

Chapter VIII

Conclusion

The study on, "Child Welfare in Iran 1979-1989", brings to light a number of interesting aspects. The research carried out under this title goes into detail of the interaction of various members of a family and their impact in society. Passions and sentiments of the children are vividly analyzed specially when the head of the family goes away from social ethics. This study is a synopsis of the rise and fall of families and their intimate relationship with a nation. More than any method being followed by any social theorists, the case method adopted to study the problem has enabled the researcher to go into the detail of the dynamics of the institution building, which is very important in the nation building. Moreover, the character building which constitutes an important aspect of a nation is already institutionalized in the system of day-care services. The shaping of the children's carrier through mental and physical development, at the tender age, is extremely important. If that work is carried out by a national government, it shows the responsibility of the leadership in building up the foundation of a nation in the making. The importance of the present study is the way in which the Islamic Republic

of Iran has made a comprehensive and systematic plan for moulding mental and physical of development the children. Moreover, the day-care services, about which the study has been carried out, gives a helping hand to those women who want to work and this clearly shows the progressive approach towards women and children by the Iranian government. An account of educational and cultural developments in Iran, particularly during the period of study, is given before explaining the findings of the study. Literacy rates have shown much improvement over the past 15 years in Iran and the ratio of the literate "among six year old and above", increased from 47.5 percentage in 1976 to 74.4 percent in 1990. At present, 26 universities of medical sciences and four faculties are engaged in the task of training medical and paramedical personnel. Various public universities and institutes of higher learning enrolled some 94000 students annually to study in various fields of Science, Technology, Arts, Social Sciences, Law etc., and to this must be added a number of students enrolled in private universities.

In fact, the first organization of Social Science in the country was the red-iron and sun society. The Iranian counterpart of the red cross established in the country had 125 branches all over Iran, providing flood, fire and earthquake relief and other charity, operations. With the

increase of poverty, ill-health, child-neglect, crime, addiction and other social problems, additional voluntary agencies were founded in 1940s and 1950s.

Day-care services were organised as part of social necessity and historical development. It has served as a nucleus of the community welfare centre programme from the beginning because it is indispensable in certain areas where many women go to work. Women became familiar with the various programmes carried out by the community welfare centres. They got a chance to observe the care the child receives at home, when the mother is actively involved in the programme offered by the centre. The day care centre has been redesigned to train women, encourage and liberate women who want to work. As Iran is marching towards the process of industrialization, more and more women want to work and it was in this situation that day-care programme is designed to help the social development of children in order to train individuals as community leaders and citizens of the nation in due course of time.

Day-care services constitute the basis of education, personality development and moulding of character of this institution is a stepping stone for those who want to make a career in future. They also constitute an important aspect in the mental and physical development of the children.

Day-care services also function as a relief for the working mothers. There is direct link between day-care services and the Iranian family system. Whether rich or poor, all children in day-care services are treated equal. Therefore, a kind of social feeling develops among the children during this period.

The behaviour of the teachers in these centres creates a great impact on the children. Today, one cannot look at the individual development as well as educational planning in the absence of day-care services. They have become so indispensable that the country cannot survive without them.

No study will be complete without a proper methodology. Theorists adopted various methods to study the social problems in the ancient period; theorists had also followed both deductive and inductive methods, but they did not have the infrastructure of the modern facilities. However, social scientists like Aristotle had given prominence to observation as method of extracting maximum information on the subject. The observation method is also adopted to study the present problem. Moreover, while adopting the case method, care has been taken to examine the surroundings of the day-care services, the house where the particular case lives and the school where they study at present. Various questions have been asked to the parents of the

children and the school teachers where they study at present apart from interviewing the particular cases in the presence of the rest of the members of the family. The conglomeration of interview and observation methods and interaction with the membership of the family bring to light a clear picture of an ancient society in transition. Full attention has been paid to correlate the findings in relation to the objectives of the study.

In the present study, social change is looked at as character building, change in attitude and change in behaviour of the children who were taught and taken care of in the day-care services. The study shows that the moulding of children in the day-care services led to character building, change in attitude and change in behaviour on those who were taken care of in the day-care services. Moreover, in every case it is observed that there is a change in attitude which is different from those boys and girls who were not kept in day-care services. They have learnt a kind of discipline, manners and norms which reflected in the attitude toward the family members and in the dressing and eating food. In many families it is found that there are a lot of people living together in a comparatively small house with minimum facilities. However, none of them has ever agitated against the head of the

family. On the other hand, boys and girls tried to study well by adjusting in their surroundings. They are mature enough to understand the reality of the situation and available facilities. Thus, there is a drastic change in the attitude towards the family members, friends, and teachers. This is definitely the result of the impact the day-care services have created.

