CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH FINDINGS:
PART II- DISCIPLINING PRACTICES OF PARENTS

“Discipline isn’t a dirty word. It is the one thing that separates us from chaos and anarchy”
- Buck Brannaman

This chapter explores the various dimensions of the disciplining practices of parents. It includes responses from parents, children and teachers.

The four research objectives relevant to this section are to study

1. To study disciplining practices adopted by parents in different situations
2. To study children’s perception of parental disciplining practices
3. To analyse differences, if any, between disciplining practices of fathers and mothers and between disciplining boys and girls
4. To understand observations/experiences of school teachers about parental disciplinary strategies over the last decade.

The main body of this section is the responses from parents followed by information from teachers and the actual experiences of children. The parents section includes:

i. The actual responses to various aspects and areas of disciplining on a daily basis with their own children

ii. Opinions and inclinations towards disciplining were explored via hypothetical cases of three children of different age groups who needed disciplining. This was designed to get insights into whether disciplining practices vary with situations and the age of the child. It was felt that parents would be more vigilant and careful while responding with their own experiences of directly disciplining their children in various situations, whereas their responses to hypothetical situations would be more spontaneous and give a clearer picture of their practices.

This section is based on the Model of Disciplining Practices which is one of the theories on which this research is based and has been described in detail in the review of literature (2.7.). Three major practices were explored for the parents: Authoritative, Permissive and Authoritarian as well as the combination or mixed practices of all three which was the emerging finding of this research. In addition, neglectful practices were explored with children. There were various questions in the tool which examined these factors. They have been outlined in the following diagram followed by detailed explanation of the findings for each.
FIGURE 5.1
The Disciplining Practices of Parents

Responses from Parents
- Discipline practices in all the areas of a child’s life
- Frequency of disciplining children in key areas
- Overall changes in discipline practices of parents from what they themselves have experienced and reasons for what practices they use for their children
- Changes made in six specific areas and the reasons
- The differences between the discipline practices of mothers and fathers
- The differences between disciplining girls and boys
- Discipline practices in three hypothetical everyday life situations; thoughts regarding the case and the opinion regarding best practices
- Problems in disciplining children

Responses from Children
- Part I: Two hypothetical everyday life situations which the child could identify with and which correspond to the first two caselets in the parents’ section.
- Part II: Sharing personal experiences

Responses from Teachers
- Observation of frequency of disciplining by parents in key areas of the child’s life
- Observations of gendered differences in discipline
- Experiences of disciplining shared by the children with their teachers
- Discipline practices of parents observed by teachers on various occasions and parents’ awareness of excessive punishment
- Changes seen in parental discipline practices in key areas over the last decade
- Discipline practices of parents in different situations: single mother/single father, joint or nuclear families, both parents working/mother a homemaker, single child/more than one child, differential practices due to birth order
- Suggestions from teachers to improve discipline practices of parents
5.1. Responses of Parents

- **Discipline practices in all the areas of a child’s life**

Thirteen main areas of a child’s life where parents discipline their children were explored - food, studies, play, friendships, computer games and TV, communication and behaviour with immediate family, behaviour with others, behaviour in school with teachers and peers, developing moral values, learning impulse control and coping with delayed gratification of desires, taking on age specific responsibility, developing social skills of communicating cooperation and coordination with others, and learning to control and channelise emotions.

This question was a closed one, which explored the parents disciplining practices by seeking responses to two parts (A and B) of the same table. Part ‘A’ asked the parents to choose from four levels of disciplining practices for the thirteen areas; ‘lenient’, ‘somewhat lenient’, ‘strict’ and ‘very strict’. They were also asked to choose from ‘B’, any one of the following for each of the thirteen areas - ‘practices are fixed’, ‘practices are flexible and depend on the situation’ and ‘depending on their mood’. The responses to both the sections of this question are presented in the two diagrams below.

**FIGURE 5.2**
Type of Practice-I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses of Parents</th>
<th>Lenient</th>
<th>Somewhat lenient</th>
<th>Strict</th>
<th>Very strict</th>
<th>Mixed responses of all four</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.M.Mothers</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
<td>12.70%</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>22.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.M.Mothers</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
<td>46.90%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>22.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.M.Fathers</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>54.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>29.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.M.Fathers</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>29.80%</td>
<td>21.30%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>42.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: MM - Marathi medium; EM - English medium*

*Note* Some parents had no fixed types of responses hence such responses are seen in the last column ‘mixed responses of all four’.
There was no statistically significant difference between the mothers for this question, however, there was significant statistical difference between the fathers: Type of Practice -I (P=0.001) and Type of Practice-II (P=0.047). The fathers of children from the Marathi medium were stricter and had more fixed practices. Within the practices, parents were the strictest about developing moral values (71.9%) and maximum responses for very strict (10.8%) was also in this area of discipline. This was followed by studies (67.5%) where parents were strict. They were the most lenient about play (34.5%) followed by friendship (33.0%).

**Discussion**

Exploring the disciplining practices of parents in all the areas of a child’s life, the responses can be seen within the sociocultural context, where adhering to moral values and strictness of parents, are desired qualities. At the same time, a number of these parents, except the Marathi medium fathers, state that their practices are flexible, possibly due to the changing needs of children in this generation as well as the increased knowledge and exposure of parents to new thoughts. Another dimension is that while parents decided on the areas where they have to be strict or lenient depending on the importance they placed on the thirteen areas of daily life, there were fewer variations in

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*FIGURE 5.3*  
Type of Practice-II

Note: MM - Marathi medium  
EM - English medium
responses while discussing their levels of flexibility in the same areas, especially by the fathers. This indicates that responses of fathers were more dependent on their personality. Being fixed in a practice or being flexible should depend on the situation and not on the personality of the parents; hence this can be seen as one of the pointers for the problems they face in disciplining children.

- **Frequency of disciplining children in key areas**

  This was a closed-end question which was designed to understand the frequency of the disciplining practices of parents in the eleven areas of daily life where the child is generally disciplined. Parents were asked if they ‘seldom’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’ or ‘never’ disciplined their children in these areas which were studies, behaviour in school with peers, behaviour at home, age specific self-care and responsibility, behaviour in the larger community, developing moral values, learning impulse control and coping with delayed gratification of needs, developing social skills, controlled use of the media, learning to control and channelise emotions and learning to adhere to the values and beliefs of the family and society.

  There was no statistical significance between the responses of the mothers (P=0.390) and the fathers (P=0.398). Overall, it could be seen that parents were ‘sometimes’ followed by ‘often’ disciplining their children in the given eleven areas. Studies, (43.8% of mothers and 39.6% of fathers, with more responses from the Marathi medium parents) followed by controlled use of the media, (37.5% of the mothers and 37.4% of fathers, with more responses from the English medium parents), are the two areas where the children were disciplined most often. A number of parents said that they had ‘never’ disciplined their children in these two areas: adhering to the values and beliefs of the community and behaviour in school.

**Discussion**

Disciplining frequency was between medium and high with the most often disciplined area being studies followed by controlling the use of media. Very few parents never disciplined children. The responses show that parents are vigilant and have chosen areas of immediate concern for disciplining.

- **Overall changes made and reasons for discipline practices in the light of what they themselves have experienced and what they use for their children**

  This section essentially explored the ecological system of the parents. It was an open-end question which explored the changes between their own experience of being disciplined when they were children, and those that they practice on their children. The
reason was to investigate the level and type of impact of the ecological system on discipline practices. There were no statistically significant differences between the responses of mothers and fathers. Many parents said that there were no changes (58.2% fathers and 58.1% mothers) more from the English medium. However, many had made small changes which are explained. The English medium mothers had the least changes.

The reasons for changes in the disciplining practices are:

**Changes to more effective practices:** They constituted 41 per cent of the changes. These were negative practices like verbal and physical abuse and excessive strictness, which they changed with increased communication with their children and self-control in the face of challenges.

**Generational changes:** These were 30 per cent of the changes made. They comprised changes in the behaviour and habits of this generation due to the changes brought on by the impact of the media which made a children more informed and inquisitive than their parents, loosening of family and community ties leading to nuclear families and globalisation. These situational changes led to behavioural and habit changes in children making them less obedient, stubborn and demanding.

