CHAPTER - I

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Whether leaving the home for the work place actually affects children and their social development adversely has been a topic of lively debate in the public arena and among researchers. In India, most of the people believe that “Working mothers are bad for the development of children.” They believe that “young children learn more if their mothers stay at home with them.”

Does maternal employment actually impede children’s development? Researches conducted over 30 years by Hoffman (1989) comes to the conclusion that there are no systematic negative effects of maternal employment on children’s development. However, both positive and negative association with maternal employment have been found and children’s gender, age, social class and family composition have been relevant to the strength & direction of the results.

Occupational Status and Anxiety :

One area of development that has recently been the focus of research is that of anxiety. In today’s hectic life everyone experiences it. It is very important personality factor having relationship with parenting practices. Employed mothers with young children feel anxiety because of role-overload, separation, stress and work strain. Therefore, it is assumed that mother’s anxiety may be one of the factors which affect parenting.
Occupational Status & Social Maturity of Children:

Maternal employment is typically accompanied by increased responsibilities and sometimes stress, especially for mothers of very young children (Barch et al. 1987). These responsibilities may compete with the child for the mother’s attention and affect the quality of their interaction. Thus, maternal employment can adversely affect the quality of care that employed mothers provide to their young children. Child’s age and sex are other variables which are responsible for apparent effects of maternal employment, specifically, boys are more often adversely affected by maternal employment than girls (Bronfenbrenner & Crouter, 1982). There are theoretical reasons for expecting that the quality of the care, children of employed mothers receive; will determine whether the impact of maternal employment will be adverse or beneficial. The impact will be assessed through social maturity scale in the present study. Since social maturity scale covers various types of development of young children i.e. social, physical & motor, intellectual and emotional; will enable to assess effect of occupational status of mother on the social maturity of a child.

Justification of the Problem:

In this section researcher clarifies the reasons to include the following variables in the study:
1. **Social Maturity:**

Everyone knows that child does not take shape in vaccum. The social conditions, events, ethos and milieu influence his life. Even the blind faiths, superstitions & discriminations also adversely affect him. The political, economic and religious conditions of the society are also hard realities in the child’s life & he is affected in some way or the other. The present scientific age and technological changes have also influenced child’s mental, social and psychological make-up. Therefore, we have to study him in the social context. Mohanty (1980), reported that social, economic, religious and scientific forces play significant roles in the development of a child and drives him to individuality.

Each child is unique one because of interaction of nature and nurture but evidence shows that children follow a relatively similar sequences of growth and development. Devadas (1991) stated that “maturation proceeds in an orderly and progressive sequences in the child. The growth of the organism follows a natural sequence which is comparable in all the children.” Gesell and Ilg (1943) who developed norms, noted :-

The child’s personality is a product of slow and gradual growth. His nervous system matures by stages and in natural
sequences. He sits before he stands; he babbles before he talks; he fabricates before he tells the truth; he draws a square; he is selfish before he is altruistic; he is dependent on others before he achieves dependence on self. All his abilities are subject to laws of growth.

Hence, it clarifies that maturation responses are in sequences and accomplishment of each step sets the stage for the next phase of development. Since development does not proceed in haphazard manner but in an orderly pattern, it can be studied and recorded for the guidance of parents, teachers and child development personnels.

Likewise the physical maturation child shows an evidence of sequential social maturation (as he responds to his day to day demands placed before him by others.) which can be measured in terms of social maturity with the help of social maturity scale. Crow & Crow (1959) said that “a child is considered socially mature when his responses to a situation are appropriate to his development and adequate to meet the demands of situation within the frame work of the societies. In other words socially matured individual meets the requirements that society has
set for his behaviour in a variety of social situation." Social development always mean the development of the individual in those traits that facilitate social interaction and make him a “social being” who can live normally as a member of society and enjoy the company of other persons who usually acts so as to further the social welfare (Hurlock, 1989).

