

PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN IN NAGALAND

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of parents on the academic behaviour of children in the state of Nagaland, India. The samples consisted of 35 male residences of three-rehabilitation centers of Dimapur district, Nagaland. The samples were drawn by using random sampling method. A self-constructed questionnaire was employed to collect the data. The data were analyzed and converted into percentage to obtain the results. The findings of the study suggested that there was an imbalance in the parenting method applied by the parents. Inconsistency in the home environment was also found to be another cause of children's behavioral deviation. Further findings of the study revealed that parental substance abuse was not directly related to children's substance abuse.

Keywords: Parental Influence; Academic Behavior; Nagaland

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I. INTRODUCTION

The transition of children from a biological being to an efficient social being does not happen by magic, nor does it happen overnight. It is a rigorous process that needs time and effort. It is a fact that children are born with immense capabilities, but the unfolding of these capabilities happens only when interaction with the outside environment takes place. This 'outside environment' starts with the parents. Starting with the mother's womb, the first contact any child experiences with the outside environment are their parents, consequently, making the role of parents the most crucial for children's development. Parenting is a never-ending job and demands careful execution as it is double edged. Upbringing can make or break a child's life (Sudeshna Guhasarkar, 2020). The family context plays a fundamental role in the personality development of children and adolescents (Ribeiro, 2007; Relvas & Vaz, 2007) Although children learn from everything that is around them, ultimately, it is the parents who lay the foundation of everything that is to be learned, and it is also the parents who controls and manages the learning environment for their children even outside the family. Parental role cannot be substituted by any kind of sophisticated school nor can it be replaced by any kind of highly informative digital learning.

Children are the chip off the old block', the influence of parents on their children's lives is paramount. Children learn through conscious and unconscious imitation in the family. Children are like sponges- they model everything a parent does and incorporate what they see into their own lives (Rose Erickson, 2018). The behavior of the parents and the way they conduct themselves in front of their children greatly influence the children's behavior. Parent's supportiveness and relationship quality are reciprocally related to children's behavioral problems (Julia S Go, Marcia J Carlson, 2014) Children learn more by watching their parents' behavior than through the instructions and advices given to them. Kids do not remember what you try to teach them, they remember what you are (Jim Henson). It is through learning within the family and parenting, that the child develops socially and psychologically (Vaz & Relvas, 2007). Every parent desires their children to be efficient, disciplined and well integrated into the social system, but to bring it to pass; they need to be well parented towards that goal. As children are the mirrored images of their parents, the parents need to model those behaviors that they want their children to inculcate.

II. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEWS

J. M. Jenkins and M. A. Smith (1991) in their study, *Marital Disharmony and Children's Behaviour Problems: Aspects of a Poor Marriage that Affect Children Adversely* found that, as parental conflict increased; there was increase in lack of care of the child, and parental aggression towards the child. The study further indicated that, lack of parental care, parental criticism and parental aggression towards children were significantly associated with increased child behaviour problems.

Mo-Yee Lee (2001) in her study entitled, *Marital Violence: Impact on Children's Emotional Experiences, Emotional Regulation and Behaviours in a Post-Divorce/ Separation Situation* found that marital violence, as reported by the mothers was associated with children's internalizing problems. Marital violence was also found to be associated with children's reported experience of negative emotions like sadness and anger. Further findings

of the study revealed that children's reported anger mediated the relationship between marital violence and children's total behavioural problems.

Paul Webley and Ellen K. Nyhus (2005) in their study Parental influence on children's future orientation and saving, investigated how parental inter-temporal choices influenced the economic behaviour of their children. The results revealed that, parental behaviour such as discussing financial matters with children and parental orientations like conscientiousness and future orientation had weak, yet clear impact on children's economic behaviour as well as on economic behaviour in adulthood.

Jolien Rijlaarsdam et.al (2012) in their study, Economic Disadvantage and Young Children's Emotional and Behavioural Problems: Mechanisms of Risk found that, for both internalizing and externalizing problems, the mechanisms underlying the effect of economic disadvantage included maternal depressive symptoms, along with parenting stress and harsh disciplining. The lack of provision of learning materials in the home was indicated as an additional mechanism explaining the effect of economic disadvantage of internalizing problem scores. The results suggested that interventions that focused solely on raising income levels might not adequately address problems in the family processes that emerge as a result of economic disadvantage. Thus the researchers suggested the implementations of policies to improve the mental health of mothers with young children. It was also suggested that the home environment of the children were needed to change in order to change the economic gradient in child behaviour.

Samiullah Sarwar (2016) in the study influence of parenting style on children's behaviour found that authoritarian parenting style led children become rebellious and develops problematic behaviour. The study further indicated that the parents who spent maximum time with their children reduced the probability of developing delinquent behaviour among their children. Spending more time together with the adolescents reciprocated through reducing their problematic behaviours.