**Changes due to economic mobility:** Economic mobility was the reason for 19 per cent changes. When they were younger, their illiterate parents had long hours of exhausting hard labour which kept them out of the house most of the day. This combined with poor knowledge of the world, meant that they were not guided properly as children. They are now amending this to the best of their capacity as their situation in life is better.

**Changes due to migration:** There were more Marathi medium parents who responded, contributing to 10 per cent of the overall changes. Changes were brought on by parents’ migrating to the metropolis from their villages for better opportunities for themselves and their children. Migration to cities brought with it opportunities but also stress and unhealthy competition. A few said that the norms and beliefs in their childhood were different: superstition, lack of interest in education, extreme punishment, marrying off minor girls. They disapproved of these and are consciously set to change them.

- **Changes in disciplining practices in six specific areas**

After the understanding of the overall impact of the changes in the ecological system of the parents which brought on the changes in disciplining the children, six specific areas were explored to understand the level, type and the need they felt to make the changes. This was an open-end question. The areas examined were:
Studies: Nearly 58.0 per cent mothers and 34.1 per cent fathers made no changes. Those who did make changes mentioned that they were more motivated, vigilant and careful than their parents. A few mentioned the changing pattern of education which believed that no examinations should be held in the primary section as they stressed out the child. Some shared that their parent’s abusive behaviour while studying when they were small, had made them decide to change things and never repeat the mistakes of their parents.

Academic achievement: Around 42.9 per cent of the mothers and 47.3 per cent of the fathers, more from the Marathi medium (53.2%), said that there were no changes. However, many of these parents of Marathi medium children had made small changes to the practices of their parents. For some, their daughters were expected to help out at home but were also encouraged to excel in academics, which were not a priority for their parents. Some were more ambitious and serious about their children’s achievements than their own parents had been with them.

Extracurricular activities: The percentage differences between parents were similar to academic achievement. Many more English medium parents had made changes in disciplining in this area (53.1%). For some parents, extracurricular activities were considered unnecessary, expensive and a waste of time when they were children. Some of these parents think differently now and encourage their children whereas some agreed with their parents and also discourage their own children. Differences were seen in gender; earlier, some mothers were not allowed to go out of the home other than to school.

Relationship with Peers: Seventy per cent and more parents said that there were no changes in disciplining relationships with peers. Those who did mention changes said that either they were not allowed friends because they were girls, or parents were too strict and watchful, which they have changed now for their children. Conversely, some felt that times were bad now and they had to be more strict and watchful than their parents. Fifty per cent of those parents who said that there were no changes, agreed with their parents that there was no need for friendship between children.

Relationship with Parents: More than 85 per cent of the Marathi medium parents and less than fifty per cent of the English medium parents have made no changes in this area. The significance in differences is thus high. Those who mentioned making changes have done so due to their own suffering as children - because of the fear they felt for their parents, lack of communication and poor involvement by parents in their lives. Conversely, a few mentioned that due to the changed times, children were more difficult to discipline; hence, they had to get stricter with their children and often, the relationship with them was strained.
**Relationship with Teachers**: Nearly 63.4 per cent of the mothers and 64.4 per cent of the fathers made no changes in this area. Those who mentioned changes have said that the relationship with teachers had improved as they now encouraged their children to be informal and friendly with their teachers and not fear them and be blindly obedient to them as they themselves were. Conversely, there were parents who said that their own experiences were good and encouraged the same between their children and their teachers.

**Discussion**

Changes in the ecological system of the parents naturally bring about changes in habits, behaviour, thoughts and practices. This is seen clearly in the responses of parents where they shared the overall changes in disciplining practices between what they had experienced as children and what they are practicing now with their own children. Further investigation of disciplining in six areas of a child’s daily life reveals that parents have made more changes in areas that are related to the child’s achievements, and fewer changes in areas that have to do with interpersonal relationships. Several responses of parents for not making changes in disciplining practices in the relationships of the children with peers, teachers and parents, can be seen as culture specific. This is in keeping with the findings in chapter four, where maintaining and perpetuating the values, beliefs and culture of society was considered the most important definition of disciplining by parents. This also is in keeping with the bicultural identity of the parents which they are facilitating for their children.

- **Gendered differences in disciplining practices**

  Theories explored in the review of literature; Role Theory of Parenting (2.6) and the Developmental Niche Model (2.3.) have shown the importance of investigating the sociocultural aspects of disciplining practices, and gender is one of those elements best explained and understood within the sociocultural context. Data for this section has been mainly collected from the parents’ and some from the children (which is presented in a later section) and the teachers. Both the areas of gender differences in disciplining were studied; the differences between the disciplining practices of mothers and fathers, and the differences in disciplining girls and boys.

  - **The differences between the disciplining practices of mothers and fathers**

    The parents were requested to give their opinion on six statements related to differences in the disciplining practices of fathers and mothers. The following table indicates their overall responses to each of the statements.
### TABLE 5.1
Differences between the Disciplining Practices of Fathers and Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Differences between the disciplining practices of fathers and Mothers</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Total Parents (203)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Fathers are stricter and punish their children more than mothers do</td>
<td>89 (43.8%)</td>
<td>95 (46.8%)</td>
<td>19 (9.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mothers nag their children more often than the fathers</td>
<td>152 (74.9%)</td>
<td>39 (19.2%)</td>
<td>12 (5.9%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mothers try harder than fathers to discipline their children</td>
<td>173 (85.2%)</td>
<td>19 (9.4%)</td>
<td>11 (5.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mothers use verbal disciplining more often than the fathers, whereas fathers use physical disciplining more than the mothers</td>
<td>103 (50.7%)</td>
<td>73 (36%)</td>
<td>27 (13.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mothers are more controlling of their children than fathers</td>
<td>154 (75.8%)</td>
<td>34 (16.8%)</td>
<td>15 (7.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mothers are more understanding and patient of their children’s disciplinary problems than fathers.</td>
<td>159 (78.3%)</td>
<td>29 (14.3%)</td>
<td>15 (7.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A large number of parents seem to feel that fathers are no stricter than mothers. Significantly, a large numbers of parents believe that mothers seem to control and nag their children more. An equally large number feel that mothers are more understanding and patient of their children’s disciplinary problems and try harder than the fathers to discipline them.

On examining the differences between parents, there were statistically significant differences seen between the responses of mothers (P=0.000) and fathers (P=0.003) of children from the English and Marathi mediums. While more Marathi medium parents (68.3%) mentioned that there were differences in practices, only 30.6 per cent of the English medium parents felt the same. It is observed here that the opinion is more influenced by the socioeconomic background and not the gender of the parents, because the opinions of the mothers and fathers within each group were almost the same.
The opinions of the teachers from both mediums to this same question also differ in a similar manner. Most (85.7%) Marathi medium teachers feel that there were differences in the disciplining practices of fathers and mothers as compared to a smaller number (29.4%) among teachers from the English medium school.

- **Differences between disciplining boys and girls**

Next, parents were asked to respond to statements indicating the difference in disciplining boys and girls. This was a closed question. Their order in the interview schedule was mixed, but for the purpose of analysis, the statements have been grouped into three categories:

I. Opinion of Parents

II. Experience of Parents

III. Method of Discipline

Findings from each category are presented as separate tables with analysis. The categories of responses are:

I. **Opinion of Parents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Differences in disciplining girls and boys by parents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Total Parent (203)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>There are higher expectations of obedience from girls than boys</td>
<td>112 (55.2%)</td>
<td>73 (36.0%)</td>
<td>18 (8.8%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Boys’ unacceptable behaviour is tolerated more than girls’ unacceptable behaviour</td>
<td>100 (49.3%)</td>
<td>84 (41.4%)</td>
<td>19 (9.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>When a girl has problems in acceptable behaviour, it is more worrying for parents than if a boy has similar problems</td>
<td>140 (69.0%)</td>
<td>40 (19.7%)</td>
<td>23 (11.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Experience of Parents

TABLE 5.3
Differences in Disciplining Girls and Boys by Parents-Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Differences in disciplining between girls and boys by parents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Total Parent (203)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Girls do not need to be corrected as often as boys</td>
<td>127 (62.6%)</td>
<td>55 (27.1%)</td>
<td>21 (10.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Parents are more lenient with their sons than with their daughters</td>
<td>86 (42.4%)</td>
<td>87 (42.8%)</td>
<td>30 (14.8%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Setting limits for girls is easier than for boys</td>
<td>132 (65.0%)</td>
<td>48 (23.7%)</td>
<td>23 (11.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Method of Discipline

