CHAPTER VII

THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLINING

This chapter describes and analyzes the way in which parents enforce norms in regard to their children. It is known that,

"Adults for the most part, conform to the laws and rules of conduct of the society in which they live. Even when these rules require them to suffer severe deprivations, adults often do not even consciously think of deviating. Conformity to rules is not innate. It is our assumption that the adult willingness to conform is the result of a long and arduous process of training" (Whiting 1968: 19).

Defining desirable and undesirable behaviour, the mechanism of reward and punishment and the major socialising agents within the family constitute the main focus of attention. The points of variance and points of similarity in the dimensions considered above are brought out with reference to the three occupational groups. The aspects of change that have come about in the techniques of discipline - how parents themselves were handled for non-conformity when they were children and how they handle their children now have also been dealt with,

However it can be pointed out that

"if conformity could be predicted from a calculus of the actual consequences of deviation, our theoretical problem would be simple. If everyone always did whatever he could get away with, we would only need to estimate the prevalence and power of the police and its equivalent to predict conformity. But such is not the case. People fear punishments more dire than ever occur; they expect to be caught when there is little or no chance of it; they confess to crime when they could have gotten away from it, they fear reprisal from spirits which do not exist. Presumably all societies must "oversocialise" to some degree or the policing mechanisms would be too costly to maintain" (Whiting 1968: 20).
We are aware that there will be variations in the degree of elaboration of various combinations of control from society to society; within a society from aspect to aspect e.g., theft versus murder, assault versus adultery; from category to category e.g., men versus women and from individual to individual.

The general considerations of this section fall under the following subheadings:

1. The general definition of misbehaviour;
2. Understanding ways and means by which parents achieve conformity;
3. The socialising agents;
4. The points of variance with reference to occupations.

The definition of misbehaviour does not vary across occupational groups. Stealing, not performing well in studies, fighting with friends, telling lies, disobeying parents were considered as undesirable. Stealing was considered as the gravest offense in all the occupational groups. The severity of handling each of these are determined in turn by what the parents themselves value. In the case of parents who feel education is of great importance in life, deal with low academic achievement very severely. This is true for the clerks and sailors. The severity of punishment for lack of academic achievement is less among traders because they attach less importance to education.

The daughters, on the contrary were not punished severely for low academic achievement since education for girls is not considered as essential as it is for boys. Even across occupations the degree
of severity with which low academic achievement of daughters is dealt with is associated with what the parents thought was the value of education in their daughter's lives. These attitudes have been discussed in the chapter on education.

Those who were living in extended families dealt with aggression between cousins, siblings quite severely. This was true of the traders and sailors.

Among clerks aggression against peers was not encouraged because families of clerks lived at a particular place for long periods of time. If one had to live in the same block for a long time, one had to pass a large period of one's life with particular families, it was imperative that no hard feelings should arise which may become permanent because of aggression between children.

In the case of sailors aggression against peers is not encouraged because here too even though the families are moving from one station to another the members of a particular regional group, village etc., usually try and maintain friendly relations with each other. It was generally believed that the girls were less aggressive and therefore did not pose many problems.

With these factors in view the questioning and probing was done as under:

Once the concept of desirable and undesirable was clear the next logical step was to observe (a) ways, methods utilised for disciplining the children, (b) whether the method varies with the sex of the child, (c) the rationale for preferring one method over the other. Lastly, whether occupation of the father affects any of the above.
While some parents may use explanation, others may beat the child. It is believed that an explanation of the reason for the punishment must accompany the punishment, in order that the child does not repeat the action in future. The aims of the punishment are to correct wrong behaviour. Further it is known that the democratic method is characterized by achieving control through reasoning and discussion. This method encourages the child to think and make his decisions; or learns to make the right decisions. In other words, helping a child to understand the situation, to react favourably by means of explanation, education and helping the child to develop internal controls. (Bull 1969; Kuppusamy 1974). In this method use of praise when a child comes upto an expected standard is an essential feature.

The effect of too much power, assertion techniques, block the child's development. It is also likely that such power assertion techniques provide a role model of aggression for the child. Therefore there is a possibility that it may lead to aggressiveness in children.