Many psychologists consider that social maturity is an inevitable pre-condition of the healthy community. Without adequate social maturity one can not be a contributive member to a community. The ability to live with others or get along with others is a core of an individual’s happiness and success. Thus, without social maturity a person cannot enjoy his life in the community. He will face difficulty not only in establishing the relations but in social interactions as well. This situation may lead him to frustration, sorrow, guilt, anxiety, social deprivation and finally disintegration. Various observations pointed out that high intellectual level is not sufficient to be a contributive member in the community. Social attainment includes all the developments in an organised form. Therefore, the attainment of social maturity directly turns into the application and a person becomes successful at personal level. Social maturity is a requisite for harmonious adjustment everywhere.
The term social maturity or social competence is interrelated with the terms social role playing, developmental tasks, social interaction or social behaviour, social adjustment, social development and socialization (Raval, 1970). Socialization is a very complex process which is affected by various environmental and genetic factors. During the childhood parent-child interactions occur in the course of child-rearing is significant influential factor of social development. The great psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud said that “child rearing practices have considerable influence on the development of the personality of the child.”

Social development and social competence are the results of maturational readiness of the individual. One cannot ignore the possibility of individual differences and the cultural differences too. To achieve social competence and to utilize it in the social adjustment in healthy and socially acceptable way is a universal human attribute. The achievement of social competence can be measured through the social maturity scale. If the backwardness or slowness of social development is detected in the early years then, it is relatively easy to recover the development.

For the present study social maturity scale of Raval (1970) has been chosen to assess the developmental status of children. The scale closely follows Doll’s social maturity scale. It provides age norms for urban and rural children of Gujarat. Scale covers five major dimensions of
development such as intellectual, emotional, motor, sensory and language development and twelve behavioral categories like:

- Self help general
- Self help eating
- Self help dressing
- Locomotion
- Occupation
- Communication
- Self direction
- Socialization
- Self awareness and self perception
- Contact with environment
- Emotional expression
- Moral and religious aspects

In her scale, she pointed out the evolution in behaviour is considered social maturity. Social maturity therefore is a sequential series of behavioral accomplishment, which includes:

- From dependency to independency
- From irresponsibility to responsibility
- From incompetence to competence
- From self-centrism to altruism
- From fancy to fact

Social maturity reflects that it is an essence of integration of various development. Phatak (1983) in her paper “Social maturity of children in India” realises that in evaluating a child for his developmental status is not enough just to access his body growth and its functional efficiency. It is also not enough to add the assessment of his mental performance. Some information about how far the child has attained independence in self-care and learnt to live in his society is needed. Such information about the child certainly helps to improve our understanding of the child. The three aspects of developmental status namely motor, mental and social by putting together in a meaningful way are bound to improve the handling of a child for his welfare. Since social maturity scale covers various developments, the investigator finds it the most suitable scale for the assessment of children.

A survey of Indian studies on the social maturity by Gururaja (1981) also indicated that very few Indian studies are available in this area. Consequently, further investigation is needed in this field. It has also been observed that social maturity as such has not been adequately explored by the social scientist, as it is being utilized by the clinical
scientists & counsellors. Thus this area needs further exploration by social scientist.

As a result in the present study researcher aims at studying the social maturity of children of working and non-working mothers of urban and rural area in relation to their anxiety in rearing the child.

2. **Working and Non-Working Mothers**

The justification for the selection of children of working mothers is to answer various common beliefs which are prevalent in connection with working mothers and their children in our society. For example -

- Children of working mothers are sufferers.
- Their development lacks in various areas like physical, emotional & intellectual etc.
- They are considered as deprived children and so on.

The above beliefs have prompted the interest of investigator to undertake the present applied research to study the comparison of social maturity between the children of working and non-working mothers in relation to their anxiety, with a view to clarifying various common beliefs and to change the public opinion regarding working mothers and the children.
The another reason to select the present problem is to contribute a systematic study on psycho-social issues of women, which is one of the growing areas of research in the social sciences. The concern for women’s development and the focus on women’s issues has reached a central place in the national policies and strategies of development in India.

