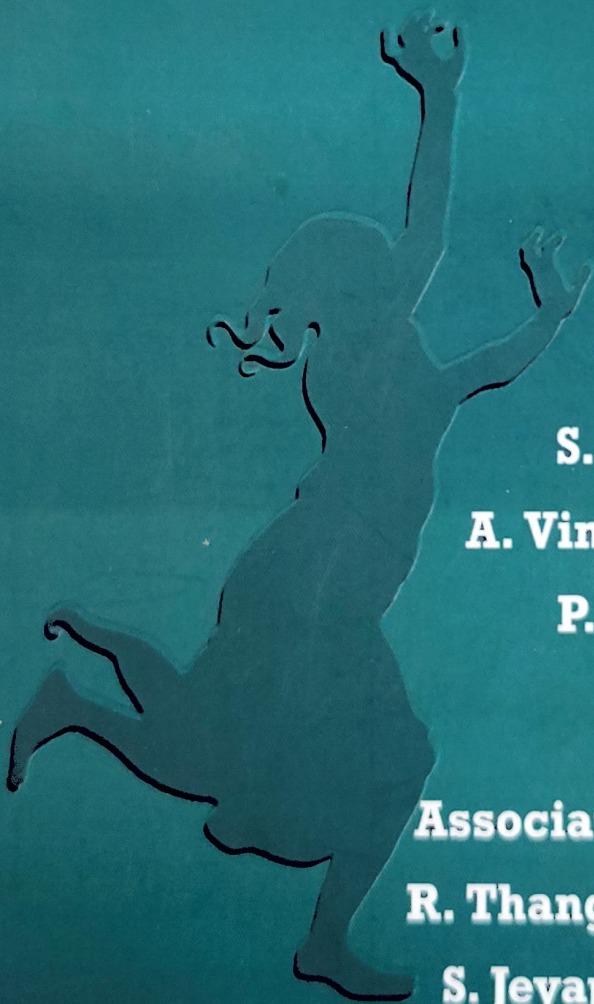

PSYCHOLOGY IN ACTION

(An IQAC Publication)



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Parenting is the Process of Caring

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Introduction

Parenting is the process of caring, bringing up and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parents have the power to make a unique difference in their children's cognitive, emotional, social development. In the words of Brooks (1987), Parenting is "the process or the state of being a parent". Morrison (1978) defined parenting as "the process of developing and utilising the knowledge and skills appropriate to planning for, creating, giving birth to, rearing and providing care for offspring". According to Encyclopaedia of Psychology, A high-quality parent-child relationship is critical for healthy development(cited in APA 2018)

Parenting Psychology is the science of parenting. It is process of applying psychological principles in bringing up the child. It means studying the parent- child relationship from infancy to adolescence. Parental psychology is defined as scientific study of child rearing practices, styles of parenting and the major components of parenting. It is the process of understanding how parents affect the social emotional and cognitive development of their infants and toddlers.

Parenting psychology explores the role of parents as caregivers, playmates and teachers. It is the duty of the parents to

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teach their children how to behave in various situations. It explains how the parents should manage the child's budding aspirations, needs and instil the sense of social responsibility and self-control. Also it focuses how the parents should care not to undermine the child's curiosity, creativity, initiative, interests and feelings of personal competence. It explores how parents influence their children to develop positive attitude, skills and motivation to learn. In the words of Williams et al. (2009) parenting psychology deals the emotional climate for interaction between parent and children.

Scope of parenting psychology

It focuses the following areas

- i. The major dimensions of parenting
- ii. Patterns or styles of parenting
- iii. Parenting practices
- iv. Parental socialisation
- v. Parent's lifestyle and its impact on child development.

i. The major dimensions of parenting

The two major dimensions of parenting are

a. Acceptance / Responsiveness

It refers to the amount of support and affection given by the parents to their children. It depends on how much they encourage their children to achieve the goals. They express a great deal of warmth, even though when a child misbehaves. Less accepting and relatively unresponsive parents are often quick to criticize, belittle, punish or ignore a child. They rarely communicate to children and less lovable in nature.