In view of the above considerations the response of the parents to general misbehaviour was elicited. The statement administered was: "How do you generally react when your daughter/son misbehaves"? Various combinations of techniques were suggested to the parents. It was probed whether they explained to their children or scolded them or they made use of all the methods; whether the mode of punishment was determined upon the severity of the fault?

Patterns of correction do not vary across occupations but vary on two physical attributes namely age and sex. Therefore, it is
observed that when children are young, about 1-4 years old, if the child is wrong he is scolded by the mother and sometimes by the father. The mother usually scolds the child at this age because general child care responsibilities fall on her. The general feeling of the respondents was that if the child does wrong or makes mistakes at this age he is too young to understand the consequence or the meaning of misbehaviour. This idea is similar for the boys and girls of this age.

As the child grows above this age he starts understanding through constant conscious and unconscious training. The parents concepts of the desirable, their values and consequently also of the undesirable, is gradually internalized. The parents believed that by the time the child is 8-9 years old he distinguishes between right and wrong, behaviour which is rewarded or behaviour which is subject to punishment but he does not understand the consequences of this. The only consequence of non-conformity according to his level of understanding is punishment. Therefore a boy of 8-9 years is liable to be slapped a number of times, if he steals for example. At this age it is only the fear of the punishment, of being caught by the parents that made the child to conform. This holds true for the daughters also.

As children go beyond this age, they start understanding more, therefore beyond the age of 10 physical punishment like slapping the child for wrong is accompanied by scolding, explaining. As the child starts growing if wrong actions become intentional it is now that punishment becomes severe and a boy who steals may be thoroughly beaten up by both the parents and causes great alarm.
As the son grows up beyond 10 or so, the father starts handling the son. The daughters are usually tackled by the mother. Usually acts mentioned earlier like stealing, telling lies, physically fighting, not doing well in studies were acts of misbehaviour associated more with boys. The parents believed that girls usually posed less problems.

Table 23: METHODS OF HANDLING MISBEHAVIOUR OF SONS IN THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

(Figures are given in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General reactions when sons misbehave</th>
<th>Clerks N=50</th>
<th>Traders N=50</th>
<th>Sailors N=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explanation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Showing anger, scolding</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical punishment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scold, use physical punishment, accompanied by explanation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resort to explanation and some scolding</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Physical punishment coupled with scolding</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table unfolds the most severe reaction towards misbehaviour was scolding coupled with physical punishment, as shown in item 6. In all the three occupational groups, this was observed to be so. Surprisingly not a single family in all the three occupational
groups utilized only explanation as a technique for achieving conformity. Large number of them felt it was not an effective technique for young children, "after all what could one explain to a very young child" was the rationale. Some of the parents admitted that they had not thought whether reasoning or corporal punishment was more effective to achieve conformity.

Though some mentioned that all the techniques were used the first reaction of the parent toward mischief is to administer a slap or two, this is later followed by explanation. This method is usually adopted when a child steals, tells lies or does not study, e.g. A father (Case 5, sailors) Mr. R.B gave the example that if his son failed in school examinations his instant reaction would be to slap him. He further felt that by beating a child he could be made to conform better. Since a child of 8-9 could not understand the consequences of not studying, failing in class etc., the fear of the father could be instilled by beating.

The general view of the parents was that we have to hit, slap our children when they misbehave. The mothers expressed that most of the time they were quite busy with the household chores, there was no time to supervise the child every minute. If the child had constantly been indulging in mischief, then he or she was given a few slaps. The mothers felt that after this at least for a day or two the effect of the beating remained. On asking why the child should forget after a day or so the usual reply was that, "After all children are forgetful, one moment you scold them, hit them and the other moment they are again the same".
Though the efficacy of the explanation was recognised by a few and even verbally admitted that they resort to this method and would like to resort to this method of control, actually this treatment for disciplining the child is rarely used.

There were some (Clerks 24%, Traders 22%, Sailors 22%) in all the three occupational groups who explained their children the consequences of a misbehaviour coupled with scolding in actual situations opined that if the child is to be properly disciplined, he had to be hit sometime, otherwise he would be spoilt.