TABLE 5.4
Differences in Disciplining Girls and Boys by Parents-Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Differences in disciplining between girls and boys by parents</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Total Parent (203)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Boys get physical punishment more often than girls</td>
<td>98 (48.3%)</td>
<td>76 (37.4%)</td>
<td>29 (14.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Girls in general get verbally disciplined more often than boys</td>
<td>140 (69.0%)</td>
<td>48 (22.7%)</td>
<td>17 (8.3%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are statistically significant differences between the mothers (P=0.022) and fathers (P=0.000) of the Marathi and English medium children. It was seen that the parents of Marathi medium children (mothers 52.4% and fathers 63.65%) were the largest group to confirm that there are differences in practices for girls and boys. Relatively fewer English medium parents (25.5%) had the same opinion. Linking the findings from the three tables (5.2, 5.3 and 5.4), it is seen that parents believe and have experienced that girls do not need to be corrected as often as boys and that setting limits for them is easier for the parents than setting limits for the boys. This is probably because a large number of them feel that there are higher expectations of obedience from girls than boys and that it is much more worrying for parents when a girl has problem in acceptable behaviour as compared to boys. Parents then, more so from the Marathi me-
dium are much more watchful and controlling of the girls than the boys. This is borne out in later responses of children as well.

**Discussion**

The Role Theory of Parenting, which is described in the chapter on review of literature (2.6.), assumes that most humans would have played multiple roles to a lesser or greater degree in their lifetime, which also have varied expectations built into each role. These role expectations differ between cultures, but traditional collectivistic cultures largely put the onus of upbringing of children on the mother. While men are largely unprepared for their parenting role, women are socialised from an early age into all aspects of the role. Strong cultural norms put pressure on mothers to be seen as ‘good parents,’ which includes how well the child has been disciplined according to the cultural norms. This explains why mothers are seen as more controlling and nag more, as they have to try harder than fathers to discipline their children. These same role expectations also expect them to play their feminine role of being nurturing caretakers, calling for more patience and understanding.

To sum up, there are differences in the disciplining practices of mothers and fathers, and to a lesser extent (possibly the impact of the changing times), the practices used by them for their daughters and sons. It appears that parents are socialised for their roles differently, and they pass on these differences to the next generation. The reasons for this are varied and not necessarily out of choice (which also explains the statistically significant differences between the two groups of parents).

- **Disciplining practices in hypothetical everyday life situations**

This question, the largest, explores parenting practices in three common situations that children in the age group of six years to eleven years often get into. It was a closed-end section, and parents had to tick the options they agreed with.

There were three cases which were carefully created. First, they were situations that the parents could relate to, yet they did not threaten as they were hypothetical. This also ensured that parents were more spontaneous in their responses. Parents would expectedly tick on the practice they agreed with, which were most likely their own practices too. Second, they represented three different age groups within middle childhood - age seven years, age nine years and age ten years. Next, the situations were common situations that children often are in, where disciplining practices are used by parents to deal with the situation. Even if parents had not personally encountered the situation with their own child, the situations were so ordinary that they were easily able to relate to them. This was concluded by the observation of how quickly most parents were able to choose from the options.
The first two caselets had two tables each. The first table in each, inquired about what the parents thought about a given situation and the second table explored what they think parents should do in the same given situation. The purpose of these two tables was to find out if the parents thought about a situation and then acted on it in the same way or whether their thoughts and acts differed. The third case was not a problem situation but rather a situation of transition for the child; hence it did not need two tables. All the statements belonged to any one of the three disciplining styles explored in this research with the parents. The tables representing overall findings of chosen practices by parents along with the statistical analysis have been presented. The tables show the number of parents who mark a particular style exclusively, and the number who mark combination methods with various types of combinations.

Case 1: Arun/Aruna is a 9 year old boy/girl. The child is fussy and a slow eater and is also lethargic and disorganised in daily age specific activities. These habits are beginning to cause a lot of problems. For example, the child is often late for school, leaves the lunch-box mostly uneaten and the class work and homework incompletely noted, besides being below average in studies. The child would also much rather play all of his/her free time and is not bothered to change behaviour/habits. A complete check-up by a doctor has shown that the child has no medical problems.

The following statements were mixed in one table. For the sake of clarity, they have been divided into three disciplining practices:

**Authoritarian**

I. The child has been overindulged and spoilt and is in need of strong discipline

II. Compared to obedient and hard working children, this child has made his/her parents ashamed

III. The parents are to be blamed for being so lax that the child is not scared of his/her parents

**Permissive**

I. Some children are like this, so one should wait till the child outgrows this habit, which the child will do when he/she grows older

II. The child should be ignored and then the child will improve

III. So many children nowadays are like this, so there is nothing particularly distressing about this child’s behaviour

**Authoritative**
I. The behaviour is not appropriate, but the child should be helped out of such behaviour

II. The behaviour of the child is inappropriate but the child is not to be blamed, as the parents have not used the right discipline practices

III. The child behaves like this as the parents are either ignoring the child or putting pressure on him/her.

**TABLE 5.5**

Immediate thoughts that come to mind if the child behaves in this way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>5 (8.0%)</td>
<td>1 (2.0%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td>2 (4.1%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (8.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>21 (33.3%)</td>
<td>35 (71.4%)</td>
<td>15 (34.1%)</td>
<td>29 (61.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix of the three</td>
<td>36 (57.1%)</td>
<td>11 (22.5%)</td>
<td>27 (61.4%)</td>
<td>14 (29.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MM - Marathi medium

EM – English medium

There was a statistically significant difference between the responses of mothers (P=0.000) and fathers (P=0.000) of the Marathi and English medium children. There were significantly more mothers of English medium children, who thought authoritatively, and significantly, more mothers of Marathi medium children, who thought a mix of practices. A similar pattern of differences is seen with the fathers.

The possible practices of the parents in this given situation were next explored. The following statements were mixed in one table. Parents were asked to tick on the practice they agreed with. For the sake of clarity here, they have been divided into the three discipline practices:
**Authoritarian**

I. The parents are tired of their child’s behaviour and habits and spank the child to make him/her obedient.

II. Parents feel that some children understand only when they are punished, so they use /various tactics such as isolating their child, hitting on the palm with a ruler and withdrawing a meal, to discipline the child.

III. The parents feel guilty that the child appears to have been spoilt by them and resolve to reverse the situation by controlling the child strictly, henceforth.

**Permissive**

I. The parents plead with the child, hoping that the child will understand and cooperate.

II. The parents indulge the child’s wishes, hoping that it will make the child cooperate.

III. Parents feel that these are not important issues at all and should be ignored.

**Authoritative**

I. Parents believe that the child should be allowed to eat/or work at whatever pace he/she wants as the child will overcome these fussy and disorganised habits as he/she grows up.

II. The parents distract and interest the child with new ideas like storytelling and creative presentation of food to try to change the child’s behaviour and habits.

III. They feel that as long as the child is eating something, has no medical problems and is passing examinations, it is ‘okay’.
### TABLE 5.6
The most appropriate responses from the parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>3 (6.1%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>2 (3.2%)</td>
<td>1 (2.0%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>22 (34.9%)</td>
<td>29 (59.2%)</td>
<td>15 (34.1%)</td>
<td>26 (55.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix of the three</td>
<td>39 (61.9%)</td>
<td>16 (32.7%)</td>
<td>25 (56.9%)</td>
<td>17 (36.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MM- Marathi medium
EM – English medium

Overall, there was a significant difference between the mothers (P=0.036) but not the fathers (P=0.237) of Marathi and English medium children. Mothers of English medium children had more authoritative practices, whereas mothers of Marathi medium children had more of an equal mix of practices and the English medium mothers were the only ones who had authoritative responses.

**Discussion**

The findings from the two tables of this case revealed that more parents have authoritative thoughts than actually practiced more so from the English medium. While dealing with the child, authoritative practices were alone seen as less effective, possibly because the situation was acute, and therefore there were more combination practices overall. Authoritarian and permissive practices were not considered good by themselves but were used in combination with authoritative practices.