Gloria Moroni, Cheti Nicoletti and Emma Tominey (2019) found that harsh parenting, poor mental health of the mother and limited time spent in interactions between children and parents could create stressful environment for children, and amplify their behavioural disorders.

Many investigations have established positive relation between the parental behaviour and children's behaviour. Children by nature learn mostly through imitating their parents. Thus it becomes important for the parents to model such behaviours which are favourable for their children's behavioural development. Parental conflicts, substance abuse, financial problems, divorce etc. are detrimental to children's behaviour problems. Research also reveals that the emotional behaviour and mental health of the parents, especially that of the mother, has adverse impact on the behaviour of the children. In view of the enormous research findings, we can safely conclude that the children's behaviour is reflections of their parents' behaviour. Thus, it becomes very essential to put more effort and attention towards this area of study as behaviour of the children can make and at the same time break the children's future.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is believed that differential behaviors among the children are the direct result of differential child rearing methods applied by the parents. The way children turn out to be, their behaviors, attitudes, attributes, skills etc. all are attributed to their upbringing. If the children turn out to be honest and compassionate, it is because of the parenting, and if the children turn out to be the opposite, it is also because of parenting. Parents are praised and even blamed for what their children become. Today, one can find massive research literatures dealing with the issue of parental influence on different domains of children's behavior. Researchers and scholars, social scientists and child psychologists alike collectively agree to the colossal influence of parents on their children's behavioral development.

At present time, technology has profound impact on children's behaviour. The way they socialize, the ways they think and understand have become completely different from the past generations. We find that many children of the present generation are gradually distancing themselves away from their parents. Children's misbehavior has become a common sight. Children today, do not like to be interfered and does not appreciate being told what to and what not to do by the parents. The whole mindset of the children of modern generation has completely changed over time. As the parent-child relationship gap widens, we find many behavior related issues such as children becoming victims of drugs and alcohol, increase in school dropout rates, increasing numbers of juvenile offences etc. on the raise. However, the question arises that, is this growing issue solely the cause of fast-paced technological\social development and parent- children generation gap? Or rather, do the parents of present generation need to do a reality check and reconstruct the parenting blueprint they acquired from their parents? Thus, there are many questions in this regard which needs to be studied and researched. Consequently, the present study seeks to understand the magnitude of parental influence on children's behavior and examine how far the parents are responsible, or not responsible, for their children's behaviors with special reference to the state of Nagaland.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to get the right solution, clearly defined objectives are imperative. Research objectives describe the expected achievements of a research and provide a road map towards answering the queries raised by the research study. A research objective is a clear, concise, declarative, statement, which provides direction to investigate the variables under the study (Dr Maheswari Jaikumar, 2018).

The study aims to investigate in what ways the parents influence their children's behaviors in relation to academic performance influenced by social, financial, and academic background of the parents. It also researches into the areas of pedagogy and emotional support of the parents for the academic performance of the children.

V. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on descriptive method of educational research. The descriptive research is a research method that describes the characteristics of a population or phenomenon studied. It is used to obtain information concerning the status of a phenomenon to describe 'what exist' rather than 'why it exists' with respect to variables or conditions in a

situation. It is a non-experimental research design to discover new meanings and to provide new knowledge regarding a phenomenon of interest.

Parents influence their children's overall behavioral development, be it social, emotional, physical, psychological, educational etc. The present study however, aims to examine the parental influence of the parents specifically on academic behaviour of the children within the state of Nagaland only. The population consists of all the male candidates admitted for recovery in rehabilitation centers of Nagaland. Simple random sampling method was used to draw 35 (male only) samples from three rehabilitation centers of Dimapur, Nagaland. A self-constructed questionnaire that was established basing on five specific areas of parental influence viz, emotional, social, financial, pedagogical and academic achievements of the parents was employed as tool to gather the primary data. The questionnaire was furnished to the concerned centers for approval before it was administered to the residents. For the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher sought prior written permissions from the concerned directors of the centers and administered the questionnaire in person.

1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

| Sl. no | Variable (Emotional) | Response | | Total | Percentage % | |
|--------|---|----------|----|-------|--------------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
| 1 | Did your parents encourage you to express your feelings freely at home? | 28 | 07 | 35 | 80% | 20% |
| 2 | Did you sometimes feel that your parents were critical and judgmental when you share your problems? | 26 | 09 | 35 | 74% | 26% |

Table 1 reveals that 80% of the parents encouraged their children to express their feelings freely at home and 20% did not encouraged their children to express their feelings freely. 74% of the children felt that their parents were critical and judgmental about their problems, while 26% felt that their parents were not critical and judgmental about their problems. The table indicates that the children were encouraged to be at liberty to speak their mind at home. However, the parents were critical while dealing with their children's problems.