Even though only 18% (item 4) of the sailors felt that all the methods were utilised for making the children conform to desirable behaviour the number was more than table 23 shows. In fact even those who responded for items 5 (explain and scold) and 6 favourably (scold and physical punishment) in actual situations utilised all the techniques for fostering desirable behaviour.

A hypothetical situation was posed to get the response of the parents. The question asked was: "If your son steals how would you tackle such misbehaviour"? When mothers were posed this question they could not adequately imagine the situation and answer. Most of the answers were given by the fathers and the mothers readily agreed.
### Table 24: STEALING - TECHNIQUES OF HANDLING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your son steals how would you tackle such misbehaviour</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Traders</th>
<th>Sailors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=50</td>
<td>N=50</td>
<td>N=50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Use explanation, scolding physical punishment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explanation, scolding</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical punishment, scolding</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Physical punishment and explanation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures are given in percentages)

The parents in all the groups rated stealing as a grave offence which should be dealt with very severely. Thus largely the parents felt they would scold and beat their sons if such a situation arose.

The figures were generally similar for all the occupational groups. The clerks thought that it was a grave offense so it could not be excused. Similar opinions were obtained from the traders and sailors. Some examples from the cases studied would illustrate the ideas of the parents. For example one father (Case 5, sailors), Mr. R.P., reasoned out that since stealing is an inexcusable fault of the child, the immediate reaction to such a mischief is anger, and anger is usually associated with beating. Later on when anger has subsided one feels that there is the need to reason out with the child or to explain the consequence of a particular act. The father and mother believed that all the techniques for disciplining the erring
child were utilised but the instant and spontaneous reaction to such a fault is scolding, slapping and later on persuasion and explanation.

Mrs. T. (case 2, clerks) was the only mother who confessed that her son a 13 year old boy was once caught stealing money from her purse and he had utilised it for going to films, roaming around, and in eating. But the parents did not know how to ensure that it was not repeated. The boy had been severely beaten up by both the parents. This was later followed by a series of explanations. The parents thought that since the child would be scared of being beaten up he would not commit the mistake again. Though the boy had not repeated this again, his records at school were also becoming consistently poor.

The father and mother were very alarmed about this. They were perplexed as to where they had gone wrong. The mother often blamed the father for this. Mrs. T opined that the father was not strict enough with the children. Whenever they did wrong he would never punish them. Since the father was lenient with children whenever she tried to make them conform they would try and wriggle out of all such difficult situations. She further stated that the father's in all families should be very strict with their children so that they 'behave properly'. In addition she felt that since the father was not very ambitious, did not possess very high career or educational aspiration for his sons and did not expect much from them, therefore they made no efforts. Consequently inspite of what she desired as a mother, the son never paid heed or attention to the mother's desires or aspirations.
The traders too emphasised that the way of handling a child who had stolen was to beat him up. This was the best possible method of correcting this behaviour. One father, Mr. R.P., Case 1 (traders) interestingly pointed out that if the child made this mistake the parents "should think for the rationale — why the child had made such a mistake." The parents should recollect whether they have been too strict with the child, whether they have been less vigilant of the child's company. He further believed that "such an action could occur also when the parents were denying certain things to a child and the child could not control the temptation of enjoying that particular thing which may be a toy, some entertainment, something to eat etc." This reasoning was provided only by one of the fathers in the entire sample.

Since most of the parents could not provide such a reasoning the next step was to pose certain direct questions to them. In this certain reasons were provided to them. "Do you feel that children perform such actions due to bad company, lack of vigilance on the parents side, too strict handling?" The parents readily agreed to all the reasons provided by the researcher.

The context for posing these questions and situations arose only in the case of sons because the daughters generally were obedient. Thus table 23 gives the details of the methods utilised for handling misbehaviour of the boys in the family. For daughters similar techniques are utilised but the amount of beating or slapping is comparatively less.