**Case 2:** A child aged seven years has entered a shop with his/her parents. Parents have come to pick up groceries only. The child sees a toy he/she likes and starts demanding it so loudly that everyone in the shop can hear. The parents say a loud ‘No’, yet the child soon starts throwing a tantrum.
The following statements were mixed in one table. For the sake of clarity here, they have been divided into the three discipline practices:

**Authoritarian**

I. The child is thoroughly spoilt and needs to be disciplined immediately

II. The behaviour of the child is a shame for the parents and it reflects badly on them as parents

III. The child dare not continue with the behaviour as the parents have said a ‘No’

**Permissive**

I. The child is not behaving well but one has to live with this bad behaviour till the child grows out of it on his/her own

II. It is perfectly normal for children to behave this way

III. This episode is unimportant and the incident should be ignored

**Authoritative**

I. The child is thoroughly spoilt and needs to be disciplined immediately

II. The child’s behaviour is inappropriate but has come to this extreme because the parents have not used the right strategies to correct the child

III. The child’s behaviour is unacceptable but this is because the parents have either overindulged or ignored the child.

### TABLE 5.7

Immediate thoughts that come to mind if the child behaves in this way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>12 (19.0%)</td>
<td>6 (13.0%)</td>
<td>8 (15.6%)</td>
<td>1 (1.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>5 (8.0%)</td>
<td>12 (24.5%)</td>
<td>7 (15.9%)</td>
<td>14 (29.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>8 (12.7%)</td>
<td>16 (32.7%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>15 (31.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix of the three</td>
<td>38 (60.3%)</td>
<td>15 (30.6%)</td>
<td>28 (63.6%)</td>
<td>17 (36.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: MM- Marathi medium; EM – English medium*
There was a statistically significant difference between the responses of the mothers (P=0.001) and the fathers (P=0.000). The English medium parents had more authoritative responses and the Marathi medium parents had more mixed practice responses. The mothers overall had more authoritarian responses.

The possible practices of the parents in this given situation were explored. The following statements were mixed in one table. Parents were asked to tick on the practice they agreed with. For the sake of clarity here, they have been divided into the three disciplining practices:

**Authoritarian**

I. Give the child a sharp slap to make him/her shut up  
II. Scream louder than the child to frighten the child and make the child shut up  
III. The parents whisper a threat in the ears of the child warning of dire consequences if the child does not stop the tantrum immediately.

**Permissive**

I. Immediately buy it for the child to keep the child quiet and avoid the embarrassment  
II. Ignore the child and allow the child to throw a tantrum  
III. Parents hope that the child will forget, hence they promise the child that it will be bought soon after the grocery shopping is over.

**Authoritative**

I. Try and distract the child  
II. Pick up the child and leave the shop immediately  
III. Parents promise the child that they will consider it for another day, providing the tantrum stops immediately today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>5 (7.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (9.1%)</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5.8**

Most appropriate responses from the child’s parents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>5 (7.9%)</td>
<td>3 (6.1%)</td>
<td>4 (9.1%)</td>
<td>5 (10.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>28 (44.5%)</td>
<td>36 (73.5%)</td>
<td>18 (40.9%)</td>
<td>30 (63.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix of the three</td>
<td>25 (39.7%)</td>
<td>10 (20.4%)</td>
<td>18 (40.9%)</td>
<td>11 (23.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MM- Marathi medium  
EM – English medium

There was a statistically significant difference between the mothers responses (P=0.023) but not of the fathers (P=0.307). The English medium mothers had significantly more authoritative responses whereas the Marathi medium mothers had more mixed responses.

**Discussion**

Examining the two tables for this case together, it was seen that authoritarian thoughts about the situation was higher, but when it came to actually disciplining the child, the authoritative practices had increased considerably. When this Case is compared to Case 1, it is seen that in Case 1, the authoritative thoughts are more than the thoughts of parents in Case 2, yet, in practice, there is a sharp increase in authoritative practices in Case 2, and there is only a slight increase in practice in Case 1. This can be attributed to two things; the context of the case and the age of the child. Though the child in the second case was younger, the context being in the public domain, parents were more angry and irritated. Yet, keeping the age of the child in mind, several parents appear to have made an effort to overcome their thoughts and practice disciplining in a more authoritative way, whereas some have used a mix of practices.

**Case 3:** A ten year old boy/girl is approaching adolescence. The child will also soon be going into the secondary section of the school and will be thus meeting and mixing with older children.

The following table has the responses from the parents which were thought to be most appropriate by the respondents. The following statements were mixed in one table. For the sake of clarity here, they have been divided into the three disciplining practices:
**Authoritarian**

I. The child is warned repeatedly to be careful of outsiders.

II. The parents decide to keep a very close watch on the child and the child is expected to keep the parents aware of all happenings all the time.

III. The child is told that from now on he/she will have to take care so that the family is not disgraced in any way.

**Permissive**

I. The parents feel that times have changed and that the child will feel left out if he/she is treated like a child; hence, they believe that the child has to be treated like an equal from now on.

II. The parents start indulging the child to make the child easy to handle.

III. The parents do not see the need to change anything.

**Authoritative**

I. The parents increase their communication with the child.

II. The parents decide to set firm limits to the child after explaining to the child in the wake of discussion.

III. The parents get involved in the child’s life by being friendly and yet giving the child space.

TABLE 5.9

Practices of parents you think are right in the given situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM (63)</td>
<td>EM (49)</td>
<td>MM (44)</td>
<td>EM (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>5 (8.0%)</td>
<td>3 (6.1%)</td>
<td>2 (4.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (4.1%)</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>12 (19.0%)</td>
<td>29 (59.2%)</td>
<td>6 (13.6%)</td>
<td>32 (68.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal mix of the three</td>
<td>46 (73.0%)</td>
<td>15 (30.6%)</td>
<td>35 (79.6%)</td>
<td>14 (29.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: MM- Marathi medium; EM – English medium*
There are statistically significant differences in the responses of both the mothers (P=0.000) and the fathers (P=0.000). Authoritative practices are overall the least in this case as compared to the earlier two cases. The mix of the three is also the most in this case in practice. One sees that for the Marathi medium parents, the overall disciplining attitude is of watchful control where they are seen using a mix of practices, whereas the English medium parents use mainly authoritative practices.

Discussion

The disciplining practices of parents were also explored via three hypothetical situations of children belonging to different ages and in different situations. In the first case, the child was nine years old and the situation was within the family, which is the immediate micro system of the child. In the second case, the child was younger and the situation occurred in the neighbourhood in front of everybody. The third child was pre-adolescent in a transitory phase of life, again within the micro system but with more impact of other micro systems on the child. Differences in parental responses can be seen in each of the situations. Overall, authoritative responses were the most in all the tables of all the three cases followed by an equal mix of the three practices. The English medium parents had more authoritative responses whereas the Marathi medium parents, especially the mothers had responded more in the mixed combination practices. Overall, the Marathi medium parents have more combination practices, especially the mothers. Hence, differences in the responses of parents of children from the two mediums are seen clearly in this section.

The profile of the parents will explain this difference to some extent. The parents of Marathi medium children being younger and less educated than the English medium parents, have a more traditional background and less experience of the present technological driven world; hence, being solely authoritative like so many of the English medium parents is not possible for many of them. Yet they are trying to tone down their authoritarian orientation with a mix of other practices to suit the times. This is possibly the strongest reason why their practices co-occur with other practices more than the practices of parents of English medium children.

Another dimension is differential responses. First, they have responded differently to each of the situations. Parents seem to make an effort to increase authoritative practices while dealing with younger children, which means that parents change their disciplining practices according to the age of the child. Second, their overall thoughts for a situation and the action for the same, differ. They have more authoritarian thoughts that reduce in practice, which means that parents make an attempt to think through and control authoritarian thoughts before they act.

Lastly, situational differences seem to impact practices. For example, even though the child in the second case is the youngest of the three cases, there are more authoritarian
thoughts for him, probably because the situation created public ridicule for the parents.

In the last case, authoritative responses are much fewer with the Marathi medium parents (lesser than in the other cases) but are consistently on the higher side with the English medium parents. The Marathi medium parents thus have a tendency to be stricter than the English medium parents as the child grows older.

- Problems faced by parents in disciplining children

This was an open-end question and the responses were categorised.

