programmes about the impact of child rearing practices on mental health of children. The professional social workers may take initiatives to conduct various programs to parents by coordinating community resources, establishing partnership with other health and social care organizations.

**SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH**

While discussing **the existing research in the field of child rearing** we can observe that researchers belonged to different disciplines conduct research

- **on parents specific characteristics and contexts**
  - These studies concentrating on Parental Values and Practices, parents’ child-rearing stress, Parenting difference between Mothers and Fathers, impact of parent’s employment on child rearing, family relations, parent child interaction etc.

- **on different paradigms**
  - Researchers giving importance to cause and effect relationship between child rearing and parental mental health, Parent Behaviors, Parenting Style, Family Functioning, marital satisfaction etc.
on the joint contributions of parents and children in child rearing

Certain studies included both parents and children for exploring their perception on Parenting Practices, Child Adjustment, Parental Religiosity, Parenting Style, Mothers and Sons, parent child relationship, Impact of child rearing on emotional, cognitive and social development of child is also discussed, Parental Control in the Etiology of Anxiety

Several studies were discussed on the impact of parent’s employment on child rearing, family relations, parent child interaction etc. Impact of child rearing on emotional, cognitive and social development of child is also discussed. Child rearing practices in particular cultures like African –American families, Mexican and particular communities in Bengali, Punjabi and Marvari, and in particular tribal societies in India is also studied. Specific contexts like rural and urban difference, impact of family structure, father mother difference is mentioned in some studies. Some studies were concentrated on the impact of marital relationship on parenting.

Review of literature indicates that in Kerala, there are not many intervention oriented researches in the field of child rearing practices. Research in the field of child rearing will contribute to the development of better child rearing practices which in turn will foster child development. In order to develop suitable models of social work intervention, research in the areas of impact of different patterns of child rearing, family environment and marital life on children and their mental health problem, existing social support systems could be conducted. The present study focused on children within the age group of 6-11 years, the preschool group is also a potential group requiring attention of the researchers and social workers. Studies focusing on mental health aspects of children in the light of child rearing practices should be
planned and carried on more extensively. The social science academic institutions may give priority to research on families and children at risk. Monitoring and evaluation studies may be carried out of different policies and programs that affect families and children

**Directions for future research**

The existing research on child rearing literature shows that there is need for future research in experimental, descriptive and evaluative designs.

**Descriptive Design**

- There is need for theoretically driven qualitative and quantitative research that can help social work professionals understand the sociopolitical, psychological, and emotional factors that precede parenthood and subsequent behaviours that impede parental responsibilities.

- Lack of documentation on issues related to child rearing practices, marital relations and family environment and intervention programmes organized by religious organisations and government functionaries like anganwadies in Kerala context demand for research in these areas.

- Experimental design

- A comprehensive training module based on the need assessment could be prepared and tried out with parents.

- There is also need for intervention studies for health professionals and teachers in the area of management of children..
**Evaluative studies**

- There is a need to conduct an evaluative study to understand the impact of intervention on parents for betterment of child rearing practices.
- There is scope for research on both the short term and long term impact of child rearing education programmes.
- There is a need for longitudinal studies to understand the impact of child rearing practices in children.
- Research on networks/agencies which have initiated parent education programmes, including review of the nature, content, strategies and achievements towards empowerment of families and thereby determine the indicators of success/failure of these intervention programmes.

**POLICY FOR FAMILY**

- The Year of the Family-1994 was taken as an opportunity by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to review the policies, programmes, curriculum planning and research relating to family well-being. At present time also there is a need to lobby with the government to review existing schemes for families and modify them according to the needs and problems of families.