As children girls are also slapped for misbehaviour but as they grow up, i.e., during the age of 12 onwards they usually are not slapped or beaten. The father usually never beats his growing daughter.
Table 25: METHOD OF HANDLING LACK OF INTEREST IN STUDIES FOR THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

(Figures are given in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When son does not study</th>
<th>Clerks N=50</th>
<th>Traders N=50</th>
<th>Sailors N=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explanation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scold, getting angry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical punishment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All of the above</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explanation and scolding, getting angry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scolding and physical punishment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ignore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100 100 100

When daughter does not study

| 1. Explanation          | -           | -            | -            |
| 2. Scolding             | -           | 40           | 50           |
| 3. Physical punishment  | -           | -            | 2            |
| 4. All of the above     | 86          | -            | -            |
| 5. Explanation and scolding | - | - | 4 |
| 6. Ignore               | 14          | 60           | 44           |

Total 100 100 100

Table 25 brings out two aspects: (1) the importance provided to education by the different occupational groups, (2) the differences
in the parental ways of handling the different sexes with regard to education. The table also clearly reveals the differences in the ideas of parents regarding their daughters and son's education.

Lack of concentration in studies was considered a serious offense but the gravity of this and the concern it caused, varies across occupations (see table 25).

In the case of clerks since education was the only pathway to social mobility if the son did not perform well he was scolded, beaten up by the mother and father. In some cases where the father was quite harsh, (their mothers thought so) in handling misbehaviour she would not inform the father of their offence. This was a form of indirect shielding of the son's faults.

The parents did not like their daughters to fair poorly but they were not beaten up for this as the sons were. Among clerks in contrast to the traders and sailors the parents desired that the daughters take up some jobs to augment the family income and to accumulate some funds for her marriage.

In the case of traders the parents recognise that "there own lack of education, something in the general social environment acted as an impediment to high academic achievement". The parents did not appreciate lack of concentration in studies, but did not take it very seriously. However, the concern was more for their sons, than for their daughters 6.

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6. Greater details of this are discussed in the chapter on Educational and Career Aspirations.
In the families of sailors lack of academic achievement is viewed quite seriously for the sons. This is so because the parents are very ambitious that they should do well in school and thus also enter into professions with high prestige. For daughters lack of concentration in studies does not cause alarm.

Once the ways of handling undesirable behaviour have been elicited across occupational groups and across the sexes the next subject of focus is to locate what are the ways and means by which desirable behaviour is encouraged. Thus the respondents were asked: "Do you make use of rewards, when the child is obedient, does well in studies, comes up to your expectations?"

Table 28: METHODS OF ENCOURAGING DESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR ACROSS THE DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of praise, rewards for encouraging desired behaviour</th>
<th>Clerks N=50</th>
<th>Traders N=50</th>
<th>Sailors N=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes, very often</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quite often</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rarely</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Not at all, never</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the child does well in studies and was obedient parents did make use of praise, but this varied across the occupational groups.

7. Greater details of this are discussed on Educational and Career Aspirations.
Generally the parents made use of praise when the children listened to them. Thus obedience was praised, or when the child performed well in school and listened to them in other matters. For example when certain demands could not be satisfied and the child listened to reason, tried to understand the position of the parents they rewarded this maturity of the son and daughter through praise. Usually the daughters were expected to listen to parents, stay indoors not to make many demands, not be a spendthrift, etc. Sometimes the sons in the family showed quite contrasting traits but often it was said, "After all boys are like that", but in spite of all this if the boy was doing well in school some of these traits were tolerated. This was true for the families studied.

Generally the parents said that they could not provide material rewards because there is never enough money to spare. Sometimes a reward may be in the form of candy, toffees etc. However, a great degree of emphasis is not placed on material rewards because of the idea among the parents that buying things which children do not need is a wastage of money.

Tantrums in children are not entertained at all for they are believed to spoil the child and these are scoffed upon as the prerogatives of the rich. If the child is throwing some tantrums he is ignored and then the child keeps quiet on his own or he is thoroughly beaten up by the mother. However, when grand parents are around in the family some type of fondling is encouraged, especially if it is a son. A spoilt child can be defined as one whose demands are listened to, a child who cannot control himself, who is not taught restraint in his demands.
Now and then, it was noted that sons in the family were spoilt but the daughters were rarely spoilt. This was observed in all the families studied. For the daughter to be treated equally with the son was hardly found.