Women’s studies as a field of study itself has recently emerged and is now gaining considerable momentum. The incorporation of women’s studies perspectives into different disciplines, specially in the humanities and social sciences will serve as a powerful motivation and provide content for policy thrusts such as promotion of Human Rights, Population Education, Adult Education etc. Women’s studies should not be narrowly defined as studies about women or information about women, but be viewed as a critical instrument for social and academic development (UGC, 1986).

However, in the area of ‘Women’s Studies’ many aspects of working women have been undertaken uptill now with relation to her place in society such as her role conflicts, role overloading, self perception, self esteem etc. Only a few studies have been undertaken in the area of mother’s employment and its effect on social maturity of a child. The study of child rearing practices and their consequences for
social and personality development have continued to be an area of both theoretical and research interest.

In the past few decades millions of women in India and other developing countries have been involved in earning. For the aforesaid various factors could be responsible such as,

- Technological advancement
- Women education
- Industrial revolution
- Desire to maintain high standard of living
- Nuclear family system
- Decreased birth rate
- Equal opportunity in every field of life
- Development of positive self-perception
- Changes in role perception
- Self actualization
- Financial insecurity, and
- Wide variety of exposure of mass media.

Mostly observed; on the one hand employment provides economic independence and comfort to the mothers on the other it creates new
problems like role-overload and role-conflict situations. They have to devote much longer hours to their jobs. As a result the time available for child care is reduced. In Sriram's study (1994), "40% of mothers stated that child care was a constraint to the work. There is a little doubt that mothers are over-worked and exhausted. The burden, coupled with anxiety about their inability to provide good care as expected, often prevents them from enjoying the relationship with the child." Wanne (1993), reported that "In India mother plays a dominant role in social development. They believe that child care is their forte and feel guilty if they are unable to fulfill any tasks related to the care and well being of their children be it feeding, behaviour and discipline or academic achievement as validated through primary studies on urban and rural women." Here researches reveal that because of multidimensional roles a mother become tired, unable to give proper time to their young children and thus, experiences guilt and anxiety.

In the present study researcher will probe into that whether occupational status of a mother really affect social maturity of a child adversely.

3. **Anxiety**:

Anxiety is a perennial part of everyday life. It provides an essential spur to achieve one's goal (Spielberger, 1975). Invariably it is
experienced by all including working and non-working women of rural and urban area. However, when the level of anxiety increases above normal, it becomes an unpleasant emotional state which causes tension, apprehension, nervousness, worry and different physiological manifestations like high blood pressure, sweating, rapid heart beating, restlessness and so on (Spielberger and Rickman, 1990).

As mentioned earlier working and non-working mothers are likely to suffer from anxiety due to clashes with social and cultural demand, pressure related to various roles, role-conflict, separation from child, during working hours in the case of working mothers. Whereas in non-working mothers it may be due to economic dependence, lack of self-confidence and self esteem, socio-economic insecurity and so on. These reasons may lead to increased blood pressure, palpitation, restlessness, fear, depression, dullness, deterioration of psycho-motor activities and neglect of herself and development of her child.

Undoubtedly, anxiety has close relationship with task performance, which influences workability of mothers. Since, mothers are intimate to the child, her anxiety influences workability as mothers and the child rearing practices. According to Sears (1957) "child rearing is a continuous process. Every moment of a child’s life that he spends in contact with his parents has some influence on both his present behaviour and his
potentialities for future actions." Varma (1990) has pointed out in her study that "parents anxiety should also be related to their child rearing attitudes. But no specific attempt has been made to study this relationship." If a mother has low anxiety her motivation will be low, moderate anxiety is good for motivation whereas high anxiety is not good for motivation as well as cause of disorganisation in work.

Looking at the importance in this perspective anxiety has been selected as a variable for the present investigation.