**FIGURE 5.4**
Problems Faced by Parents in Disciplining Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses of Parents</th>
<th>MM Mother (63)</th>
<th>EM Mother (49)</th>
<th>MM Father (44)</th>
<th>EM Father (47)</th>
<th>Total Fathers (91)</th>
<th>Total Mothers (112)</th>
<th>Total Parents (111)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, there are problems</td>
<td>36 (57.1%)</td>
<td>33 (67.3%)</td>
<td>14 (31.8%)</td>
<td>28 (59.6%)</td>
<td>42 (46.1%)</td>
<td>69 (61.6%)</td>
<td>111 (54.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problems</td>
<td>26 (41.3%)</td>
<td>16 (32.7%)</td>
<td>30 (68.2%)</td>
<td>15 (31.9%)</td>
<td>45 (49.5%)</td>
<td>42 (37.5%)</td>
<td>87 (42.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: MM - Marathi medium; EM – English medium*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Total Fathers</th>
<th>Total Mothers</th>
<th>Total Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MM Mother (63)</td>
<td>EM Mother (49)</td>
<td>MM Father (44)</td>
<td>EM Father (47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>1 (1.6%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>4 (8.5%)</td>
<td>4 (4.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: MM- Marathi medium
EM – English medium*

There was a statistically significant difference between the responses of the mothers ($P=0.014$) and the fathers ($P=0.004$). More parents of English medium children said there were problems in disciplining children (63.5%) than Marathi medium parents (46.7%). Of the fourteen mothers of Marathi medium children who had come alone for the interviews, six (42.8%) had problems in disciplining children. Overall, three of the seven single mothers (42.8%) had problems in disciplining their children. If one were to look at the number of children who were seen as being difficult to discipline, then of the total number of sixty-one English medium parents who said there were problems in disciplining their children, there were twenty one couples, hence in total (40 children: 80.0%) were seen as difficult to be disciplined. Similarly, from a total number of Marathi medium parents (50) who felt their children were difficult to discipline, since only seven were couples, 43 children (68.3%) were seen by their parents as difficult to discipline. The distribution of boys and girls who were seen as having problems were more or less equal and the same for both mediums (50.0% Marathi medium, and 49.2% boys and 50.8% girls for the English medium).

- **Reasons**

Problems due to behaviour of children: By far, the largest numbers of responses were for the problems due to behaviour of children (see Figure 5.4). The commonest problem mentioned was that children did not obey when asked to study or shut off the television/computer/video game or come in from play. While for some children instructions had to be frequently repeated, some others were disobedient, aggressive and headstrong (the sons and not the daughters were the trouble makers in the family). A few children behaved badly only with others.
The main problem with some children was food habits - eating very little, complaining about the cooking and demanding food of their own choice all the time. Some spoke about their children’s manipulative behaviour - crying loudly when given instructions, bargaining, lying, emotional appeals and extreme stubbornness. Several children were very naughty, always getting into trouble and quarrelling continuously with siblings. A few parents shared the efforts they put in to disciplining their children - talking sweetly even when they were angry, bargaining, threatening and even punishing, but this did not help for long and they often gave up in their efforts. Lastly, some mentioned the personality and behaviour of their children - moodiness, emotional outbursts, rudeness, ego problems and arrogance, jealousies, anger issues, succumbing to peer pressure, always doubting, arguing and questioning everything.

Problems due to personality/relationship of parents: The main problems mentioned here were the differences of opinions and the differences of practices between the parents.

Other: Some mentioned the joint family system which made disciplining a problem when each adult in the family had different opinions about disciplining, eating habits, play time, studies, TV time, besides the child being indulged unnecessarily by the grandparent/s thereby making him/her manipulative. A few single parents mentioned that managing the child singlehandedly was a difficult task and put pressure on them as they were held responsible for their children’s behaviour and adjustment.

Discussion

A large number of parents reported that there were problems in disciplining their children, with more responses from the mothers. The Role Theory of Parenting in the review of literature (2.6.) mentions strong cultural norms, which makes mothers responsible for parenting and its outcomes. Further, very few parents mention their own handling and skills in disciplining. It is obvious that most parents have not made the connection between parenting attitudes and practices and difficulties in effecting child discipline. It also appears that parents of English medium children are more demanding of their
children. Finally, for a large number of parents, disobedience and problems in disciplining are synonymous, which matches with the definitions as well as the impacting forces on disciplining, where obedience is paramount.

5.2. Responses from Children

“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression”

- Dr. Haim Ginott

Responses from children were taken by two different methods. In Part I, they were asked to respond to two cases of young children, which were hypothetical common situations. This was an open-end question. These situations would be familiar to them, either due to direct experience or due to having observed them with siblings or peers. Being hypothetical, it was also non-threatening and therefore more honest responses were expected from them. Both the cases are modified versions of the first two cases in the parents section, and they correspond with Situation 1 and Situation 2 of the parents section. Part –II was a closed-end question which was a creative activity to make it non-threatening and dealt directly with their personal experiences. Detailed findings are in the relevant sections.

Part 1-Responses to Hypothetical Situations

**Situation 1: This is a story about a boy named Tim. Tim is 9 years old. He just loves to play with his friends and takes every chance he gets, to go and play. His homework and class work are incomplete and after his exams, his grades have gone down a lot.**

Children were asked three questions with regards to this case

I. What would the parents say to the child?

II. What would the parents do to the child?

III. If the child were a girl and not a boy, would the practices be the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MM (6)</td>
<td>EM (6)</td>
<td>MM (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>3 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (16.7%)</td>
<td>5 (83.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>1 (16.7%)</td>
<td>2 (33.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Parents should give children what they need not what they want" - A ten year old girl
There were no permissive practice responses in this section. It was seen that boys have more authoritarian experiences whereas girls have more experiences of authoritative practices.

**Authoritarian:** The responses to this section were - scold and warn the child; tell the child he has no future and then beat him; tell him that the more he studies the better marks he will get and then beat him and make him study every minute and put him for tuitions; stop him from viewing television and playing, take away toys, lock him in a room as punishment and several children simply wrote, ‘they will shout at him and beat him’.

**Authoritative:** The authoritative practices mentioned how the parents would lovingly explain the consequences of the actions give the child warnings and watch him and may even be strict with him, but they would not beat him or punish him in any other way.

**Mixed practices:** Those children who have given mixed responses, have either talked about

(a) how parents will start with one practice and end with another

(b)have one parent using one practice and the other parent using another (these were the least) or one practice for what they will say and another practice with what the parent will do (these were the most).

They mentioned that the parents would shout, beat and then force the child to study, followed by relenting, talking nicely and then scolding and beating or send to boarding school; only one girl said that the parents would not treat the girl the same because parents do not beat girls.

When the responses of the children are compared to those of the parents, it can be seen that the children have mentioned more authoritarian practices than the parents and fewer authoritative practices. The combination practices are also more and there are no permissive practices mentioned by the children.

**Situation 2:** This story is about a boy named Tommy. Tommy is six years old. One day, Tommy goes with his parents to a shop to buy grocery. He sees a toy he likes and asks loudly for it. The parents say ‘NO’. On hearing this, he starts shouting and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Total Girls</th>
<th>Total Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MM (6)</td>
<td>EM (6)</td>
<td>MM (6)</td>
<td>EM (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mix of three</td>
<td>2 (33.3%)</td>
<td>3 (50.0%)</td>
<td>1 (16.7%)</td>
<td>1 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: MM - Marathi medium; EM – English medium
crying loudly and everyone is the shop can hear him and they stare at him.

Children were asked three questions with regards to this case

I. What would the parents say to the child?
II. What would the parents do to the child?
III. If the child was a girl and not a boy, would the practices be the same?

