CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

It has been discussed above the child-rearing practices adopted by the Chothe mothers in relation to such areas as pre-natal beliefs and practices, child birth and child care, mother’s foods, name-giving ceremony, period of confinement, sleeping, feeding, weaning, walking, talking, toilet training, cleanliness training, children’s play, aggression, responsibility training, sociability training, sex, expectations, identification, attitudes towards sex, sense of belongingness, obedience and techniques of socialization, and role of parents and other members of the family in taking care of children and in carrying out family responsibility. It has also been examined if there were any differences in child-rearing practices among the mothers of different educational levels. In this chapter, the work has been summarized and the conclusions drawn. The main empirical findings of the study along with certain suggestions for taking up the necessary measures for improvement and suggestions for further research have also been given in this chapter.

About the methodology, the descriptive survey method was adopted in which the relevant facts and information as it exist at present were collected from a sample of 250 mothers selected from a population of 269 mothers from nine villages through the purposive sampling. The data were collected from the
subjects during their leisure through a self-developed interview schedule consisting of 52 main and 24 sub-items.

In Chapter – II, the relevant studies on the current problem conducted in aboard and India on different areas of child-rearing practices have been reviewed. It is found that in the early period, little attention was paid to child study by social scientists, but a beginning has been made in this direction by Mead with publication of the results of her research work, such as “Coming of Age in Samoa” (1928), “Growing Up in New Guinea” (1930). In India also, various studies on child-rearing practices have been conducted since Dube (1949) till date by the researchers in the field. They studied different areas of child-rearing practices, such as pre-natal practices, child-birth and its associated rites and rituals, child care, feeding, weaning, sleeping, walking, talking, toilet training, cleanliness, reward and punishment, aspirations, etc., and different similar and dissimilar conclusions have been arrived at.

Chapter – III examines the background of child-rearing practices wherein village setting under study, basic economy, daily routine, material culture, food habits, origin of the Chothe, religion, recreation, social organization, marriage, death, and folklore of the Chothe have been analysed. Out of the nine villages, two of them are situated in the Bishnupur District and seven in the Chandel District. Agriculture is the basic economy of the villagers. Their daily routine appears to be simple one. They still use their traditional household materials side by side with modern amenities. The Chothe people are non-vegetarians and they take two meals a day. So far as their religion is concerned, almost all the Chothe people have been converted into Christianity, although they still worship their
ancestors like Pakhangba, Sanamahi, Lungchungpa. About their social organization, there are seven major clans in this society. About marriage, a boy can marry with a girl from the mother’s clan. In case of natural death, religious ceremonies are generally observed, while in the case of unnatural death, no such ceremonies are performed. Regarding festival, there are some festivals observed by the Chothes, but major festivals are --- Innapei/Bambui Rin, and Achui or Choltuk Rin, i.e., festival of unmarried daughters and festival of yeast respectively. With regard to formal education, the literacy rate among women was very low (35.27%) as against male literacy rate of 67.83 percent. It is found that the Chothe elderly persons more or less have the knowledge of some forms of folklore, such as stories, riddle, proverb, song, dance, and music, but the knowledge of these things appear to be missing among the younger generations.

From the discussion in Chapter – IV it is found that the Chothe mothers appear to be superstitious as many social taboos were observed by them during the pregnancy period. Observance of pregnancy feast; prohibitions from eating crab and paired things, from seeing monkey and dead body, from laughing at deformed persons, from sitting in the doorway, from stitching cloth, and from closing rat-holes are the practices adopted by the pregnant mothers. Almost half of the mothers consult doctors, while the majority of the illiterate mothers (72.09) do not do so during pregnancy. About sex preference, most of the mothers (53.6%) prefer boy girl, among them, 68.65 percent are illiterate mothers, 23.88 percent literate, and 7.46 percent educated.

In most cases (84%) delivery takes place at home. A child is breastfed immediately after birth if breast milk is available, but it was not so in the past
because of the belief that mother’s milk is impure. A mother begins to take ‘normal’ foods after two or three months of delivery. Name-giving ceremony is compulsorily observed in the Chothe society. The majority of the educated mothers take rest for a longer period than that of literate and illiterate mothers. Most of the illiterate mothers take the shortest period of rest after delivery.

About sleeping pattern, the Chothe mothers sleep with their children till the arrival of the next baby. Mother’s milk is considered to be the best by the Chothe mothers. Accordingly, a child is breastfed as long as milk is available in the breasts of the mothers. It is found that 146 (58.4%) mothers breastfeed their children ranging from nine to thirteen times, while the rest 104 (41.6%) breastfeed whenever their children cry. Among them the majority of the illiterate mothers (73.08%) breastfeed their children whenever they cry. About the duration of breastfeeding, 49.2 percent mothers breastfeed till pregnancy in which 79.67 percent mothers are illiterate. It reveals that illiterate mothers’ duration of breastfeeding is longer than educated (4.06%) and literate (16.26%) mothers.

