Chapter

INTRODUCTION

"Trailing clouds of glory do they (children) come from God."

Wordsworth

Children give us real happiness in life. They add zest to our tired lives. They diminish our worries and light up our dismal worlds. They give us a prototype of human evolution—by studying children the mysteries of the species in general can be unlocked. Children—how to care for them, how to rear them, how to convert them into adults have always been of concern to parents in particular and to society in general.

The child’s first teachers are his parents. To impart only goodness to one’s children is the motivating force in the mind of parents as they bring up their young ones. It’s a superhuman task; still the parents do justice to this. It starts right from infancy—the anxiety to care, to nurture and to develop them for tomorrow’s young men and women with healthy minds and bodies.
1.0 Background of the Problem

It is in some ways unfortunate that human growth begins with infancy for there is no area in psychology more bedevilled with controversy and dispute than the psychology of infants. Mussen (1983) suggests that the disputation perhaps is inevitable as adults have long forgotten their infancy and do not know what it is like to be a baby. Thus the knowledge of infancy depends very heavily on influences, analogies, hypotheses and more or less educated guesses.

However research has succeeded in establishing the impact of early experiences on development. Early years have generally been regarded as the foundation age. Many psychologists believe that the early years are the most critical periods in setting the pattern for personal and social adjustments.

Childcare has emerged in recent years as a major area of concern in India. The problem assumes greater significance amidst the last century—a century which has seen marked changes in the family set-up, role relationships and related factors.

For a long time the family has been the focal agency for the care and nurture of young children in Indian society. In the traditional middle class families, the role of men as breadwinners and women as housekeepers and caretakers of children were well defined and exclusive. Besides the mother as child caregiver, familiar support in child rearing was embedded in the socio-cultural tradition thereby holding childcare as a joint responsibility. Forces such as industrialisation, migration from rural to urban areas and high cost of living have resulted in the break-up of joint families. The role played by the loosening of kinship ties—increasing individualistic values and
unwillingness of young couple to accept ‘favours’ and help for child care cannot also be ignored completely. Changes in living patterns, financial and residential restrictions to support an additional member have adversely affected the interdependence within the social system to meet childcare demands.

The increasing pressure on mothers to search for employment outside the home in the face of economic hardships has further aggravated the problem of childcare. Moreover, in a country like India, where substitute care has become increasingly scarce and expensive more and more parents will have to look after their children themselves. Many fathers have taken on a significant share of nurturing responsibilities of their children.

Although fathers have always played an important role in children’s lives, it was not until recently that psychologists began to study the relationship between fathers and children and the ramifications of paternal involvement in the lives of children. Thus the scientific interest in the topic of fatherhood was triggered in part by changes in the traditional roles assumed by men and women and the policy implications inherent in such change. Psychology now knows enough about human relationships to state without qualification that man who fails to establish cordial relations between himself and his child before the age of two to three has already lost out. Pilling and Pringle (1978) give some indication that an affectionate but hardly ever at home father is insufficient for the development of good adjustment particularly for boys.

The recent years have seen a marked decline in the strict gender division of labour within a family to an arrangement where the roles of mothers and fathers overlap to a great extent. Modern fathers like mothers have multiple roles of provider, protector, nurturer, companion, disciplinarian,
Fathers and instillers of societal norms. A recently coined term 'co-parents' is often used to describe the situation where mothers and fathers share equally the responsibilities of maintaining a family.

Father's involvement in child rearing is not only a positive tone for him and his children but for the mother as well. The new-born baby comes into the family routine breaking hours of sleep, keeping his mother everlastingly busy and frequently tired. Even the most organised and efficient person needs help at one time or another in taking care of a baby. There are thousands of working women who feel that best years of their working lives are wasted on nappy changing and preparing feeds while their husbands were hidden behind the paper or glued onto the T.V. sets. Hence the fathers who are psychologically ready to play his role can do a great deal to give his wife the very desirable peace of mind by sharing the responsibility.

Family, whether it is nuclear or extended is the preferable unit for nurturing and socialising the child. Throughout the early years, the child spends most of its waking hours in and around the home than it does anywhere else. Not surprisingly therefore the influence of home is of critical importance in a child's psychological development. Research on family and child rearing styles report that they have a powerful impact on children's personalities. Mussen et al. (1984) and Berk (1996) are of the view that family plays a crucial role in the development of personality. Personality is a blend of innate temperament with the pattern of stimulation and care the child receives from the parents and others. Children show individual differences right from an early stage. Mussen et al. (1984) are of the view that the individual differences are believed to be the root of adult personality.
Temperament is the beginning point or the base on which everything must be built. It is the raw material from which originates the individual's behaviour. Each child has his or her own distinct genetically based temperament, which permeates virtually every aspect of the person's developing personality.