TABLE 5.12
Situation 2: Parents’ Response to the Situation: Words and Action

| S. No. | Responses  | Girls | | | Boys | | | | Total | | | Total |
|-------|------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
|       |            | MM (6) | EM (6) | MM (6) | EM (6) | Girls (12) | Boys (12) |
| 1     | Authoritarian | 2 (33.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 3 (50.0%) | 2 (33.3%) | 2 (16.7%) | 5 (41.7%) |
| 2     | Permissive | 1 (16.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (16.7%) | 1 (16.7%) | 1 (8.3%) | 2 (16.7%) |
| 3     | Authoritative | 1 (16.7%) | 3 (50.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (16.7%) | 4 (33.3%) | 1 (8.3%) |
| 4     | Mix of three | 2 (33.3%) | 3 (50.0%) | 2 (33.3%) | 2 (33.3%) | 5 (41.7%) | 4 (33.3%) |
|       | Total       | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   |

Note: MM- Marathi medium
EM – English medium

Overall, the patterns seen with the first case are repeated here. Boys are responding with more authoritarian responses and girls have higher authoritative responses. Boys have also responded with more permissive practices. The age of the child is an important consideration as it is seen that the authoritarian practices are lower here.

Authoritarian practices: Parents feel insulted and shout, or ask the child if he has gone completely mad, or demand an explanation, or keep very quiet, and all of them said that finally it would lead to a beating.
**Permissive:** Here, the children said that because the child was small, the parents would indulge in him and buy him what he wanted, and if they were short of money they would promise to get it later and meanwhile will buy him some smaller and more affordable gifts to keep him quiet.

**Authoritative practices:** They described how the parents would quietly explain to the child that he is not small, that the toy is not fit for him, that if he continues to behave badly, then he will never be given anything and then take him out of the shop and take him home.

**Mixed practices:** The responses in this section were; explaining lovingly or shouting or getting angry initially and giving in to demands, the mother begging good behaviour and father threatening, or convincing the child to postpone gratification of wants. Two children, one girl and one boy mentioned that a girl would never throw a tantrum in public so this story does not apply to girls at all.

**Part II-Sharing Personal Experiences**

For this closed question, children marked their personal experiences of being disciplined by marking on the various disciplining practices - whether they were frequently experienced, occasionally experienced or not experienced at all. The practices were part of a creative activity which has been explained in detail in the chapter on Research Methodology. The practices mentioned were mixed and randomly placed in the question, but for clarity, responses have been separated into the four practices explored - authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful. Two responses from children are shared here - the first by a girl from the English medium and the second, a boy from the English medium (who chose to write in Marathi).

**Note:** There was a typology error in this section of the tool. The researcher forgot to mention in the instruction that if the practice was not experienced, than there was no need to join the dotted line and it was to be left just the way it is. However, this instruction was given verbally to all the children during the orientation, before the activity began.

*The Marathi medium children used a translated tool in Marathi.*
FIGURE 5.5
Sharing Personal Experiences-Response from a Girl

The Spider below has many legs. Each leg has the name of one disciplining that parent’s do with their children. The legs have been drawn as dotted lines. Which do you think are the disciplining that parents in general will use most often? Once you choose, use the red colour given to you and join the dotted line of those legs. Next, which is the disciplining that the parents use less than others? Use the green colour given to you and join the dotted line of those legs. If you have time, you can colour the spider if you want and add anything else also to the drawing as you wish.

Thank You So Much for participating in this research! ©

I think parents should be very loving. If the child does something wrong they should not shout at him but they should convince them peacefully.

They should never be violent with children such as some parents lock children in the room.
FIGURE 5.6
Sharing Personal Experiences-Response from a Boy

Translation from Marathi to English: ‘They should behave well with us. They should explain to us in a way that we understand. They should never be unfair to small children.’

The Spider below has many legs. Each leg has the name of one disciplining that parent’s do with their children. The legs have been drawn as dotted lines. Which do you think are the disciplining that parents in general will use most often? Once you choose, use the red colour given to you and join the dotted line of those legs. Next, which is the disciplining that the parents use less than others? Use the green colour given to you and join the dotted line of those legs. If you have time, you can colour the spider if you want and add anything else also to the drawing as you wish.

Thank You So Much for participating in this research! 😊
FIGURE 5.7
Parents’ Disciplining Practices Experienced by Children—Authoritarian

![Bar chart showing frequencies of different practices experienced by children in Marathi and English mediums.]

**Note:** MM - Marathi medium  
EM – English medium

**Authoritarian:** The four practices explored here were

- Making the child feel ashamed
- Finding faults all the time with the child
- Shouting Loudly
- Beating the child

Being shouted at loudly and being beaten, was the most experienced by all the children. Making the child feel ashamed was less experienced by the Marathi medium children. All the Marathi medium boys have experience of fault finding by parents, and on the other hand, this was the least experienced among all the practices by the other children. Overall, it is seen that boys, and within that the Marathi medium boys, have more experiences of authoritarian practices than girls.
Permissive: The permissive practices were

I. Allowing the child everything
II. Giving the child everything asked.

The Marathi medium boys had the maximum experience of being given everything that they asked for. The English medium girls had the least experience of this set of practices. Overall therefore, the boys have more experience of permissive practices than girls.

Note: MM- Marathi medium; EM – English medium

FIGURE 5.9
Parents’ Disciplining Practices Experienced by Children-Authoritative

Note: MM- Marathi medium; EM – English medium
**Authoritative:** The authoritative disciplining practices in this section were

I. Explaining lovingly

II. Forgiving mistakes made.

The girls, especially the Marathi medium girls have the most experience of this set of practices. The English medium boys having the least experience. Within the experiences, all the Marathi medium girls have frequent experience of the situation/problem being explained to them lovingly and some English medium boys has no experience of this practice. Boys then are having less experience of these practices than girls.

**FIGURE 5.10**

Parents’ Disciplining Practices Experienced by Children-Neglectful

Note: MM- Marathi medium

EM – English medium

Neglectful. The practices in this section are

I. Do not notice anything is wrong

II. Not bothered by the child’s behaviour.

Overall, the boys, especially the Marathi medium boys, had more experience of these practices. The girls, especially the English medium girls, had the least experience of these practices. Together, the English medium children had less experience of neglectful practices.
Discussion

Though the children interviewed for this research were not the children of the parent respondents, yet they belonged to the same class in school with a similar socioeconomic background like the children of the respondents. So it can be stated in general, that there is a significant difference between the responses of children and the responses of parents. The children, especially the boys, had marked more authoritarian practices, whereas the fathers had marked fewer authoritarian practices. There were more permissive practices and fewer authoritative practices marked by the children, especially the practices of the boys. The mixed practice responses are also more than those marked by parents.

The boys had more experiences of authoritarian, permissive and neglectful practices, whereas girls had more experiences of authoritative practices. Boys had more varied experiences. The findings in both sections of the responses of children are matching in this regard. It can be seen by their responses to ‘occasional experience’ in each set of practices - parents are using a combination of various practices for their children, in which case, the girls are experiencing more mixed practices. Parents are using a combination of various practices for their children with boys having more experiences of all of a combination of authoritarian, permissive and neglectful practices. The differences in disciplining practices for girls and boys which are evident in the findings of the parents and the teachers are also seen here. Similarly, combination or co-varying and co-occurring practices are seen in the responses of parents in earlier sections.

5.3. Responses of Teachers

‘The Master said, “A true teacher is one who, keeping the past alive is also able to understand the present.”’ (Analects 2.11)

- Confucius

There are various ways teachers can share information about parenting disciplining practices. First, their observations of the child’s behaviour in class, motivation to work, moods and emotions seen and shared by the child, and their interaction with peer, teachers and the parents. Teachers are also often the recipients of confidence from both the child and the parent, especially in moments of crisis. These opinions of experienced teachers are thus vital in understanding the practices of parents from an objective point of view.

- Occasions for meeting parents

Most teachers met the parents on open day, which is once in two months. But most also said that some parents were met often as per the need, if there were issues.
• **Common topics of interaction with parents**

The most common topic of interaction with parents was regarding the performance of children which included discussions if grades had gone down or work was incomplete. All teachers discussed this.

Next, the disciplining practices of parents was discussed, most in relation to the child’s behaviour at school, followed by low to get them to be better behaved at home and motivate them to study, concentrate better.

• **Main concerns shared by parents with teachers**

The main concerns shared by parents were regarding behaviour problems; disobedience, deliberately harassing parents, temper tantrums, stubborn and adamant, naughty and getting into trouble, poor social skills and poor habits of time management and personal hygiene (with many more boys having hygiene problems than girls).

The other concerns were regarding; obsessive habits like T.V. viewing, playing etc. and poor study habits.