  The government of India needs to consider formulating a policy for strengthening the family unit. It may consider integrating family life education with the ICDS scheme. It needs to replace the scheme for the welfare of children in need of care and protection with an integrated family-based child welfare scheme.
FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY OF BETTER CHILD REARING PRACTICES

MEDIAS FOR DIRECT DELIVERY OF BETTER CHILD REARING PRACTICES

SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

ICDS PROJECTS

SCHOOL

KUDUMBASHREE

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

CDPO/ICDS SUPERVISOR

SCHOOL TEACHERS

COMMUNITY

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

ANGANWADI

SCHOOL COUNSELORS/SOCIAL WORKERS

NHG

PTA MEMBERS
Suggestions for Delivery of Better Child Rearing Practices to All Families in Kerala

Improved Child Rearing Practices can be delivered to all families in Kerala through four different medias. They are Social Welfare Organizations, ICDS, Schools and Kudumbashree.

Social Welfare Organizations

There are different Social Welfare Organizations working for Family and Child Welfare in Kerala. We can divide them into Government organizations and Non Government Organizations. The staff of the Government Organizations like Children’s Home and Juvenile Home can have training on better child rearing practices in their training period. The Non- Government organizations like Child Line and Family Counseling Centre’s can reach into the families to impart awareness on healthy child rearing practices.

Social Welfare Board can implement schemes for better child rearing through Family Counseling Centres. The social worker in Family Counseling Center can reach to the families through house visits, formation of groups of parents, and organizing Focus Groups in community.

Child Line – Child telephone advice service can provide information on child development and better child rearing practices. Through these service parents can ventilate their stress and worries about parenting.
ICDS Projects – Workshop for all CDPOs and ICDS supervisors in Kerala is one of the medium through which the information on better child rearing reached into families. Child Development Project Officer can include better child rearing practice programmes in their Annual and Five Year Plans and can monitor and coordinate these functions through Anganwadi workers. These programmes will develop the parents’ knowledge and skills parenting. Also it serves the purpose of rendering a value based parenting which results in the inculcation of positive attitude in the children. CDPO can liaison these programmes with the voluntary organizations functioning in the area. CDPO can make use of the village level Mahila Mandals and Youth Clubs for effective functioning of Parenting Education Programmes. CDPO can facilitate preparation of Information, Education and Communication materials on better Child Rearing Practices through ICDS network and distribute display it in State, District, Block and Village level and in each campaigns.

Anganwadi worker can reach to families through home visits for educating parents, organizing group discussions of mothers and awareness programmes to the community in rendering better child rearing practice programmes. Anganwadi worker can also identify the families which follow practices which are detrimental to the growth and development of the children and can refer such cases to Family Counseling Centres.

Schools can arrange awareness programmes on better Child Rearing Practices in Parent- Teacher Association meetings, as one day workshops for parents, awareness programmes at the time of admissions, Facultti Development Programmes and also in individual sessions. Agencies that specialize in Parenting Education can also be invited.
to provide information sessions in school. Schools can provide specific information and programs on child rearing such as tips, in the school newsletter, access to parenting books and videos, and web-based information. Parenting information on Child Development and on risk and protective factors of Mental Health can also be provided as part of parent information sessions.

Role of teachers in children's life is important. School teacher can identify the behavioural problems of children and can also intervene to help them to overcome their family problems. They are the ones who get more opportunity to interact with parents and can make them aware about the better Child Rearing Practices, Child Development and Child Mental Health.

**School Counselors / Social Workers** through their expertise can assist parents to understand their children's behaviour and development. School counselors can intervene at individual and family levels and can also do referral services. They can inform parents about various resources like relevant services and organizations available in the community.

**Kudumashree** have great potential to deliver the better Child Rearing Practices in families of Kerala. The ultimate goal of Kudumbashree is reaching out family through women. Kudumbashree representatives can reach into the community through ADS and CDS meetings and activities. Neighbourhood Groups (NHG) can be the best place for sharing better child rearing practices and imparting information on parenting skills. NHG can be considered as a platform for capacity building and for reducing strains on parenting. Better child rearing programmes can be implemented through SHG/NHG’s for empowerment of families. Awareness on proper parenting can be
spread through regular Parent Education Programmes. These programmes should emphasize the importance of conducive family environment to a child’s wellbeing