Table 2

| Sl. no | Variable (Social) | Response | | Total | Percentage % | |
|--------|--|----------|----|-------|--------------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
| 1 | Is any of your parents into drugs or alcohol? | 17 | 18 | 35 | 49% | 51% |
| 2 | Do you think your family is well respected in the society? | 29 | 06 | 35 | 83% | 17% |

Table 2 reveals that 49% of the respondents' parents were into different kinds of drugs and alcohol and 51% of the parents were not into any kind of drugs and alcohol. 83%

of the respondents felt that their families were respectable families in the society and 17% felt that their families were not respectable families.

Table 3

| Sl. no | Variable (Financial) | Response | | Total | Percentage % | |
|--------|---|----------|----|-------|--------------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
| 1 | Did you ever feel burdened about paying your school fees? | 09 | 26 | 35 | 26% | 74% |
| 2 | Have your parents ever suspended your pocket money or curb your spending? | 18 | 17 | 35 | 51% | 49% |

Table 3 reveals that 74% of the respondents were not made to feel burdened about paying their school tuition fees and 26% of the respondents were burdened about paying their school tuition fees. 51% responded that their parents never suspended their pocket money nor curb their spending and 49% responded that their pocket money and spending were managed by their parents. The table indicates that the children were not given any monetary burden regarding their school expenses. However, their spending was not managed by their parents.

Table 4

| Sl. no | Variable (Pedagogical) | Response | | Total | Percentage% | |
|--------|---|----------|----|-------|-------------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
| 1 | Did your parents talk about your school activities at home? | 23 | 12 | 35 | 66% | 34% |
| 2 | Did your parents regularly attend parent-teacher meetings? | 17 | 18 | 35 | 49% | 51% |

Table 4 reveals that 66% of the parents discussed their children's school matters at home and 34% did not discuss their children's school matters at home. 49% of the parents regularly attended parent-teacher meetings and 51% did not attend parent-teacher meetings regularly. The table indicates that there were regular parent-child discussions regarding children's school matters at home. However, there was irregularity in the parents' attendance in school parent-teacher meetings.

Table 5

| Sl. no | Variable (Academic Achievement of Parents) | Response | | Total | Percentag % | |
|--------|--|----------|----|-------|-------------|-----|
| | | Yes | No | | Yes | No |
| 1 | Were your parents high achievers at school? | 09 | 26 | 35 | 26% | 74% |
| 2 | Did your parents know the matters of your school subjects? | 15 | 20 | 35 | 43% | 57% |

Table 5 reveals that 74% of the respondents' parents were not high achievers at school and 26% were high achievers. 57% of the parents were not aware of their children's school

subject matters and 43% were aware of their children's school subject matters. The table indicates that the respondents' parents were not high achiever at school and they were not aware about their children's school subject matters.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the data collected reveals that the children are provided with the liberty to express their feelings, thought and problems at home. This indicates a positive and understanding home environment, which is advisable and has been advocated by experts as conducive for the emotional development of children. However, the data further indicates that the parents while dealing with the problems and issues of the children tend to judge and criticize the children. This indicates that, the parents' way of handling their children's problems and mistakes are unfavorable in terms of their emotional growth. In order to ensure favorable emotional behaviour development of the children, it is extremely important that the parents exhibit consistent emotional behaviour and at the same time, maintain consistently favorable emotional environment at home. Being a good listener for the children is important, yet, the secret lies in 'understanding what was listened', otherwise the whole question of parent-child communication and freedom of expression provided by the parents becomes futile. Criticizing or being judgmental towards the children is never advisable for their emotional growth as it can make them rebellious, can also push them to become secretive, and can result in emotional immaturity. Every parent wants their children to have the best and be the best, and for that matter, parents corrects their children and shows disapproval so as to encourage them to make better choices and behave or discipline accordingly. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to maintain a balance between approval and disapproval.

Parental alcohol and drug abuse can be fatal for a growing child at home especially since children learns through imitation. The above data indicates that more than half of the participants' parents are free from any kind of drugs and alcohol, which is in fact, a positive sign of parenting. Many a times, parents who are into different form of substance abuse tend to be more distant from their children, the reason being that the parent-child attachment, warmth and being physically and emotionally present for the children becomes missing. This lack of attention and care from the parents can lead the children develop severe Attention Deficiency Syndrome leading to developing classroom misbehaviors such as side chatting, disobedience, sniping remarks etc. in an attempt to attract attention from friends and teachers. Parental substance abuse can result in children becoming substance abusers themselves as they might develop a belief that, it is normal to be a substance abuser since even their parents are into it. Another risk factor of children of such parents is that they have the risk of becoming emotionally immature and can develop social and behavioral mal-adjustments.

