

Original Research Article

Effect of education and socio-economic status on parenting among pre-school and school going children

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ABSTRACT

Background: Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting is a complex activity that includes much specific behavior that works individually or together to influence child's outcomes.

Methods: It is prospective observational study carried out in the Department of Pediatrics, Shyam Shah Medical College and associated Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India during the period from July 2008 to June 2010. Parents were interviewed with predesigned proforma. Parenting was graded in to three grades (1, 2 and 3) according to the performance of parents in various aspects of parenting.

Results: In this study, 60 parents had 155 children constituting 2.5 children per family and male to female ratio was 1.18:1. We observed that literate parents performed well in all aspects of parenting (i.e. behavioral, physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, nutritional), but illiterate parents could not score on these points especially in spiritual and nutritional aspects. 33% graduate parents fulfilled the criteria for grade 3 parenting in nutritional aspects, 55% intermediate passed parents in nutritional aspects were in grade 3, whereas there were more than 50% parents in behavioral, physical and emotional aspects who had education level up to primary class.

Conclusions: Educational status of parents has a positive impact on almost all aspects of parenting and the educational status of mothers appeared to be even more influential. Socioeconomic status of parents and residential area have a great influence on all aspects of parenting.

Keywords: Education, Parenting, Pre-school children, School going children, Socio-economic status

INTRODUCTION

Parenting refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship.¹ It prepares the child to enter into the next phase of life. today's child is gripped with multitude of stresses such as making career choices, attending to schools, to develops a social identity, acquiring social skills to establish meaningful relationships, choosing a partner and establishing an

appropriate sexual identity etc. He/she is expected to excel in his academic pursuits. Mounting parental pressure and economic constraints, nuclear families, rising number of working mothers have added to the problems of parentin.²

Pre-school (two years to six years of age) and school going children (first four to eight years of Childs formal education, often including kindergarten or first grade)

have a great effect by parenting due to their developmental period. In some countries, this has resulted in crisis in child rearing, such as increase in number of unwanted children, avoidance and refusal to rear the children, confusion and inappropriateness in child rearing, inappropriate discipline; overprotection and over control, change in sex roles and attitudes, preoccupation with education and relentless pressure on scholastic achievement. Parenting affects all faces of life-infancy, toddler, pre-school and school going children.³

Although race may be a significant contributing factor, social class, wealth, and income have the strongest impact on what methods of child rearing are used by parents. All these situations aroused sufficient thought in our mind and led to this study. The aim of this study is to assess the association of different aspects of parenting with educational status, socioeconomic status and residential area.

METHODS

The study entitled is a prospective study carried out in the Department of Pediatrics, Shyam Shah Medical College and associated Gandhi memorial Hospital, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India during the period from July 2008 to June 2010 after taking necessary permission from ethical committee. 60 family heads were selected on

parent’s teachers meeting in a primary school (after taking necessary permission from school) by random selection method. These family heads had 64 preschool children and 91 school going children. They were interviewed by self- made proforma consisted of questionnaire about general information along with knowledge of parents in following aspects of parenting (based on parenting style and dimension questionnaire).^{4,5}

- Physical aspect
- Behavioral aspect
- Emotional aspect
- Mental aspect
- Spiritual aspect
- Nutritional aspect.

Each question in every aspect was given 2 marks. All parents were included in the study who willingly took part in the study. Those parents who refused to take part in the study and who lived away from their children were excluded from study. Based on their responses, parenting was graded as grade I, II and III in each aspect and compared with socio-economic and educational status of parents. Table 1 shows how grading is done in each aspect of parenting. All means were compared by chi-square test. The level of significance for all tests was 0.05. Analysis was conducted using the SPSS version 10.0 software.

Table 1: Scoring in individual aspect of parenting in pre-school and school going children.

Aspect of parenting	Pre-school group	School going children group
Behavioral	Grade I (2 marks)	Grade I (2-6 marks)
	Grade II (4 marks)	Grade II (8-12 marks)
	Grade III (6 marks)	Grade III (14-18 marks)
Physical	Grade I (2-4 marks)	Grade I (2-4 marks)
	Grade II (6-8 marks)	Grade II (6-8 marks)
	Grade III (10-12 marks)	Grade III (10-12 marks)
Emotional	Grade I (2-8 marks)	Grade I (2-8 marks)
	Grade II (10-16 marks)	Grade II (10-16 marks)
	Grade III (18-24 marks)	Grade III (18-24 marks)
Mental	Grade I (2-4 marks)	Grade I (2-4 marks)
	Grade II (6-8 marks)	Grade II (6-8 marks)
	Grade III (10-12 marks)	Grade III (10-12 marks)
Spiritual	Grade I (2 marks)	Grade I (2 marks)
	Grade II (4 marks)	Grade II (4 marks)
	Grade III (6 marks)	Grade III (6 marks)
Nutritional	Grade I (2 marks)	Grade I (2 marks)
	Grade II (4 marks)	Grade II (4 marks)
	Grade III (6 marks)	Grade III (6 marks)

RESULTS

In the study, 60 parents had 155 children constituting 2.5 children per family and male to female ratio was 1.18:1. 21 (35%) parents had preschool children, 14 (23%) parents had school going children and 25 (41%) parents had both preschool going as well as school going children. 64 (41.2%) children were of preschool going age and 91 (58.8%) children were of school going age.