The majority of the mothers (57.6%) wean their children at the age of four years of pregnancy wherein illiterate mothers comprise of 75.69 percent, educated 6.94 percent, and literate 17.36 percent. It is also found that out of the 250 mothers, 12 percent of them take 5 days to wean their children, 21.2 percent 10 days, 24.8 percent 15 days, 31.2 percent 20 days, and 10.8 percent wean by the time they begin to take solid foods. The result shows that illiterate mothers take much time to wean their children as compared to educated and literate mothers. In other words, it suggests that illiterate mothers breastfeed their
children longer than that of educated and literate mothers. About weaning technique, 57.2 percent mothers use substitute foods, while 42.8 percent mothers smear bitter substances on the nipples. Most of the educated mothers begin to replace breastmilk by other substitute foods, while most of the illiterate mothers use severe weaning techniques like smearing bitter substances on the nipples. Early weaning is not considered good by the majority of the illiterate mothers, but the majority of the educated mothers consider it good.

It is also found that, on an average, children are able to lay face downward at the age of 5 months; to sit up at 7 months; to crawl at 10 months; and to stand and walk at 1 and ½ years. With regard to talking, the ability for proper communication begins to take place by the time children are five years old.

In most cases bed wetting stops by the time children are about one and half years old. Proper toilet training seems to be provided by the educated mothers as compared to the literate and illiterate mothers. Scolding as a technique for toilet training is mostly used by the illiterate mothers. The Chothe children begin to use toilet independently at the age of about six years. It implies that toilet training starts early and ends late. Regarding cleanliness training, children begin to take care of themselves by the age of about seven or eight years. Since mothers hardly expect the children of five years old to meet the cleanliness standard by their own efforts, it may be inferred that cleanliness training seems to be provided at a low ebb in the Chothe society. Play is encouraged by the parents. Costly toys are not used by the children.
With regard to aggression, aggression seems to be discouraged by the mothers. In case of aggression towards parents, children are likely to be punished. However, 37.6 percent mothers opine that their children must learn to become sports person, while 33.2 percent want to make their children learn to fight in self defence.

The responsibility training in the Chothe society appears to be started late since the mothers do not expect responsible tasks and duties from their children till they attain the age of 8 or 9 years. As most of the mothers (70.8%) reported that their children feel shy with strangers, giving sociability training to the children seems to be poor.

Modesty in sex is very strong in the Chothe society. Just from the moment of the birth of the child, he is wrapped around with a swaddling cloth and not a single child of any age is seen without cloth. It reveals that the infantile sexual repression seems to be very prominent in this society. About expectations, almost all the mothers have desire of making their children educated ones thereby enabling them to hold higher posts.

The majority of the children seem to imitate fathers in gesture and speech and most of them are the children of illiterate mothers. On the other hand, most of the children (56.4%) better behave their mothers than that of their fathers and the majority of these children belong to the illiterate mothers. Most of the mothers (53.6%) preferred boy to girl. In the sense that, male child is the carrier of blood of the father and other practical reasons. Respect for property begins to teach to the Chothe Children from their early stage.
Concerning obedience and techniques of socialization, it is found that all the mothers consider a good child as the one who obeys his parents. In case of disobedient child, out of the 250 mothers, 206 (82.4%) mothers use negative reinforcement like threatening and scolding. Among the 129 mothers (62.62%) mother are illiterate ones; 62 (30.09%) mothers literate; and 15 (7.28%) mothers educated. The results indicate that the majority of the illiterate mother use negative reinforcement as compared to literate and educated mothers. ‘Suggestion’ as a technique of behaviour control is mostly used by the educated mothers, while a small proportion of literate and illiterate mothers use suggestion as a technique. Material reward is mostly given by the illiterate mothers, while the verbal reward by the educated and literate mothers.