4. **Rural & Urban Areas of Residence:**

Rural and urban area of living is also considered as a variable in this study. Because researcher thinks that child rearing practices are quite different in these two types of environment. In the western countries demarcation between urban and rural area is not conspicuous. It has very thin difference whereas in India, rural-urban diversity is obvious and observable. The Indian village people have intimate, face to face contact, and mutual social support. They are more traditional and conservative and mostly live in joint family. A city on the otherhand is largely a secondary group society. There are varieties of subgroups in the city and they are not characterized by intimate face to face contact. The urban child mostly live in nuclear family, thus he is more autonomous in his behaviour, and urban parents are more permissive than the rural parents (Kuppuswamy, 1984).
5. **Sex & Age of a Child:**

By and large social maturity of a child is influenced by various environmental components. Studying them collectively is not only difficult but impossible (Phatak, 1993). Out of those components the most prominent two influential variables have been taken into the consideration.

(i) **Sex of a child**

(ii) **Age of a child**

Sex is a very prominent socio-cultural variable in the Indian society. Sex-segregated norms are the practices amongst all sections of India, irrespective of caste, class and ethnic communities, and this is common in rural as well as urban communities. A girl child is discriminated in education, clothing, nutrition, health care and general upbringing, right from her early childhood (Bhadra, 1999). Due to differences in attitude of the parents and difference due to experiential exposure the variable becomes very important for the research particularly in Indian society. At the same time in Indian situation there is a vast difference between the indicators of socialization. So the researcher has opted for this variable.

With advancement of age a child shows developmental attainment. Therefore, age of a child is thought to be an influential variable in the
attainment of social maturity. By studying this particular variable researcher may identify the critical age period when attainment of social maturity is faster.

Relevance of Study:

The present study has relevance to the Indian society, especially it concentrates on the development of Indian children. Children are the most valuable assets of the world. They are the future foundation of the mankind. They, being an important human resource of progress of our country requires researches from various angles. The vast treasure of information hidden in our diversified population of children needs to be discovered for the betterment of the country’s future citizens and also for understanding the Indian child. The present study is a humble attempt to disperse knowledge in this direction. Undoubtedly it will contribute thought provoking information about working and non-working mothers and early childhood development of the urban and rural children and gender difference.

The results obtained from the research can be helpful in planning a good child guidance programme, parental guidance programme, child welfare programme and counselling.
Attainment of social maturity may be the outcome of biological, socio-cultural and environmental factors. The present study focuses on the following aspects:

The main focus is on attainment of social maturity by the children. This may be influenced by such variables like rural and urban residence of mother, their anxiety levels, the age and sex of children etc.

The effects of the selected independent variables refer to above have been studied in a manner so as to find out their single effects and also their effects in combinations. The specific objectives have been stated in the chapter on methodology.

The present research is also devoted to throw some light on some of the beliefs prevailing in our society, the beliefs pertain to the adverse effect on social maturity of working mothers. The belief is also pertaining to facilitation effect of urban residence compare to rural residence on the development of social maturity.

It is therefore to be ascertained as to whether working mothers have a higher anxiety level than non-working mothers. It is established that working and non-working mothers do differ in respect of their anxiety levels. The second issue relates to the differential impact if any, of differing levels of anxiety on the attainment of social maturity by children.
Another important issue relates to rural-urban influence on social maturity. It is commonly held that urban background is more conducive for developing social maturity or competence in comparison with rural background. The latter is generally viewed as relatively intellectually impoverished. The present research therefore, attempts to examine the impact of rural/urban residence on attainment of social competence.

The status of working i.e. working or non-working of mothers is also considered to be an important parameter in determining social competence of children. There seems to be involved in this issue both positive and negative aspects for both working and non-working mothers. It can therefore be tackled only through empirical research.

It would be quite interesting to examine differences in attainment of social competence due to sex and age of children. These two variables have been included to study their impact on social competence.

Finally, the interplay of several variables of the types included in the present investigation might prove to be more influential in determining social competence of children than each variable taken singly. In this investigation the impact of interaction of several variables is examined on the attainment of social competence.