Sociability, tolerance and cooperation are the basic values of a society. When these ethical values are undermined by any political society, there can arise protest movements to create a new society based on morality. This is what we witness in the tradition of protest created by Socrates whose teachings have laid the foundation of western civilization. History is full of such instances because no society can be built without the moral values. The present study in fact examines whether these are really institutionalized in the day-care services or not. Further, it examines the impact this institutionalization of social morality has made on the children during their stay in the day-care centres.

It is found that these children who underwent care in the day-care services are sociable, tolerant, adjustable, cooperative and responsible. It is interesting to point out that the child educator in the day-care services has

extended to one girl called Minoo a kind of affection which she could have got only at home. As a result of it, she never felt that she lost her father. Islamic Revolution in Iran has brought tremendous changes, specially in the modernization of the day-care services. Before the revolution the day-care services were under different managements. After revolution, they were all centralized and brought under central welfare organization. Apart from this, voluntary organizations and other types of welfare organizations were also brought under the management of central welfare organization. There has also taken place a shift from westernization to Islamization. Before 1979, there was the practice of conducting general prayer before starting the daily programme but after revolution they made it a practice to educate children about how to pray with emphasis on Islamic prayer. Before revolution, the child educator and other staff members did not cover their body according to Islamic tradition. After revolution, it has been made compulsory for them to cover according to Islamic tradition.

The period between 0-6 years of age is the time when children undergo important developments in the physiological and psychological make up. This is a crucial period in the biological history of a child. The concept of child welfare

evolved in Iran in 1962 has a social base and a historical context. The sociology of profession is highly advanced specialized area within the discipline of sociology. It emerges from the assumption that each distinctive profession is an occupation in special sub-culture with its own language, its own special form of thought, its own values and its own norms. As a matter of fact, each occupation is characterized by its own pressure and anxieties. It also has special areas of conflict between the occupations and that of the surrounding culture. It is from this perspective that the child social welfare worker is looked at; this approach looks at child welfare social work as a social institution within a large community. Child-welfare workers are, therefore, identifiable as organized sub groups in society. In fact, social work is treated as women's profession because more than fifty percent of the people doing social works are women. There are certain ethos behind the concept of the child-welfare social-worker. The humanitarian ethos suggest that society has an obligation to those who are unable to care for themselves.

External disturbances can create problems for the institutions within a nation. A research^{er} has to carefully look into the impact it can create in the existing social order. The war can challenge the internal dynamics of an

established social order. It is with this perspective that the following aspect has been carefully examined in detail.

Iran, in its war with Iraq, has made profound impact on social and economic development of the society. The war has also created a number of social and psychological problems on family set up. In other words, it is difficult to look after the children between the age group of (0-6), specially when no one is there at home to look after them. It was in this context that the present study and its findings are to be looked into. The present study is an examination of various cases which have been collected in Iran.

The available data show the increase of day-care services in Tehran during the period of study. During the war-time at least 5 units were closed down in day-care services. The children are classified into different groups. The child educators encourage the children for group-playing, role-playing and playing with different toys. Attempts are made by the child-educators to bring about discipline among them. They also teach the children how to keep themselves clean, how to eat and how to brush the teeth etc. Co-ordination is carried out between families and day-care centres in order to solve problems facing children. Social workers visit children's home and discuss with

parents about the problems of educating the children. They also discuss with them about the behaviour of the children and give proper advice on matters concerning them. In case they find any socio-economic problems, the social workers advise the parents and if necessary, refer the children to other institutions.

Under the direction of community welfare centre so many programmes such as handi-crafts, maternity health, family planning and youth programme etc. are carried out. Day-care services is one such programme undertaken by community welfare centre. It is only middle and lower middle class children admitted in the day-care services run by the government. Examination of the first case, 17 year old school girl Minoo brings to light many interesting aspects. Being the daughter of a working mother, she was to be kept in the day-care services and even now the girl remembers her happy reminiscences about the day-care service. In spite of her father's death, in the war with Iraq, she is found quite co-operative and studies at home and school. The day-care services, through the educational and socializing programme, have inculcated in her a kind of character which has helped her to be balanced in her approach and actions. A very peaceful and calm atmosphere were also found in her house.