With regard to the role of the parents and other members of the family in taking care of children and also in carrying out family responsibility, it is found that 61.47 percent fathers assume the main responsibility for matters relating to family affairs, while in case of mothers it is only 12 percent. But in some matters, both fathers and mothers bear responsibility. On the other hand, father-in-laws and mother-in-laws also take part in taking care of children as well as in carrying out certain family responsibilities. The data reveal that although fathers are the main responsible members of the family for taking decisions, other members of the family also take part in it. Hence, it may be inferred that child-rearing seems to be a joint effort of all the members of the family.
5.2 Main Empirical Findings

The following are the main empirical findings of the study:

1. Since all the Chothe mothers observe one social taboo or another during pregnancy period, they seem to be superstitious. Some of the beliefs and practices are: observance of pregnancy feast called ‘anhei-na’, certain prohibitions, among other things, from eating paired things, and bitter substances; from looking at monkey and dead body; from laughing at deformed person or animal; from killing; from sitting in the doorway; from stitching cloth; and also from closing up rat-holes. It is found that in many cultures of the world, a number of beliefs and practices are observed by the expectant mothers (e.g., Mead, 1953, 1954, 1961; Ammar, 1954; Sarker et al., 1955; Swaroop, 1963; Aphale, 1976; Gunadhor, 1983; Rashitombi, 1996; Kusuma, 1997).

2. Almost half of the mothers consult doctors for safe delivery, while the majority of the illiterate mothers do not do so.

3. Eighty four percent of the delivery takes place at home. Preference for such home delivery is found in the studies conducted by Aphale, 1976; Ali Hirani, 2008.

4. The belief for preservation of umbilical cord is still prevalent in the Chothe society – a culture among the Manus (Mead, 1954) and the Garos of Assam (Medhi & Marak, 2002). Placenta is, considered to be important
among the Chothes and it is buried ritually. Such afterbirth is, however, considered as bad and unlucky in the Manus society (Mead, 1954) and among the Ngoni it is buried (Read, 1968). A Chothe child is found to be breastfed by only 18 percent mothers, while the rest of the children are fed with honey or glucose or a lactating mother is engaged. Breastfeeding just after birth is encouraged by the Chothe mothers. The result is in agreement with other findings (e.g., Deshpande, 2010; Medhi & Marak, 2002), but in most of the societies, breastmilk is not given to the new born child after its birth immediately (e.g., Ali Hirani, 2008; Mead, 1954; Bhogle, 1978; Kaur et.al., 1979; Puri, 1976; Datta Banik, 1975; Swain, 1985; Saraswathi, 1978; Madhavi et.al., 1972; Bhandari & Patel, 1973; Bahl, 1979; Mudgal & Rajput, 1979; Myers, 1994).

5. After delivery, more educated and literate mother take longer rest than that of the illiterate mothers.

6. A Chothe mother sleeps with her baby till the arrival of the next baby or upto the age of about five or six years. It indicates that independent sleeping arrangement is not made by the mothers. This finding is in disagreement with the American finding in which the American mothers tend to expect infants to be more independent by putting them into separate beds, but the finding is in agreement with the sleeping pattern of the Japanese mothers (Suzuki et.al. 2000).

7. Breastfeeding is a normal practice among the Chothe mothers. The frequency of feeding in the case of 58.6 percent mothers ranges from nine
to thirteen times, while the rest 41.6 percent breastfeed whenever children cry, among them, 73.08 percent are illiterate mothers. It is also found that the duration of breastfeeding among illiterate mothers is longer than that of educated and literate mothers. Such feeding on demand is found in other societies (e.g., Ammar, 1954; Aphale, 1976; Dave et al. 1984;Dosnajh & Ghuman, 1996; Deshpande, 2010). A Chothe child is breastfed from one to three years of age or even more, like in other societies (e.g., Dube, 1949; Belavady et al. 1959; Sampath, 1964; Bailure, 1971; Aphale, 1976; Nirmala et al. 1981; Das and Ghosh, 1985; Rizvi, 1985; Medhi & Marak, 2002).

8. The majority of the mothers (57.6%) wean their children at the age of four years in which the illiterate mothers comprise of 75.69 percent; educated 6.94 percent’ and literate 17.36 percent. The data suggest that the illiterate mothers breastfeed children longer than that of educated and literate mothers. Similar result of late weaning are found in various studies (e.g., Mead, 1953, 1954; Rajalakshi, 1979). There are also societies in which early weaning takes place (e.g., Myers, 1994; Deshpande, 2010; Walia et al. 1974; Patodi et al. 1976; Saraswathi, 1978; Narayan, 1983; Dave, 1985).

9. Children begin to stand by the age of about eleven months, and walk by the time they are about fourteen months. And they are able to communicate fluently by the age about five or six years. The physical development of the majority of the Chothe children appears to be more or less conformed to the general norms of physical development.
10. Toilet training begins to take place when a child is about five or six months old and continues till the child is about four or five years old. By the time children are six years old, they begin to use toilet independently. It may, therefore, be said that toilet training takes longer time in this society. Taking longer time for toilet training is found in other studies (e.g., Ammar, 1954; Dave et al. 1984; Tiwari, 1976). It is also found that the majority of the Chothe mothers (53.6%) use scolding as a technique of toilet training.