The daughters in all the families were generally obedient, performed all their duties and tasks assigned to them. It was observed and also the parents felt that daughters should not be praised too much, lest they become spoiled, too demanding, start answering back their brothers or may start demanding equality. One mother Mrs. G. S. (Case 1, sailors) said "If we praise our daughters too much they will become vain. Vanity in girls is not appreciated at all, it is against the ideal role model for which girls in the family are being trained".

Among the traders not much importance is given to praise, the parents thought that praise makes children extremely vain and this should not be encouraged. It was emphasised by the parents that demands of the children should not be readily conceded. This point was brought out by the sailors too. It was felt that through this handling the child learns to be thrifty, develops self control and this promotes the true moral development of the child.

In the case of clerks and sailors doing well in school was highly appreciated. This was greatly encouraged for the sons in both the groups. In these groups if daughter showed some potential or was excelling in studies, then in such cases it was encouraged and sometimes rewarded. This was true of case 3 (sailors) Miss S.P., aged 12 scored excellent marks in school and the parents often praised her on all my visits and also praised her to relatives.
Probing and questioning now is focussed upon the socialising agents, the figures of authority in the family, rather the wielders of discipline and the variations across the sexes and occupational groups.

Table 27: AGENTS OF DISCIPLINE

(Figures are given in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are children afraid of you? (mother)</th>
<th>Clerks N=50</th>
<th>Traders N=50</th>
<th>Sailors N=50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes, they listen to me</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No, they do not listen to me</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Usually listen to me</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are your children afraid of you (father)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally in all the occupational groups the children are afraid of their mothers when young because it is the mother who usually stays at home and is constantly interacting with the children. Thus the day to day socialisation and disciplining is done by the
mother. This is true for both the sexes till about they are 10 years of age. The father is the highest authority whose help would be taken when the children do not conform or listen to the mothers. Of course, the daughters normally listen to their mothers since for them it is the mother who is the major figure of authority. It is thought that the mother should socialise the daughter, and there is not such need for the father to take over. Generally the mother is quite effective.

Though we say that the disciplining of the daughter is done by the mother, it does not mean the mother does not discipline the son. Whenever the boys errs, the mother usually tries to correct him, punish him, but if he does not listen the father will be brought into the picture. Thus a large part of the disciplining of the son and daughter is done by the mother. The father is basically the over-riding authority over and above the mother.

Mostly all the children, sons and daughters, are afraid of their fathers, due to the authoritarian, patriarchal attitude of the father. This does not vary across occupational groups. The father often takes over the general aspects of misbehaviour of the son.

As Khalakdina points out the,

"Child's father is held as the main disapprover of unworthy behaviour, for the father in most rural ethnic groups is aloof, and his contact with the young child is only occasional. This is probably related to the norm that demonstrative affection between younger people is not permitted before older members. The father's image as a strong disciplinarian is continually reinforced, especially in rural and urban lower classes" (Khalakdina 1979:27).

Out of the one hundred and fifty families under consideration not a single girl was located from among those families who was not
obedient or caused problems. Generally disciplining the girls, whether young in age or a growing adolescent did not pose any problem for their parents. The girls were not given much rights and freedom to express their demands. This could attributed to the patterns of socialisation in the families. This is a very critical point which this study brings to light. This general world view dominates the cultural tradition of not only this regional group which is being studied but the Indian society at large. Therefore with regard to this aspect, irrespective of the occupational groups under consideration the cultural stereotypes tend to dominate in parent-daughter relationships.

The ideal patterns sometimes get disrupted as the sons start growing older. The actual pattern varies from a situation of negligible deviance to that of substantial deviance from the ideal pattern. If the latter stage arises it can be characterised as a situation of 'loss of control'.

In families where there is a more or less general consensus between the parents the situation is nearer to the ideal pattern. Most of the families across the different occupational groups swing from one end of the continuum which is the ideal pattern to the other end where the son may not listen to the mother and therefore the father usually takes over or there is a constant conflict between the husband and wife as to how the son is to be handled.