• **Three most common disciplining challenges faced by parents**

These were same as mentioned in the third point, in addition the teachers stated that obsessive viewing of cartoons on T.V. and computer and mobile games were worrisome habits in children as they observed how it reduced the capacity of children to do well in studies and made them disobedient.

• **Observation by teachers of frequency of disciplining by parents in key areas of the child’s life**

This was a closed-end question where they marked observations regarding key areas in a child’s life, where disciplining is practiced by parents. Parents are seen to be disciplining their children often in studies, followed by learning to adhere to the values and beliefs of the family and community. Third is age specific self-care and self-responsibility.

• **Observations of Gendered Differences in Disciplining by Parents**

Teachers are in a position to be observers of how parents deal with their children. A number of Marathi medium teachers (71.4%) feel that there are differences in parental disciplining practices for boys and girls. Fewer English medium teachers (52.9%) believe the same. This matches the findings to the same question by the parents of the two mediums.
- **Experiences of disciplining shared by the children with their teachers**

This was a closed-end multiple choice question. Teachers were asked if they had experienced the children sharing the following disciplining practices of parents - spanking, beating, encouraging, explaining and discussing, verbally abusing, neglect, isolating, keeping all promises made, shaming, threatening, nagging and not keeping promises. They were also asked about the feelings that the children either shared or they directly observed with regards to these practices. The teachers often shared more than one feeling for the practices. The findings show that though all disciplining practices are sometimes shared by children, the positive practices are shared most often with the teachers. Feeling sad and angry were the most shared or observed feelings of children with regards to negative practices, whereas they appeared most confused about being spanked and isolated. With the negative practices, the children also appear to experience a gamut of feelings, which include indifference and even confusion. These child outcomes of disciplining are mentioned in detail in the review of literature.

- **Teachers’ observations of disciplining practices of parents: on various occasions and excessive practices if any**

There were two open-end questions that explored the disciplining practices of parents which were observed by teachers. The first dealt with observations made in specific situations like open-days, sports days and annual days; and the second question simply asked if they had noticed any excessive practices of parents.

**FIGURE 5.11**

Disciplining Practices of Parents Observed by Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical punishment of child</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal punishment of child</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative emotional reactions of parents</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive reactions</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response from Teachers
While some teachers made single word comments, some described their observations in detail and five English medium teachers did not reply to this question. The emerging categories were:

**Physical punishment of the child:** This included beating the child for poor achievement and complaints from teacher, burn marks of spatulas, smacking, pinching, grabbing and shaking the child vigourously while pointing out mistakes.

**Verbal punishment of the child:** This included yelling, shouting, scolding, humiliating, threatening and warning and disciplining the child verbally even in a crowd and making the child answer the questions and spellings in front of the teacher to convince her that the child actually knows.

**Negative emotional reactions of parents:** This included crying, getting very nervous and criticising the child in public, making emotional appeals to the child, depression and extreme anger. Some parents complained about the child publically, while others made emotional appeals to the teachers to help them correct the child. A few mentioned that some parents had a very casual approach, while some of them blamed the teachers for poor performance or behaviour problems in school. While a few showed no reaction, some went to extreme of stopping recreational activities. Overindulgence and overprotection of children was also becoming common as compared to a decade ago.

**Positive reactions:** The positive reactions of parents were the fewest. They were; talking quietly to the teacher to find out the problem areas and discuss solutions, encouraging and reassuring the child, never saying anything negative to the child in public, being respectful to teachers no matter how upset they were, taking positive steps to rectify mistakes and problems and showing a lot of love and support for the child.

Regarding abusive punishment noticed, while some teachers chose not to respond, more than 50 per cent said that they had no observations. However, those who did respond have used the words ‘few’, ‘some’, and ‘several’ cases, leading to the conclusion that it was not a rare occurrence for children to face harsh punishment. Some examples they shared were - a ten year old child beaten black and blue by his father, a mother angry with the constant squabbling between siblings burning the child with a hot cooking ladle, several cases of physical abuse by mothers who were angry about their children’s poor academic achievement, several cases of extreme fear and anxiety in young children whose parents had threatened them with dire consequences like abandonment, and at least four cases of major burn injuries inflicted by parents.
Changes in parental disciplining practices in key areas over the last decade

In this open-end question, teachers were asked if they had observed changes in parental practices of disciplining their children in six key areas in the last ten years. The overall finding was - Marathi medium teachers (35.7%) said practices were better earlier and a similar percentage said that they are better now with (28.6%) saying that there are no differences in practice; the English medium teachers shared (50.0%) saying things were better a decade ago, 29.4 per cent said it is better now, with 20.6 per cent mentioning that there were no differences in practices. The responses to the six key areas are given below:

**Studies:** Several said that overall the attitude of parents was more positive earlier and they taught their children in a more positive way. However, some said that parents presently chose to encourage and discuss rather than use coercion, as was done earlier. The English medium teachers said that increasing academic qualifications of parents over the decade has not benefitted the children as they continue to go for tuitions. On the other hand, the Marathi medium teachers felt that though many parents have not completed their schooling, they are more literate now which is proving helpful to the children.

**Academic achievement of children:** Several said that parents a decade ago were more relaxed, supportive and less competitive and took responsibility for the child not performing. The present generation of parents praise their children yet are excessively competitive, have unrealistic expectations, compare their children to others, have no time to help the child and tend to blame the teachers for everything. Present parents were better because the children were taught to be more focused on studies, parents being more educated they are able to assist and cooperate with teachers to help the child improve. A few said situations were the same as there was excessive pressure then and the same continues with these set of parents.

**Extracurricular activities:** The attitude of present day parents is competitive with regards to extracurricular activities as well. Present parents are more pushy, watchful and obsessed with achievements even in extracurricular activities as compared to parents a decade ago. The Marathi medium teachers added that earlier very few parents encouraged their children but now they see the value of these activities and are more encouraging.

“We are told that we are now ‘facilitators’ not ‘teachers’. So the relationship is now more professional rather than loving and close”. - A teacher
**Relationship with peers:** Most teachers felt that relationship with peers was much better a decade ago. The difference was that earlier parents would permit friendships and children were expected to respect them, cooperate and play without conflict, whereas nowadays, the true spirit of friendship seems to be lost and those allowed are friendships of convenience and transitory.

**Relationship with parents:** Ten years ago, relationship with parents was one of awe, respect and obedience. Parents were stricter and children shared with their parents only if they were asked to whereas now it is one of friendship relaxed and open.

**Relationship with the teachers:** A decade ago, children were more respectful and obedient and less of a problem then they are now said some teachers. The relationship with the teachers was one of awe and respectful fear and obedience. They are friendly now and openly share with the teachers, but often it is felt that their friendliness is because they have been told to be so by their parents, and not of genuine feelings for the teacher, said few. Devotion to teachers, which is part of our culture has reduced greatly, rued a few.

- **Teachers’ observation of disciplining practices of parents in different family situations**

  This was a mixed method question where teachers were asked if there was a difference in disciplining practices of parents with their children in the five following situations and teachers have given yes/no responses with explanations for their choices. More than 60 per cent of teachers said that there were differences; however, their maximum responses were for the difference between single mother/single father and for both working/only one working (70.8% of responses for both areas) and the least for the birth order (54.1%). The differences they shared in the open-end section of the question were as follows:

  **Single mother/Single father:** All the teachers who said that there were differences have unanimously said that a single mother has a tougher time than a single father. The reasons were - single mothers had to multi-task much more between home and work, a single mother with children rarely remarried whereas a father inevitably did, single mothers were also thought to be more caring, stricter and yet more loving and more vigilant.

  **Families: Joint/Nuclear:** Here, teachers have said either one of the type of families are better for disciplining the child. Those who said that joint families were better felt multiple caretakers were beneficial and that the child learnt more from grandparents. Some felt nuclear families were better - there was no confusion, more control on
the child, and parents were stricter, gave quality time to children and children were not pampered and were much more independent.

**Both parents working/Mother a homemaker:** Most respondents maintain that children in crèches do not imbibe their family’s culture, are deprived of adequate attention and supervision and some are neglected while some are indulged and some do poorly in school. This often leads to behaviour problems in children and they turn to watching television for comfort. Both sets of teachers, in general did not approve of working mothers.