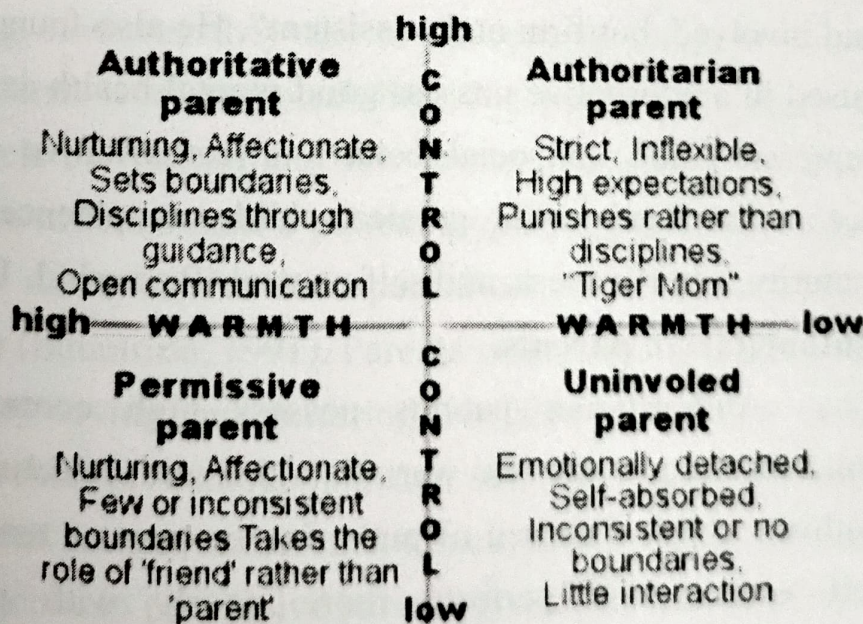
b. Demanding/ control

It refers to the amount of regulation or supervision parents undertake with their children. Controlling or demanding parents place limits on their children's freedom of expression by imposing many demands. They always monitor their children's behaviour to ensure that the set rules are followed. Less controlling /demanding parents are much less reactive. They make fewer demands and allow children considerable freedom to pursue their interests and make decisions about their own activities.

ii. Patterns or Styles of Parenting

Diane Baumrind introduced the concept of parenting psychology to explain differences in the way parents attempt to control and socialize their children. She created the Baumrind Parenting Typology on various patterns of parenting, based on her investigations on parent-child interactions. She classified parenting style under four categories: authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent and neglectful.

PARENTING STYLES



Authoritative parenting

Parents in this category are reasonable and nurturing, set high expectations, employ child-centred disciplinary practices, provide guidance and engage in frequent communication with their children (Baumrind, 1991). They set high levels of moral reasoning and raise their children as markers of moral conscience, and prosocial behaviours (Krevans & Gibbs, 1996). This style of parenting is more associated with positive well-being of adolescents as they encourage verbal communication and give-and take policy. Nijhof and Engels (2007) viewed that authoritative parenting style played an influential role in developing the children psychologically and socially. This is particularly because authoritative parenting style helps the children to develop higher level of self-reliance, self-esteem, self-image and coping strategies (Parker & Benson, 2004). Authoritative parenting is flexible and they set limits and ensure that their children follow those guidelines. They establish clear rules which are consistently enforced and are positively rewarded with warmth and affection. Steinberg (2001) concluded that authoritative parents are "warm and involved, but firm and consistent". He also found that children raised in authoritative possess good mental health and showed less depression and antisocial behaviour. Authoritative parenting has been associated with greater child competence, exceptional maturity, assertiveness, and self-control (Baumrind, 1991).

Authoritarian parents

Authoritarian parents possess high control over their children and provide less warmth and a cold, rejecting relationship with the child. Children of authoritarian parents tend to have low self esteem and perform more poorly with peers and in

school. (Sanders, M.R.). The authoritarian parent employs a strict discipline style characterized by minimal negotiation with the child. They have high expectations, limited flexibility, frequent use of punishment, and one-way communication from parent to child (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritarian parenting has been associated with child outcomes such as hostility, delinquency, rebelliousness, and antisocial aggression (Baumrind, 1991). Chorpita & Barlow, (1998) found that a child's early experience with excessive parental control tends to correlate with the development of anxiety. Rapee (1997) proposed that the low warmth is associated with child's depression. According to Baumrind (1991), authoritarian is coercive, whereas authoritative is an accepting and supportive.

Indulgent or Permissive

It is the pattern of parenting in which an accepting but lax pattern of parenting in which adults make relatively few demands, permits their children to freely express their feelings and impulses, do not closely monitor their children's activities and rarely exert control over their behaviour. These parents provide the same level of warmth and attention that is provided by authoritative parenting, however they fail to enforce the discipline reward to help children learn responsibility. The permissive parent exhibits high levels of warmth and low levels of control. He or she acts more like a friend than a parent, employing a lax discipline style with few rules, little to no expectations, and minimal guidance or direction (Baumrind, 1991). Parents with this style have a tendency to be very loving and nurturing, but also allow their children to solve problems without parental involvement. Calzada, 2001 studied that lack of involvement, lack of follow through, and lack of confidence in permissive parenting were important predictors of

child behaviour problems reported by both parents and teachers. Because permissive parents tend to be non-demanding, it becomes much more difficult to control children's behaviours and outline boundaries in children's environments (Baumrind & Black, 1967). Chen et al., 2000 had found links between the excessive parental indulgence often found in permissive parenting practices and children showed decreased social competence and academic achievement. Permissive parenting has been linked to bossy, dependent, impulsive behaviour in children, with low levels of self-control and achievement and a failure to learn persistence and emotional control (Baumrind, 1967). These children tend to grow up to be more self-centred.