When parents accommodate their child rearing expectations to their offsprings' temperamental style, there will be a 'goodness of fit' or a more 'harmonious fit' between them with good outcomes for both child and family. Thus for the future personality, which is laid down in the first few years of life, the child needs not just a mother who will care for him lovingly, he needs a father who tries to understand and satisfy his needs too. There can be little doubt that a relationship with two concerned adults who have somewhat differing experiences is of benefit of the child. The babies have their own built in computers, very quickly they learn, that being nursed is great and they enjoy the difference of being handled by their fathers.

Adults and other children relieve the infants' distress and provide opportunities for interaction and as a result infants develop a special emotional relationship to the human beings who care for them—a relation commonly called attachment. Parents and infants form emotional bonds of attachment with each other. Fathers can serve as attachment figures for their babies. There is perhaps no mystique of motherhood that man cannot master except for the physical realities of pregnancy, delivery and breast-feeding. Like mothers, fathers who are sensitive and caregiving predicts secure attachment—an affect that becomes stronger with the more time they spend with their babies.
Such an investigation as this makes the fathers aware of their role or their importance in a child’s life, especially in the early years. It can help the fathers to consider caring of their children as important to them as their jobs and careers. They may also learn that a fair division of labour in the household is thus important for a husband-wife relationship to be complete and equal.

Although the media and many mothers tend to blame the fathers, mothers may be as responsible for the unequal distribution of labour as fathers. According to Pollack and Grossman (1985) and Kranichfeld (1987), many mothers assume the status of the family childcare authority. They serve as a kind of gatekeeper and judge of the fathers’ performance, forbidding or criticising certain behaviours, permitting and praising others. Thus the fathers’ limited involvement with the babies may be a joint result of maternal and paternal preferences.

The present study will aim at the mothers who are to be made more aware of the importance of the father and what they can do in child caring. Because of fathers’ involvement, the mother herself receives reassurance from her husband’s support so that he ‘reinforces’ not only the child’s, but her own feelings of adequacy and self-esteem thus in turn increases her confidence in mothering.

Considering the increased importance of awareness and need of fathers in involving themselves in baby care, the investigator has undertaken the present study to analyse the paternal involvement in various perspectives. It looks imperative to probe into the impacts of the changes and views upon the
fathers' involvement in baby care and their influence on babies' behavioural profile, attachment patterns and mothers' behaviour patterns.

1.1 The Present Study – A Preview

A great deal of research in child development has focused only on relationship between mother and child and has neglected the role of fathers which is very essential and as important as the mothers role in shaping the personality of the child.

Examination of the role of fathers in infants' life is new material for the field of early social development. While fathers like siblings, peers and other adults have been acknowledged being physically present in infancy—their importance as socially interactive beings has only recently been appreciated. Research in the areas of mother-infant interaction, attachment to the mother figures and differentiation from the mother have all stressed the importance of the mother-infant dyad, to the virtual exclusion of all other interactive systems. Hence the present study is undertaken to find out behavioural profile, attachment patterns and mothers' behaviour patterns in relation to fathers' involvement in baby care.

1.2 Scope of the Study

With an increasing awareness of the significance of the early years in human development and increasing conviction in the world of investing in potential human capital the perspective on infancy and infants is changing around the world.
Mussen *et al.* (1984) give the most significant development in the field of human infancy as the dramatic rise of interest in the causes consequences and measurements of stable individual differences in human infancy, especially those individual differences that are believed to be at the root of adult personality.

There are a good number of studies in other countries regarding the developments of attachment, behavioural profile and mothers' behaviour patterns. But they were found to vary with regard to the focus of the research, type of sample, methods of collection, scoring and analysis of data.

On the other hand, there are scarcely any studies conducted in India regarding the importance of fathers role on child care activities and baby's behavioural profile except for a few studies like “Fathers’ involvement in baby care and baby’s behavioural profile” (Jaisree, 1991) and “Inter-relationship between the infants’ behavioural profile and their caregivers’ behaviour patterns” (Varghese, 1994) conducted in the Department of Home Sciences, St. Teresa’s College, Ernakulam. Attachment patterns of infants is another area in which Indian studies are quite inadequate except for one study conducted by Indulekha (1977) on the effect of age, sex and environments of infants on their visual and attachment behaviour, behavioural profile and mothers’ behaviour patterns. Gopinath (1994) has also carried out a study on inter-relationship between attachment behaviour of infants and their mothers’ behaviour patterns.

Caring of children is an area which has not been explored extensively. The problem of baby care assumes greater significance amidst the new century—a century which has seen the rise of nuclear families, migration to
cities in search of a better livelihood, lack of domestic help in urban homes have all directly affected fathers involvement in baby care.