About 105 (67.7%) children belonged to rural area (29.9% preschool and 71% school going) while 50 (32.2%) belonged to urban area (68% preschool and 32% school going).

Among 91 school going children, there were 48 (52.7%) males and 43 (47.3%) females. 56.2% males and 46.5% females belonged to age group 6-10 years. 41.7% males

and 46.5% females belonged to 10-15 years, whereas only 2% male and 6.9% female belonged to age more than 15 years.

Author found that 19 out of 60 parents were living as nuclear (32%) families, while 41 parents out of 60 were living as joint families (68%).

Further analysis revealed a preponderance of nuclear families (63.2%) in urban area, while joint family pattern in rural area.

Table 2 shows the socioeconomic status (according to modified Kuppuswamy scale) of 60 parents- 8.3%, 23.3% and 25% belonged to class II, II and IV respectively in rural area, while in urban area- 1.6%, 15%, 18.3% and 8.3% belonged to class I, II, III and class IV respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of parents according to socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic status	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Rural	-	5 (8.3%)	14 (23.3%)	15 (25%)	-
Urban	1 (1.6%)	9 (15%)	11 (18.3%)	5 (8.3%)	-
Total	1 (1.6%)	14 (23.3)	25 (41.6%)	20 (33.3%)	-

Table 3 shows the educational status of parents included in the study. The study revealed that the Mothers were less educated than fathers, 27 (45%) mothers of study cohort were illiterate as compared to fathers 17 (28%).

Only 12 (20%) mothers and 15 (25%) fathers were graduate in view of comparison, each score of all parents in every aspect of parenting was averaged and compared to the education status and socio-economic status.

Table 4 shows co-relation of parenting grades with educational status of parents. Authors observed that literate parents performed well in all aspects of parenting (i.e. behavioral, physical, emotional, mental, spiritual,

nutritional), whereas illiterate parents could not score on these points especially in spiritual and nutritional aspects.

About 33% graduate parents fulfilled the criteria for grade 3 parenting in nutritional aspects, 55% intermediate passed parents in nutritional aspects were in grade 3, whereas there were more than 50% parents in behavioral, physical and emotional aspects who had education level up to primary class, while none of the illiterate or primary passed parents were in this category. Co-relations were statistically significant. Table 5 shows co-relations between socio-economic status and grades of parenting. Maximum parents of the present study were belonging to class II, III, and IV as per modified Kuppuswamy scale.

Table 3: Distribution of parents according to educational status.

Educational status	Mother	Father
Illiterate	27 (45%)	17 (28.4%)
Primary	03 (5%)	02 (3.4%)
Middle	08 (13.4%)	07 (11.7%)
High school	07 (11.7%)	10 (16.7%)
intermediate	03 (5%)	09 (15%)
graduation	12 (20%)	15 (25%)
Total	60	60

Table 4: Co-relation of various aspect of parenting with educational status of father.

Education status of father	Behavioral	Physical	Emotional	Mental	Spiritual	Nutritional
Graduate (15)						
Grade 1	1 (6.6%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.6%)	3 (20%)	4 (26.6%)
Grade 2	6 (40%)	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.4%)	5 (33.4%)	5 (33.4%)	6 (40%)
Grade 3	8 (53.4%)	6 (40%)	8 (53.4%)	6 (40%)	7 (46.7%)	5 (33.4%)
Intermediate (9)						
Grade 1	1 (6.6%)	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	4 (26.6%)	3 (20%)	4 (26.6%)
Grade 2	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)
Grade 3	5 (55.6%)	5 (55.6%)	7 (77.8%)	4 (44.5%)	4 (44.5%)	5 (55.6%)
Higher secondary (10)						
Grade 1	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)
Grade 2	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	2 (20%)
Grade 3	6 (60%)	5 (50%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)
Middle (07)						
Grade 1	-	4 (57.1%)	1 (14.2%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)
Grade 2	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.2%)	3 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)
Grade 3	5 (71.5%)	4 (57.1%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)
Primary (2)						
Grade 1	-	1 (50%)	-	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Grade 2	-	-	1 (50%)	-	-	-
Grade 3	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	-	-
Illiterate (17)						
Grade 1	8 (47%)	10 (58.8%)	4 (23.5%)	11 (64.7%)	13 (76.4%)	14 (82.3%)
Grade 2	4 (23.5%)	2 (11.7%)	5 (29.5%)	4 (23.5%)	4 (23.5%)	3 (17.6%)
Grade 3	5 (29.5%)	5 (29.5%)	8 (47%)	2 (11.7%)	-	-

Table 5- Co-relation of various aspect of parenting with socio-economic status of the head of family.