Neglectful or uninvolved parenting

This style of parenting is developed by Maccoby and Martin in 1983. It is a pattern of parenting that is extremely lax and undemanding approach displayed by parents who have either rejected their children or so overwhelmed with their own stresses and problems that they haven't much time or energy to devote to child rearing (Maccoby & Martin, 2003). The uninvolved parents do not have proper communication and control over their children. They never maintain any discipline and children enjoy excess freedom. As a result their children misuse their over freedom to the maximum. This form of parenting fails to provide children with the warmth or care and fails to include the rules and teaching of responsibility. These children feel highly insecurity and show many negative developmental delays. The uninvolved parent is not responsive in developing positive attitude, moral values and show poor nurturance to the child (Baumrind, 1991). Children of uninvolved parents show high behavioural problems and

depression (Downey & Coyne, 1990). Moreover adolescents of uninvolved parents show high levels of rejection, aggressive behaviours, delinquent behaviours, hostility, and attention problems (Ruchkin et al., 1998; Meesters et. al., 1995; & Barnow et al., 2002). (Nijhof & Engles, 2007) perceived that children of uninvolved parents experiences high level of stress and poor problem solving ability and poor coping strategies.

iii. Parenting practices

According to Darling & Steinberg (1993) Parenting practices refers to specific behaviours that parents use to socialize their children. Parenting practices include

a. Parental involvement

It means how well the parents are communicating and spending their quality time with their children. In other words it is a consistent, positive relationship between parents' engagement in their children's education and their outcomes. According to Harris and Goodall (2007) parental involvement includes parental behaviours, parenting practices such as parental aspirations for their child's academic achievement, parental communication with their children about school, parental participation in school activities, parental communications with teachers about their child and parental rules at home.

b. Parental monitoring

Dishion and McMahon (1998) defined parental monitoring as "a set of correlated parenting behaviours involving attention to and tracking of the child's whereabouts, activities, and adaptations". Parents who monitor their children's behaviour after school were likely to have high achieving children than parents who do not monitor their children's behaviour. Parental monitoring

includes supervising an adolescent's choice of social settings, activities and friends. Parental monitoring of adolescents was linked with higher grades, lower sexual activity and less depression (Jacobson & Crockett,2000). Lack of adequate parental monitoring is the parental factors which is related to juvenile delinquency.

c. Parental goals, values and aspiration

It means how the parents set smart goals to achieve, imbibe social values cultural values and personal values and develop the level of aspirations to achieve more. According to the American Psychological Association, parenting practices around the world share three major goals: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults, and transmitting cultural values (APA, 2018 cited in Mullins & Sarah, 2018).

Effective Parenting Practices

Parenting takes many different forms, but some parenting practices work well across diverse families and settings. The committee's report looked at the evidence in the scientific literature and found these key ways parents can support their child's healthy development:

- Show warmth and sensitivity
- Have routines and household rules
- Talk with the child
- Read books for them
- Provide constructive feedback
- Respect the feelings of the child
- Appreciate their accomplishments
- Provide conducive environment
- Use constructive discipline
- Identify the needs the children

- Motivate the child to do the best
- Provide opportunity to develop the talents of the child

iv. Parental socialisation

Parents can socialise their children by communicating, the goals that they want their children to attain, the aspirations they want their children to fulfil, and the values they want their children to internalize, such as punctuality, finishing homework on time, adjusting with the community and family. Parents can serve as regulators of opportunities for their children's social contact with peers, friends and adults. Parents play an important role as monitors of adolescent's social relationships and as social initiators and arrangers (Parke & Buriel, 1998)

v. Parent's lifestyle and its impact on child development.

The development of the skills and values and social behaviours depend totally the personality and behaviours of the parents. Parents who talk and read regularly to their children usually produce children with more vocabularies and high academic achievement scores (Kagan, 1998). Parents who reason with their children while making requests for obedience usually end up with more civil children (Baumrind, 1967). The family is the most important factor to gain intellectual and social skills. Parents also influence their children through their own characteristics. If the parent is affectionate and talented the child possesses desirable behaviour and feels more confident. In contrast the child who feels rejected, gets punishment often develops undesirable behaviours. (Kagan, 1998). Also such children possess more anxiety or anger if the parents criticise their children.

Relevance of Parental Psychology

The knowledge of parental psychology is very essential for the parents for the following aspects

- i. Parents can establish an appropriate balance between control and autonomy, and can provide opportunities to develop independence, positive attitude and a good individual
- ii. They can give educational, vocational and personal guidance that children need .
- iii. They can help children to understand social relationships and nurture the essential qualities for being a socially competent person
- iv. They can influence their child's emotional wellbeing their warmth and involvement.
- v. Parents can provide better provide better counselling on emotional problems and coping mechanism to deal stress and strain experienced by them.
- vi. They can influence child's all round development of personality.
- vii. The parents help the child to develop gender identity (a sense of maleness of femaleness)that becomes central aspect of one's personal identity.
- viii. The knowledge helps the parents to set clear rules and explanations to facilitate children's awareness of parental values.
- ix. Parents can help the child to develop moral behaviour through moral reasoning and warmth.
- x. The parents can help to change the stereotypical Beliefs.

Conclusion

No two individuals are alike, every child, every teen, and every situation calls for differential approaches. Hencethe

knowledge of parental psychology helps the parents to follow good parenting techniques so that they can develop attachment with parents, good social behaviours and cognitive performance.

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