The study assumes greater significance in Kerala—a state which has achieved full literacy. Women of Kerala seem to be breaking the social and psychological barrier to assume new responsibilities outside the home. More and more women seem to enter the field of employment which in turn shows the high priority given to education and career in the state. Substitute care has become increasingly scarce and expensive in the state. Thus familial support in child rearing, especially from the father, could ameliorate the severity of the problem.

The concept of paternity leave has nearly got sanctioned in most of the Indian companies which again highlights the importance of emotional and mental support which man can provide.

All the above factors have prompted the investigator to take up the present study which will throw light on different ways in which the involvement of fathers in the family can be intensified.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The present investigation aims at elucidating the relationship between fathers' involvement in baby care and baby's behavioural profile, reaction patterns, intensity of reaction, attachment patterns, and mothers' behaviour patterns.
1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 To elucidate the relationship between the fathers' involvement in baby care, baby's behavioural profile, reaction pattern, intensity of reaction, attachment patterns and mothers' behaviour patterns.

1.4.2 To assess the impact of

(1) age—(a) paternal age, and (b) maternal age;
(2) educational status—(a) paternal educational status, and (b) maternal educational status;
(3) status of income;
(4) gap between marriage and birth of the child under study;
(5) nature of infant care provided;
(6) gender of the infants;
(7) ordinal position of the infant in the family;
(8) type of family;
(9) working status of the parents; and
(10) gap between the child under study and the younger or older sibling

on all the study variables, namely (a) fathers' involvement in baby care, (b) baby's behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers' behaviour patterns.

1.4.3 To understand the study variables, namely fathers' involvement in baby care, attachment patterns of infants and mothers' behaviour patterns which make significant contribution to the dependent variable, namely baby's behavioural profile.

1.4.4 To find out the age of the infant at which the attachment patterns of infants show conspicuous changes and also to find out the age groups having similar characteristics regarding attachment patterns of infants.
1.5 The Areas of the Study – The Concepts Defined

1.5.1 Baby

The term in the present study is synonymous with infant. It is applied to those children in the age range of six months to 1½ years (18 months).

1.5.2 Baby care

It is providing necessary attention to the baby—body warmth and contact, being held and carried about, being rocked and patted, providing physical care and protection, being made clean, comfortable, being played with and also responding to the baby’s signalling behaviours such as cries, smiles, reaching and clinging.

1.5.3 Fathers’ involvement in baby care

The intensity which include the frequency and the quality which embody the consistency of the fathers getting involved in the day to day baby care activities are taken into consideration in the present study. The higher scores obtained show maximum involvement of fathers in the baby care activities and lower scores obtained show minimum involvement of fathers in the baby care activities.

1.5.4 Behavioural profile or temperament

The present study considers the view of Thomas, Chess et al. (1964, 1971). They have given nine dimensions of behavioural profile. The grouping of the nine categories into two sub-divisions as reaction pattern and intensity of reaction by Indulekha (1977) is also used in the present study.

Under reaction pattern, six dimensions, namely, quality of mood, rhythmicity, approach withdrawal, adaptability, distractibility and persistence
which enable to differentiate the responses in terms of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ patterns, are included. Under ‘intensity of reaction’, three dimensions, namely, activity level, threshold of responsiveness and vigour of activity are included which help to describe the baby’s behaviour as intense and ‘mild’.

The high scores of behavioural profile indicate an easy temperament and low scores point to a difficult temperament among infants.

1.5.5 Attachment patterns

The patterns of attachment formulated by Ainsworth (1972) are taken into consideration in the present investigation. They include securely attached infants who accept and initiate interaction and proximity with the mother during play, show approach or greeting behaviour during reunion and clearly prefer mother to a stranger, insecurely avoidant infants, according to the authors tend not to solicit interaction with the mother during play, may show little or no separation distress and tend to avoid their mothers upon reunion and insecurely resistant infants during reunion tend to couple their desire for proximity to the mother with conspicuous anger towards her.

In the present investigation, two patterns of attachment were identified which include securely attached group who show mild protest following mother’s departure, seeks her when she returns and are easily comforted by her. The second include the insecurely attached group in which the infants are seriously distressed, show protest following mothers’ departure and cling on to her when she returns.

The high scores of attachment patterns indicate security in the infants attachment relationships and low scores reveal insecurity in their attachment relationships.
1.5.6 Mothers' behaviour patterns

Indulekha (1977) has defined mothers' behaviour patterns as the availability of the mother or caregiver to the infant, her contacts (visual, tactual and verbal) with the infant, the frequency and intensity of their occurrence in day to day situations. The present investigation also considers the same definition.