Further findings of the data analysis indicate that more than half of the participants belong to well respected families in the society. The social status of the family is one of the most important ingredients in bringing about wholesome development in the children as it determines the way of how children view the world. A respectable family is better equipped to produce children who are more confident, open minded, friendly, emotionally stable etc. Children from well-respected family are found to have higher self-esteem, which is the key to balanced personality development in children. Even in the academic field, children from better-respected families show more confidence in academics and they participate more actively in different school activities.

It is apparent from the data analysis that the parents never let their children stress about any of their school related expenses. However, it is also evident that the parents neither suspended nor curbed their children's spending. Burdening children with their school expenses can cause behavioral maladjustment among the children as it causes anxiety and stress on the children. This stress and anxiety can lead to children becoming maladjusted in the school environment leading to academic misbehaviors. Research findings reveals that when children are made to stress about their educational expenses, along with negative impact on their academic achievements, there can be number of other negative effects such as depression, severe grief, panic, confusion, substance abuse, detachment, lack of confidence and low self-esteem, insecurity, etc. Nevertheless, it is always advisable for the parents to manage their children's spending. Providing daily\ weekly\monthly allowances in the form of pocket money to children has both positive and negative effects. On the bright side, it teaches children the essential life skill of money management and financial independence. On the other side, it has inherent danger of making children develop thrifless behavior.

Parental participation in children's school activities has far-reaching benefits in terms of their academic behavior as well as their overall personality development. The data analysis of the present study indicates that home based parental participations such as parent-child communication regarding school matters at home, parental assistance in completion of children's assignments, having regular systematic home study routine etc. are systematically being carried out by the parents and children at home. However, the data also indicates that the school based parental participation such as parents' regular attendance in parent-teacher meetings; parent- teacher communication and parents' participation in the school activities etc. are not being effectively followed. Children benefit more when parents participate and guide them in their education both at home and at school. School based parental participation and home based parental participation need to have balance for better outcome. Research shows that the attitude of parents regarding education shapes their children's attitude towards their studies. Children of involved parents are better behaved at school and possess better social skills. Children's behaviour related problems at school such as truancy, indiscipline, suspension, irregularity, bully etc. can be reduced to a large extend when parents actively participate in their education.

The data analysis shows that 74% of the participants' parents were not high achievers at school and 54% were not aware of their children's school subject matter. Keeping in view of the data, parental ignorance of their children's subject matters might well be the consequences of their low educational achievements. Parents' understanding of their children's subject matter is necessary, as it will equip them with better-informed involvement in their children's education. The academic behaviour of the children is largely influenced by the educational achievements of parents. The level of parental education influences the amount of value they put on education and it automatically influence the amount of value their children have for education. Research indicates that better educated parents possess the advantage of knowledge and skills of childrearing that would help them to understand and deal with their children's problematic behaviors better and in a more rational manner. Education provides parents with the knowledge of understanding their children's school matters and enables them to facilitate their children's school works. Better-educated parents may possess positive qualities such as enthusiasm for learning, consistency, persistence, educational ambition, strong work orientation etc. that can positively influence their children's overall educational process.

VII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the study, we can infer that there is much inconsistency and imbalance in the parental behavior towards their children as well as in the home environment. Consistency is one of the most important tools of effective parenting. Inconsistencies of any kind in parental behaviour make children confused and lead them to develop stress and anxiety. It is imperative for parents to maintain a balance in their behaviour towards their children. Children should be protected and cared, yet hovering over their every movement and being a helicopter parent leads them to become dependent and incapable of controlling their own life situations. Home environment should be designed in such a way that it provides the children with warmth, care, love, support, stimulation, emotional and psychological security etc. to ensure stress free development for the children. For improving the academic behavior of the children, parents should encourage them to develop positive attitude regarding school and learning as a whole. Academic misbehavior of the children can also stem from what the children experience at home and thus, should be handled in a very careful manner so as not to further deteriorate their behaviour. It is always advisable to first find the cause of their misbehavior rather than punishing them or rather, 'understand their needs before understanding their behavior'. Parents should model such positive behavior as being organized, following rules, being disciplined, punctuality, respecting authority and friends, positive attitude, freedom of expression, taking initiatives etc. for stimulating positive academic behavior among the children. There is no denying that there is always a genetic factor present in children's misconduct and misbehavior, heredity is of course a very strong base in the behaviour development of children. Yet, the impact of environmental factors cannot be ruled out, as environmental factors around the children equally influence the children in their behavioral development. Thus, home environment and parental behavior towards the growing children are crucial in their behaviour development. As such, this immediate environment around the children should be conducive to ensure favorable behavior development.

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