In families whenever problems of adjustment were observed the causal factors were (a) the differences in the values of the parents (b) lack of consensus on the techniques to be used for achieving
conformity to parental values, (c) one of the parents usually the
father was too strict or too lenient. These terms are slightly
ambiguous but they should be viewed in relation to the position
taken by the mothers.

Therefore where parents themselves were in conflict with each
other all the time, the children's adjustment levels in various
spheres of life were bound to be low. This is illustrated by some
of the cases presented below.

In case 6 (clerks) the parents were very unhappy about their
son aged 21, who neither had any interest in studies, nor was he an
economic asset. The father believed in being strict with his child-
ren, whereas the mother always protected the son and shielded his
bad habits. The son took advantage of this fact and always misin-
formed the mother of his whereabouts, his habits, his company.
Whenever the father questioned, the mother would fabricate some story.
This she did because she was aware that if the son would be late,
the father would beat him.

The mother, Mrs. S was of the view that the mode of disciplining
the children should not be only strictness or harshness, but love and
affection combined with strictness. She believed that her son was
so much afraid of his disciplinarian father and he could not confide
in him, could not discuss his problems, could not express his desires
and his wishes. Since the children were never formally allowed to
go out or watch movies, they never went with the father's knowledge.
They knew that their father would always disregard their wishes.

In another family, Case 2 (clerks) the son, had stolen money.
The mother believed that "this situation had arisen because the father
did not provide the right amount of guidance, love, affection and strictness to his children. She thought that each of these should be provided in the right proportions at the proper times. The father was not sufficiently assertive”. The mother desired high educational and career aspirations for her son. But the father never reinforced this. On the contrary he confided in the course of the interviews that he himself had gone through ‘hard times’, he never pressurised his son for anything. He did not possess high ambitions or high academic or career aspirations for his sons. Due to this gap in expectations between the parents, the lack of reinforcement by the father this situation arose.

In another family, case 5 (clerks) there was a constant disagreement between husband and wife in all aspects of life. This clash of opinions is seen in the modes of discipline also. The mother totally disapproved of her husband’s ways. This was not so much in the case of the husband only but the wife had an extremely critical attitude towards her husband and his family. The father was not respected by the children. The father’s attitudes were not appreciated by the children and his wife. The father was also aware of this situation and commented that at times the elder son felt that the father was right and it was only the mother to blame for this tense atmosphere at home. He clarified that whenever the mother was around the children (son and daughter) usually supported her, of course the daughter always supported the mother, but as the son was growing his opinions were changing and influence of the mother was slowly fading out.
This situation of dissatisfaction affected the children too. The children's achievement as observed through school records in various fields ranged from mediocre to low. The mother had high career aspirations for her son and daughter. She felt that this could be attributed to the highly educated background of her parental family.

It could be concluded in this context that the competition between husband and wife projecting each other's family, attitudes and values to be superior to the other, lead to this constant tense atmosphere in the family. The children, especially the son was constantly struggling whether to identify with the mother or with the father.

Among the traders no such cases was observed, neither for the sons nor for the daughters. A very important reason for this was that the sons of traders usually had no time to spare because they were constantly helping in the running of the business after attending school, on holidays, in the vacations. This was the case when the place of work and residence were nearby. Even in families where the place of work and residence were at a distance the sons would be occupied in the vacations. The responsibility on them was much more.

Another reason could be that the occupational training to the son is provided at an early age therefore even if he is not doing well in studies he does not have to face much frustration.

In the case of sailors one case of poor adjustment was observed because 1) the father was constantly absent for large part of the year. 2) the mother was not sharp or shrewd enough to be able to supervise the son's activities. More cases of this kind were not
located because the family is not an isolated nuclear family from where father is constantly absent. The family moves into the village with the father's relatives when the children are young or stay at the station of posting with the children so as not to disrupt their education when they are more grown up in a 'community' of sailors. In addition, during the period when the father is away the grown up sons take over some of the responsibilities of the father.

An interesting point which emerges and which needs further probing is that in the families whenever sons do not show conformity to desired goals it is the parents inconsistency regarding the techniques to be used for achieving conformity which is at the root,