The high scores reveal a positive behaviour pattern of mothers towards the infant when compared to low scores, which indicate poor frequency and intensity of mothers' behaviour pattern towards their infants.

1.5.7 Caregiver

The usage 'caregiver' has recently been coined and has replaced the old usage 'caretaker'. In the present investigation, the caregiver represents the person who is actively involved in the process of attending to the baby's day to day needs.

1.5.8 Type of family

Type of family comprises joint and nuclear families.

(a) **Joint family**

In the study, joint family refers to a family in which one or more additional member is also living with the father, mother and the child/children.

(b) **Nuclear family**

Nuclear family refers to a family, which has the father, mother and the child/children living together.
1.5.9 Working mother

Working mother in the present study refers to the mother who has sought employment and is an earning member of the family.

1.5.10 Non-working mother

In the present study, a non-working mother is the mother who is not an earning member and has not sought any employment.

1.5.11 Age groups

To have a continuous picture of the changing phase of the age groups 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 months are included for the study.

1.5.12 Sex of the infant

Considering the fact that boys and girls are treated differently from infancy through adulthood, fathers’ involvement in baby care, attachment patterns, baby’s behavioural profile and mothers’ behaviour patterns of male and female infants are taken into account in the present investigation.

1.5.13 Educational status of parents

In the present investigation both paternal and maternal educational status are taken into account. Four groups were identified by the investigator.

Group I – comprised of those having educational qualification of pre-Degree;

Group II – those having qualification of Degree;

Group III – those having qualification equivalent to post graduate degree;

Group IV – those who were professionally qualified.
### 1.5.14 Income

The annual net income of both the parents are taken into consideration. In the present study, three groups have been identified on the basis of statistical treatment, namely

- Mean + I.S.D. as Group I
- Mean ± I.S.D. as Group II
- Mean – I.S.D. as Group III

According to the Economics Survey of Kerala published by Directorate of Economics and Statistics 1995, the annual per capita income of an average family is Rs. 40,000/-. Based on this, two groups have been identified in the present investigation as those having an annual income <40,000 as Group I and those having an annual income >40,000 as Group II.

### 1.5.15 Ordinal position

In the present study, all infants who are born first (including the only child) are defined as first-born and all infants born after the first child are the later born infants.

### 1.5.16 Gap between marriage and birth of the child under study

The number of years of gap between marriage and birth of the child under study also serves as a variable in the present study.

### 1.5.17 Gap between the child and the younger or older sibling

The number of years of gap between the child under study and the other sibling.
1.5.18 Nature of infant care provided

Three groups are taken into consideration which include:

Group I  - own homes in which mothers or family members look after the baby during daytime;

Group II - own homes in which servants look after the babies during daytime; and

Group III - infants looked after in a day-care centre during daytime.

1.6 Hypotheses

Relationship between the study variables

1.6.1 There will be significant relationship between fathers’ involvement in baby care and (a) baby’s behavioural profile, (b) reaction patterns of infants, (c) intensity of reaction of infants, (d) attachment patterns of infants, and (e) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.2 There will be significant relationship between baby’s behavioural profile and (a) attachment patterns of infants and (b) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.3 There will be significant relationship between attachment patterns and (a) mothers’ behaviour patterns, (b) reaction patterns of infants, and (c) intensity of reaction of infants.

1.6.4.1 There will be significant relationship between mothers’ behaviour patterns and (a) reaction patterns of infants and (b) intensity of reaction of infants.
Effect of independent variables on the study variables

1.6.5 There will be significant effect of age:
1.6.5.1 paternal age; and
1.6.5.2 maternal age on (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.6 There will be significant effect of educational status:
1.6.6.1 paternal educational status; and
1.6.6.2 maternal educational status on (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.7 There will be significant effect of status of income on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.8 There will be significant effect of the interval between marriage and birth of the child under study on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.9 There will be significant effect of nature of infant care provided on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.
1.6.10 There will be significant effect of gender on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.11 There will be significant effect of ordinal position in the family on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.12 There will be significant effect of the type of family on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.13 There will be significant effect of the working status on the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.

1.6.14 There will be significant effect of interval between the baby under study and the younger or the older sibling on all the study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) baby’s behavioural profile, (c) attachment patterns of infants, and (d) mothers’ behaviour patterns.
Effect of the study variables of babys’ behavioural profile

1.6.15 The study variables, namely (a) fathers’ involvement in baby care, (b) attachment patterns of infants, and (c) mothers’ behaviour patterns make significant contribution to the behavioural profile of infants.

Effect of sensitive periods on the attachment patterns of infants

1.6.16 Age of infant has a significant impact on attachment patterns of infants.

1.6.17 There is a particular age group which show similar characteristics with regard to the study variable, namely attachment patterns of infants.