11. Children begin to cleanse their teeth by the time they are about six or seven years old. Among Oraon children, children do not clean their teeth upto the age of eighth years (Narayan, 1983). On the other hand, children begin to brush their teeth independently between the third and fifth year (Aphale, 1976).

12. Play is found to be encouraged by the parents. This result is contradictory to that of the finding of Myers (1994) in which in Latin America play is discouraged by the parents.

13. Aggression in any form is discouraged by the parents. When there is any undesirable aggressive behaviour, ‘explaining’ is mostly used by the educated mothers, while ‘punishment’ by the illiterate mothers. In Tiwari’s study (1976), upper and middle class mothers were not permissive towards the aggressive behaviour, while the lower class mothers were highly permissive.
14. Providing responsibility and sociability training to the children seems to be at a very low point in the Chothe society.

15. Infantile sexual repression and modesty in sex seems to be very prominent in this society since children are prohibited from doing anything relating to sex.

16. Almost all the mothers have high educational aspirations of their children. Among the mothers of different educational levels, the educational aspiration of the illiterate mother is found to be higher than that of educated and literate mothers. This result is not in agreement with the findings of Muthayya (1972) in which he found that the higher the socio-economic status of the parents, the higher the level of educational aspiration of sons and daughters. Similarly, the Santhals who were mostly illiterates did not feel the necessity of education (Mandal, 1977).

17. Most of the children of illiterate mothers imitate their fathers in gestures and speech, but they better behave their mothers.

18. Most of the mothers prefer male child to female child. Such a preference for a male child is found in various studies (e.g., Gunadhor, 1983; Gurumurthy, 1984; Sinha, 1984; Dosanjh and Ghuman, 1996; Kusuma, 1997).

19. Respect for property is taught to the children from the very beginning and no intentional theft is permitted.
20. A good child is the one who obeys his parents. In case of disobedient behaviour, both negative and positive reinforcements are used. The negative reinforcement, i.e., threatening and scolding, is used by the majority of illiterate mothers, while most of the educated mothers use positive reinforcement, i.e., suggestion, as techniques of socialization. The use of negative reinforcements is found in other studies (e.g., Ames and Randeri, 1965; Reichel, 1979; Aphale, 1976; Tiwari, 1976; Grantham et al., 1982; Medhi and Marak, 2002).

21. Father is responsible for matters relating to family affairs, while the mother assumes the main responsibility of taking care of children. However, father also takes part in taking care of children indirectly. It appears that taking care of children is the joint responsibility of all the members of the family.

5.3 Conclusion

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions may be inferred:

1. The Chothe mothers appear to be superstitious as they generally observe a number of social taboos during pregnancy period. It is also found that more than half of the mother population (51.6%) did not consult doctors for safe delivery during pregnancy; of them, the majority was the illiterate mother (72.09%). Lack of education among the women may probably be the basic reason for such a state of affairs. It is evident that the literacy
rate of women was 35.27 percent. To create awareness among the women would help improve the situation.

2. The result of the study indicates that in most cases (84%), the delivery took place at home, which may be said to be a risky delivery. The basic reasons would be poor economic condition of the mothers, lack of good hospital facilities, and lack of awareness among the people. It is, therefore, imperative to improve the socio-economic condition of the tribal people and to provide the necessary medical facilities.

3. It is encouraging to find that a child was breastfed just after its birth if milk is available in the breasts of the mother, although it was not in the past. Efforts should be made to make the mothers continue such a practice through mass awareness campaign.

4. No nutritive foods were found to be fed to the mothers after delivery, and they took ‘simple’ foods for sometime. Efforts should be made to make the mothers aware of taking nutritious foods after the birth of the child.