The present study has focused on three institutions - day-care services, schools and the houses where the concerned children live. This has become very essential in order to coordinate the interaction and impact of these three institutions on the children. Day-care services and schools are educational institutions as well as socializing agencies. Effort has been made to examine and correlate the impact of day-care services on the behaviour pattern of the children in the school and in their families.

The study shows that majority of cases, which have been taken up for study, have small houses with many modern facilities like fresh-drinking-water, Gas pipe line, cooler and Gas heater. Most of the houses are decorated with paintings and equipped with carpets, curtain and furniture, tape-recorder, video and color T.V. Most of them have their own houses except a few who lived in rented houses. Most of them are nuclear families, though in some cases, the family composition is quite big. All these children have got benefit from their study in the day-care services. None of these families was found lazy in the sense that every one took up job according her/his educational qualifications. Majority of heads of families were found responsible except in few cases where heads of families were indulged in opium

taking. Such people created a lot of hardships to the concerned families.

Arthur Livingston has said once that man is the product of environment. Metropolitan centres are, in fact, different from the rural areas. The behaviour pattern of the people living in rural areas is different from that of urban centres where man has more problems and tensions in life. The social, cultural and economic problems produced by the metropolis have a great bearing on the behaviour pattern and life style of the people. From this perspective, the present study has also focused its attention to examine whether the metropolis of Tehran has created any impact on the social, cultural and economic aspects of the cases under study.

Mothers of these children in all the twenty cases were found responsible, affectionate and loyal. In fact, they manage the whole show in the family. All these families are located in the urban centres of Tehran and they have their own problems and tension caused by the metropolis. They have ordinary income, which is just sufficient enough to protect them. All these children have developed a kind of **self-consciousness**, identity and social status. As a result, these children have developed high ambitions in

life. A number of them wanted to become Engineers and Doctors.

The study reveals that a kind of continuity in tradition has already created among them. It is already mentioned earlier that there has taken place drastic changes in the courses. Discipline and socialization, which have been inculcated in the kids, have created a profound impact on them to the extent that these children express their solidarity and co-operation with the family members and the same aspects continue in the school also. All these children are found well behaved and moderate in their approach, except two children. Two children have met with accident which has affected their health problem. One important aspect to be noted here is that the children receive the attention of the hospital authorities and they are given proper vaccination in time. Care is also taken by the parents of the children to give nutritional food to these children.

The Government is well-aware of the necessity of providing health facilities to the new born babies. The Government also wants to help working mothers by creating facilities like day-care services where they can keep their children during day-time when they go to work. This initiative of the government is very important in the sense

that it has been helping, through the day-care services, lower and middle class families to earn a little better standard of living. In the long run, this child welfare approach would bring about an egalitarian society based on equality and social justice. The children, who were kept in the day-care services, could go further schooling mainly because their mothers also were bringing income from their salary. It has provided a supportive system to the people having ordinary background. Thus, child-care services have been functioning as **indispensable** supportive system to the families just mentioned above.

The day-care services would prove themselves to be the back-bone of nation building process by allowing the people having low social-background to have social-mobility through this. This indirect approach would bring about a balancing society and it will also reduce the tension that may develop in future between classes and various social groups. It is also found that these children are also sociable, kind and polite.

Some parents generally do not agree with the views expressed by children. On the other hand, they try to impose their view points on the children and in such cases, there cannot be a harmonious life in a family system. Attempt has been made, in the present study, to examine the

same aspect and its impact and interaction between parents and children. The examination of this aspect has brought to light a positive impact and interaction between the parents and children. Whether the parents are able to fulfil the demands of the children financially or not, they support the view points of the kids. It is better to examine further which aspect of social life has influenced the parents to behave in this way.

Another interesting aspect is that whenever the children talk about the future ambitions, the parents don't disagree with them. On the other hand, they rather encourage inspite of financial and other difficulties at home. In few cases, the concerned boy or girl expresses the view that they want to go up to Ph.D. in Arts. In majority cases the houses are kept clean and things are systematically arranged. In a few houses they get the newspapers. Almost all mothers of the children expressed the satisfaction about the system of keeping children in day-care services before 1979. One of them said that day-care services are better than home and this opinion is shared by majority women whose children were kept in day-care services. Most of these women are aware of the family planning programmes and other welfare measures carried out by community welfare centres. Some of them underwent

technical training and training in tailoring which is very useful for them.