Kuppuswamy class	Behavioral	Physical	Emotional	Mental	Spiritual	Nutritional
Class II						
Grade 1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grade 2	-	1 (7.1%)	-	2 (14.2%)	-	-
Grade 3	14 (100%)	13 (92.8%)	14 (100%)	12 (85.7%)	14 (100%)	14 (100%)
Class III						
Grade 1	10 (40%)	12 (48%)	9 (36%)	10 (40%)	9 (36%)	10 (40%)
Grade 2	8 (32%)	7 (28%)	6 (24%)	5 (20%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)
Grade 3	7 (28%)	6 (24%)	10 (40%)	10 (40%)	11 (44%)	9 (36%)
Class IV						
Grade 1	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	6 (30%)	12 (60%)	10 (50%)	11 (55%)
Grade 2	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	4 (20%)	5 (25%)
Grade 3	5 (25%)	5 (25%)	10 (50%)	6 (30%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)

$\chi^2 = 0.92, P > 0.633$ Insignificant.

Parents of higher socioeconomic status were found performing better in all aspects of parenting, as in spiritual and nutritional aspects of parenting 100% parents of class II socioeconomic status were categorized in grade 3 parenting, while only 36% parents of class III and 20% come in class IV but data was statistically insignificant. 40% parents were belonging to class III and 55% parent were belonging to class IV and none of the

parents were belonging to class II, in spiritual and nutritional aspects of grade 1 parenting.

DISCUSSION

Day et al, also found that parents who are younger, have less education, have experienced strict parental discipline, have poorer mental health and/or endorse conservative

religious ideology are more likely to spank their children as noticed in our study.⁶

Area wise differences were noticed in the study cohort in different aspects of parenting. As in behavioral aspects 29% parents of the rural were categorized in grade 3 parenting while in the same category there were 96% parents of urban area. In the same way at a very important aspect of nutrition it was seen that only 17% parents of rural areas were categorized in grade 3 parenting. Even though the joint family pattern is more prevalent in rural areas, parents in rural areas could not score highly due to environment and social structure, whereas urban parents scored well in all aspects due to good neighborhood environment. This shows that residential area and environment are having a great influence on parenting.⁷

Hashima and Amato, also state in their study that many parents, who have limited resources and perceive that they have little social support may treat their children harshly, particularly when they face significant additional stresses or a crisis.⁸

In the study, maximum no. of parents in the present study were belonging to class II, III, and IV as per modified Kuppaswamy scale. Parents of higher socioeconomic status were found performing better in all aspects of parenting, as in spiritual and nutritional aspects of parenting 100% parents of class II socioeconomic status were categorized in grade 3 parenting, while only 36% parents of class III and 20% comes in class IV.⁹

Hanson et al, noticed that poverty may reduce the parents capacity to provide adequate food and other resources such as health care, limit access to safe neighborhoods and good schools, interferes with cognitive and social development in children by reducing parental responsiveness, warmth, and supervision and by increasing, maternal distress, inconsistent discipline practices and use of harsh punishments.¹⁰

Smith et al, found that Developmental risk, particularly academic failure, increases as family resources decline. Children who were poor had lower scores on measures of intelligence, verbal ability, and achievement than children who were never poor, and the effect seems to get stronger as children age.¹¹

Present study is also correlating well with the findings of above-mentioned ones.

The study concluded that educational status of parents has a statistically positive impact on almost all aspects of parenting and the educational status of mothers appeared to be even more influential, socioeconomic status of parents also influences the parenting skills.

The socioeconomic status (according to modified kuppaswamy scale) of 60 parents- 8.3%, 23.3% and 25%

belonged to class II, II and IV respectively in rural area, while in urban area- 1.6%, 15%, 18.3% and 8.3% belonged to class I, II, III and class IV respectively.

The study revealed that the Mothers were less educated than fathers, 27 (45%) mothers of study cohort were illiterate as compared to fathers 17 (28%). Only 12 (20%) mothers and 15 (25%) fathers were graduate.

Maximum no. of parents of the present study were belonging to class III and class IV as per modified Kuppaswamy scale, 24% parents were belonging to class III, and 25% were belonging to class IV in spiritual and nutritional aspects of grade 2 parenting. 40% parents were belonging to class III and 55% parent were belonging to class IV and none of the parents were belonging to class II, in spiritual and nutritional aspects of grade 1 parenting.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

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