**Single child/more than one child:** Some shared the disadvantages of the single child; they were invariably pampered, did not learn to share and cooperate, were lonely and missed having siblings. The advantages mentioned by some were; the single child was a high achiever, more balanced and disciplined. Some shared the disadvantages of more than one child - parents were often confused as they had to change practices to suit different personalities, infighting and competition was often bad for them and parents found it difficult to make time for children besides struggling financially.

**Birth order: differences between disciplining elder siblings and younger siblings:** With the first child, parents were stricter, had higher expectations and put pressure on the child to become a good role model for younger siblings. With the younger child, parents were lenient and more indulgent, but the child had to follow and obey the older sibling. These expectations lead to resentment in both. Some parents also had preferences for the male child.

- **Suggestions from teachers to improve disciplining practices of parents**

  This was an open-end question which asked teachers if they feel that parents needed inputs on disciplining practices. A significantly large number of teachers, (75.0%) said that parents, especially parents of Marathi medium children, did need inputs on effective disciplining. Only 12.5 per cent said ‘no’ and another 12.5 per cent had no comments. This matches the findings in the Parents’ section where a large number of them have said that they would want help in strengthening their disciplining practices.

  **Teachers suggestions for appropriate practices:** parents had to learn to explain the mistakes to a child in a loving way and not reprimand or humiliate the child in public. They felt many problems arose because mothers tend to overprotect the child; instead, they should make them independent and teach them to be responsible. Parents also needed to increase communication with the child and not pressurise the child to excel in studies. Some tended to compare their children to others instead of encouraging friendship and social interaction.
Discussion

As observed by teachers, the areas where parents were seen to be disciplining children most often were related to the overall development of the child and the assimilation of the child within the community, especially important in collectivistic cultures. While a number of Marathi medium teachers maintain that parents do have differential practices for girls and boys, only around half the English medium teachers thought the same, highlighting the difference between the teachers of the two mediums. This in fact follows the same pattern seen when parents discussed gender differences. Children were more comfortable sharing their positive experiences with teachers than their negative experiences. The obstacles to sharing in terms of the classroom situation highlights the need for a counsellor in every school. Parental methods of dealing with infringements of disciplining boundaries by children have been observed by the teachers as largely punitive and coercive with very few being positive reactions. The key areas where parents disciplined their children were explored for changes in the last decade. More English medium teachers have said that practices were better a decade ago, while the Marathi medium teachers maintain that they are better now, because the parents of the present children are more educated and therefore able to understand the proceedings in schools and help their children. Teachers have shared areas where parenting practices have deteriorated - obsessions with achievement which includes extracurricular activities and restricting friendships and unrealistic expectations even from children with limited academic abilities. However, relationships with parents and teachers seem to have improved, though some teachers appeared to be resentful with the friendly attitude of children, rather than the respectful distance that children had earlier. More than 60 per cent of the teachers also said that there were differences in parental disciplining practices in different situations. The differences were apparent due to the social situation, which led to more challenges for the single mother, the challenges of the joint family system and the challenges of a nuclear family. The teachers belonging to the same society would also have more or less similar expectations from different segments of society. Finally, a significantly large number of teachers mentioned that parents needed inputs to improve disciplining practices, with most of them indicating that the main inputs needed was coping with a changing society and its different demands.

- Discussion: An Overview of Parental Disciplining Practices for their Children

What stands out as an important element is that parents are trying hard to keep their children rooted within the Indian cultural context without letting them miss out on the positive outcomes of a society moving towards a global world. In the process, they appear to be clinging to some areas – expecting obedience to parents, elders and
the beliefs of society and the strong need for the child to fit into the expectations as defined by the age cohort the parents belong to, while being more indulgent, lenient and forward looking at the same time. This also explains why a large number of parents are using a mix of disciplining practices, more than what they themselves have experienced as children.

Another key understanding is that parents’ thoughts differ from their actions in situations for most of them, and that there is an attempt on their part to control and reduce the impact of their authoritarian thoughts when it comes to taking action when there is need to discipline a child. Whereas for some it is the authoritative practices, for some others the use of mixed practices (co-occurring or sequentially following) is used more in disciplining children. Children have shared the possible outcomes of disciplining practices of parents to similar situations, with opinions of more authoritarian and mixed practices being used. Since a large number of parents also maintain that they have problems in disciplining their children, the impact of these mixed practices, on the disciplining outcomes of their children may not necessarily be the right choice. If these practices are purposefully mixed, it would have better outcomes, but it appears that for many parents, it would be a trial and error method of disciplining. Teachers on the other hand have shared observing and noticing the outcomes of mostly the authoritarian practices of parents, which again indicates that these practices are higher than the parents have reflected and shared.

Finally, a re-look at the Model of Disciplining Styles in the Review of Literature (figure 2.2.), juxtaposing it with the findings from this chapter, gives an overview of the parental disciplining practices for their children in the middle childhood stage. As per the responses of all the respondents, the practices were high in Demandingness, Monitoring and Control (both behavioural control and psychological control). They were also high on Responsiveness and Support for the children. However, it appeared from the responses, that the practices were more parent centred (that is, where the needs and wishes of the parents are the centre of the decisions) rather than child centred (that is, where the needs and wishes of the child are in the centre of the decisions) and parents were more inclined towards non-inclusion of children in the decision making for the practices. More than what could be done ‘with’ the child; the responses were more about what could be done ‘to’ the child and ‘for’ the child. Thus elements of authoritarian practices were more apparent in their attitudes (neglectful practices were not explored with parents which has been explained in detail in the chapter on Methodology) but there were also a large number of them who used mixed practices as well as those who used authoritative practices. Permissiveness in practice was a choice of only a small number of parents for some situations but however, it was seen often in combination with other practices with many of them. Lastly, there were not only gendered differences in the practices of the parents but also practices experienced by
the girls and boys. Being a patriarchal society, boys have been given more leeway and
girls though corrected more authoritatively (as per the children’s’ own responses) but
are watched closer and there appears to be more expectations from them not to make
mistakes whereas with the boys the expectations are more about not repeating them. As
these children get older, the differences would be more marked in many of the situa-
tions. Overall then, parents appear to be using various practices, some of them are using
authoritarian and authoritative with very few following only permissive practices, and
the largest number of them then using a mix of practices; co-occurring or sequentially
following, depending on the situation. Even those following authoritative practices are
diluting them with elements of both authoritarian and permissive practices as clearly
authoritative practices which are child centric and inclusive, are not the hallmarks of a
traditional society, which has been borne out in the responses.

**Review of literature and the Findings.** At this stage the review of literature is re-
ferred to, to help in enriching the workshops and training programmes recommended
for parents.

First, a look at the developmental milestones of children in the middle childhood
stage informs us that: the social development of children in the middle childhood stage
mentions that comparisons become an inevitable part of their lives as they are com-
pared to peer and expectations from adult caretakers and parents become prominent.
When the findings from the teachers are compared to this, it is seen that when parents
vent their frustrations in the form of negative practices in public spaces especially in the
school, it will be going against the developmental needs of the child and adding to the
problems faced by parents in disciplining children.

Next, the emotional development of children in the middle childhood stage men-
tions that development of positive attitudes towards school, peer and self is also im-
portant. Therefore, encouragement, patience and positively disciplining are important
elements of skills to be learnt by parents and also teachers. When the parents’ emphasis
on obedience is seen throughout the research, this is seen as more important for parents
to understand.

Regarding the behaviour of the child, first in the review of literature (2.4) the quote
by Baumrind very clearly explains the meaning of abusive punishment. This would be
a good guide to parents as abusive punishment, especially the continuum from spanking
to hitting the child is not clear and it would be essential for parents to know the differ-
ence to avoid both parents and children touching the “upper and lower” limits of toler-
ance as mentioned in the Control Theory of Parenting which forms into the coercive
cycles as mentioned in the Model of Coercive Cycles.
Abusive and other inappropriate punishment/disciplining of children occurs when parents make inappropriate attributes about the capacity of the child and the reasons for their behaviour as mentioned in The Attribution Model of Parenting. When they say they do not understand the motives of their children’s’ behaviour or when they have very high aspirations and make demands on their children, it is possible that some parents have not judged the development of the child or the attributes assigned to their behaviour properly. An understanding of the developmental needs of the children and learning to access the actions of their children properly would thus be an important part of the parental training programmes.

The next chapter concludes the findings from this research and makes recommendations for the future.