5. In most cases late weaning was a normal practice among the Chothe mothers. A child was breastfed as long as breastmilk was available or till the arrival of the next child. In this context, we may examine a four American hypothesis (Protho, 1967). First “Early weaning produces less emotional upset than late weaning”. The result suggests that since the majority of the Chothe children weaned at the age of about three or four years, it may be taken as late weaning, a child would have experienced
greater emotional upset. Another second hypothesis is: “Regular feeding produces less upset, while irregular feeding produces more upset”. Here, those mothers who breastfeed without the demand of the children may be taken as regular feeding, while those who breastfeed whenever the child cries may be taken as irregular feeding. In this case, the results on breastfeeding indicate that altogether 146(58.4%) mothers breastfed in the range of nine to thirteen times a day, these feedings may, therefore, be taken as regular; while the feeding of the rest of the mothers (41.6%) who fed whenever a child cries as irregular feeding. If so, some of the Chothe children who were breastfed whenever they cry would have experienced greater emotional upset at the time of weaning. The third hypothesis is: “The use of severe weaning technique produces more upset than the use of mild weaning technique”. If the Chothe mothers’ smearing bitter substance on their nipples is considered as severe weaning technique, then more than 40 percent of the children might have experienced more emotional upset. The fourth hypothesis is: “The children of the decisive mothers who could wean within one to three days would experience lesser upset than those children of the indecisive mothers who could wean over a longer period of time”. It is found that all the Chothe mothers could not wean their children within one to three days; they took five to twenty days in weaning their children. So, they are not decisive. Hence, it may, therefore, be assumed that all the Chothe children might have the probability of experiencing greater emotional upset. The results reveal that late weaning, irregular feeding, use of severe weaning technique, and indecisive weaning occur to the majority of the illiterate mothers as compared to the educated and literate mothers, it is always desirable to
create awareness among the illiterate mothers about what ought to be done at the time of weaning.

6. Providing cleanliness training to the Chothe children at the early stage seems to be very poor. Almost all the mothers do not expect their children to take care of cleanliness by themselves till they attain the age of seven or eight years. Such an attitude needs to be changed among the mothers and they should pay attention to the cleanliness of their children from the early stage.

7. It is encouraging to find that play is encouraged by the majority of the mothers (81%). Recognizing the enthusiasm for play of the mothers, efforts may be made to promote games and sports in this society.

8. Responsibility and sociability training seems to be imparted to the Chothe children at a very low ebb. These should be reinforced.

9. The infantile sexual repression appears to be very prominent in the Chothe society. From the perspective of Freud’s psychology of unconscious, it is always questionable whether such a repression would cause various psychological problems among the Chothe children when they become adult. The attention of the psychologists and psychiatrists is called for.

10. The educational aspiration of the Chothe mothers is encouraging. This should be reinforced.
11. Although the majority of the mothers prefer male child to female child, no discrimination between male and female child is found. This is a positive attitude among the mothers towards male and female children and this should be encouraged.

12. The study finds that most of the mothers use the negative reinforcement in disciplining their children. This would not be a desirable practice because of various psychological problems which are likely to be developed in the children in future. Such a negative reinforcement is found to be used by the illiterate mothers mostly as compared to educated and literate mothers. It is, therefore, imperative to create awareness among the mothers the way in which how to discipline children.

In this connection if an American hypothesis that “Negative reinforcement produces low conscience, while positive high conscience”, is accepted then the majority of the Chothe children would have developed low or intermediate conscience as most of the mothers use the negative reinforcements. Another research needs to confirm the current result.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

There are various area of research in the field of child-rearing practices in which research work can be undertaken at both micro and macro level by adopting
longitudinal or cross-sectional approach, case study approach, correlational approach, growth study, etc. In the light of the present study, the following areas of research may be examined:

1. In the current study, some areas of child-rearing practices adopted by the tribal mothers during the infancy period, i.e., 0-5 years, were examined. The sample consisted of only 250 mothers inhabited in nine villages in two districts of Manipur. The similar study may be conducted in a larger population covering infancy and childhood period and wider geographical areas.

2. The present problem adopts cross-sectional approach; but longitudinal approach research may be undertaken in some selected areas, e.g., growth and development, such as physical growth, mental, emotional, social, etc., growth and development, over a period of time, say, 0-3 years and above.

3. A cross-cultural study of child-rearing practices between tribal and non-tribal people may be undertaken.

4. Four American hypotheses mentioned above may be tested to examine the extent of acceptance and rejection, i.e., (1) “Early weaning produces less emotional upset than late weaning”. (2) “Regular feeding produces less upset, while irregular feeding produces more upset”. (3) “The use of severe weaning techniques produces more upset than the use of mild weaning techniques” and
(4) "The children of the decisive mothers wean within one to three days would experience lesser upset than those children of the indecisive mothers who could wean over a longer period of time". For testing these hypotheses, one needs to examine the feeding practices, such as weather the mothers breastfeed regularly or whenever a child cries; and weaning practices, such as whether weaning takes place early or late; whether the mothers use severe or mild weaning technique; and whether mothers could wean within one to three days (decisive) or whether mothers take longer period of time in weaning (indecisive).

5. Another area of research may be: correlation between the use of positive and negative reinforcements and development of high, low and intermediate conscience. In this context, the American hypothesis given above may be tested, i.e., "Positive reinforcements develop high conscience, while negative reinforcements produce low conscience". In such a study, the longitudinal research would yield interesting results.

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