Three important institutions such as the family, day-care services and the school have influenced the children in shaping their character. The school and its impact on the children have been examined in detail and the interview with them shows that majority of the children study well and behave properly. Further examination into this aspect reveals the fact the day-care services had played a predominant role in shaping the character of the children.

In fact, all these children, under investigation, maintain good relationship with their family members, friends and school teachers. Some of these children have developed their talents and school teachers expressed good opinion about these children.

In one case, it is found that the head of family has ability and technical knowledge for earning money but doesn't want to work. It is quite strange that he depends on the income of his wife for his family needs. He is also very careless and irresponsible because he has not given proper attention to the family planning techniques. He has entrusted the responsibilities of the family to his wife, which is inhuman and brutal. The study also reveals that the disturbances in the family affect the behaviour of

children in the school. Some children are found emotional, insecure and tense. These may be because of the problems and the disturbances at home. One common feature found among most of the children is that they all study well inspite of having small house and financial problems at home. Morality and discipline are the basic characteristic features found among them.

Most of the mothers of these children said that the child educators in the day-care centres are kind and polite to the children. Majority of the parents are average educated with ordinary income which is just sufficient enough to maintain the family. Most of these children have group activities in the school. All of them are found doing the school-home work properly in time and after that they watch T.V. or do any other extra curricular activities like painting etc. In the case of girls, they help their mothers in the household activities, specially in the kitchen. Though these are small children, one finds mature development in them. In few cases the parents have migrated some times back from the rural areas to the city of Tehran. All people express the view that the day-care centres give nourishing food to the children. It is also found that the children do not have any bad habits and they are all homely type.

Only very few parents have high educational qualifications. It can be said that those who have high education have high-income, provided they get proper jobs. In this case, those who have high education qualification got high income and therefore, they could maintain their family well. Few parents have technical qualifications which make them earn better income. Few children have high ambitions but are doubtful about the fulfillment of the future plan because of the low-income of the parents.

It is already mentioned that 21 cases have been undertaken for close observation and study and all these cases belong to the four community welfare centres. Six cases belong to Jevadieh, six cases belong to Odikhani, six cases belong to vali-ASR and the next 3 cases belong to Ejareh-nar community welfare centre. The period of keeping children in the day-care services is not uniform in pattern and it varies from family to family depending on the family circumstances. Among 21 cases which have been investigated, 6 cases ("children") were kept, for one year, 3 were kept for two years, 3 children were kept for four years and six other children were kept for six years in the day care services. Comparatively, in majority of the cases, the family size is quite large. One family has 3 members, five families four members, six families have five

members each, 3 other families have six members each, one family has seven members, two have eight members, again one family has 9 members and finally two family have ten members each. According to Iranian size of family, the average size of the family is 5.4 and in this case, the average size of the family in 21 families goes beyond 5.4. The reason for the large size of the family, in this case, seems to be partly because people did not use family planning programme, under pressure from the social circumstances or war.

Among the 21 cases, two heads of families (father) and one mother expired. Five heads of the families are illiterate, five of them have studied upto sixth class, two fathers have education qualification between sixth to ninth class, six fathers have studied up to 9th, with diploma degrees and only one among them has higher educational qualifications. Five mothers are having education between 6th to 9th and the rest two mothers have high educational qualifications. The reason for low-education of the parents is because a number of them migrated from rural areas where much importance is not given to education. Secondly, they had low-income in their child-hood which rather discourage them from pursuing education for them. The present study has brought to light an important aspect that day-care services have led to social changes which include a shift

from westernization to islamization during the period between 79 to 89. It has also led to the change of habits and norms to a new moral code; this has also brought about modernization not in the western pattern but in the Iranian tradition. A part from this, day-care services have also brought about a linkage between the day-care services and the family and between the family and the national development.

Every research study has its limitations and the present study is no exception to it. The war between Iraq and Iran created a number of problems for the researcher to collect data. It has already been mentioned that migration of the people was one of the immediate consequences of this war. It was also found difficult to identify the houses and other related matters. However, the data were collected by applying interview method and observation method and the data have been analyzed in Delhi with the help of latest techniques in research. It is worth while to point out here that the research^{er} has paid visit to the field twice so that the changing trends in day-care services could be ascertained in detail. In spite of the limitation of the study, effort has been made to make the present study a systematic and comprehensive one.