A Study of Moral Development of Children and Good Habit Formation on Indian Child Rearing Practices Context

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ABSTRACT

Different religious, political, and cultural groups in India hold different opinions on how children should be raised. Given the wide variety of Indian cultures and traditions, it would be unfair to generalise about Indian parenting practices. Each family's unique set of circumstances, including their financial situation, level of education, and life experiences, shape their approach to childrearing. This study has surveyed the existing literature and synthesised theoretical frameworks, drawing attention to the applicability of theories such as Piaget's phases of moral development, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, and Gilligan's ethics of caring in a variety of cultural contexts. With an emphasis on Indian child-rearing techniques, this study investigates how family dynamics, cultural values, and socio-economic factors impact children's ethical thinking and behaviour. Important topics covered include how moral principles are passed down through families and communities, how religious teachings are included into the process of ethical development, and how digital media influences the way moral decisions are made. Aiming to promote moral reasoning and positive habit formation in children, the article also evaluated empirical studies and meta-analyses that highlight beneficial educational interventions and parenting techniques. The findings from this review states that children are fed with cultural learnings; however, this method does seems to be always positive and moral development of children and good habit formation among them is very important.

Keyword: Moral development, Habit formation, Children, Indian culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children are the future of the world and without effective moral development along with establishing good habits, they cannot be socially successful. It is important to understand this aspect as it provides value towards the cultural aspects and how it helps in shaping the children's ethical understanding and developing a positive behavioral pattern.

Children are the building blocks of future and it cannot be overlooked. It is important to develop morality and good habits in the children. With good morality and habits, children will be able to create their own safe space in the society and be a part of it. However, children cannot develop morality and good habits on their own. They need their family as family the first teacher they get to learn from. The style of upbringing given by parents in the family has a special impact. This known as child rearing. A family helps

a child in understanding the basics of moral values and good habits. A family teaches the child to differentiate between good and bad or right and wrong. Since the beginning of the socialization, family is considered as the most responsible part of child's learning.

Background and Significance of the Study: The Indian parenting style is unique but globally considered very successful. In comparison with most of the western countries, Indian families share a special bond. Indian parenting style helps in teaching morality and good habits to the children. Most part of this parenting style is followed since the ancient times. If the Indian parenting style is continued to be followed to the future generation with little more efforts in right directions, developing good morality and habits among the future children will be possible. The study focused on understanding the children's habit formation and their moral development. It discusses the importance of these aspects and also highlighted its impact on the children's personal well-being, especially in long run. The study also highlighted the impact of the cultural aspects on these development factors.

1.1. Moral Development in Children

As they grow up, kids learn to think about and make decisions based on what's right and wrong. This is called moral development. According to Piaget, there are several phases during which children grow from an egocentric perspective to one that recognises the need of norms and justice. Stages developed by Kohlberg that place an emphasis on conformity, social standards, and internalised moral ideals build upon this idea. By bringing attention to the role of connections and empathy in the formation of moral character, Gilligan's ethics of caring supplements this.

A child's moral development is impacted by various factors. Such factors comprise of the children's enviorment at their home like how their parents acts as their role models or how they are guided. It also comprises of the children's educational experiences and their relationship with their peers. All these highly impact their moral decisions. When confronted with moral dilemmas at a young age, children learn to weigh conflicting values and develop their own sense of right and wrong.

To fully grasp the cultural background of Indian child-rearing methods and how children develop their ethical thinking and behaviours, it is essential to understand these stages and influences. This realisation emphasizes upon several cultural settings in which cultural norms impact the development of habits and the maturing of children's moral character.

Indian parenting styles are varied and often influenced by cultural, regional, and socio-economic factors. Many Indian parents adopt an **authoritative style**, which balances high expectations with responsiveness. They set clear rules and encourage independence while providing support and maintaining discipline. Another common approach is **authoritarian parenting**, characterized by strict rules and high expectations with less open dialogue and flexibility, focusing heavily on obedience and discipline. Some parents practice **permissive parenting**, where they are highly nurturing and communicative but may lack consistent discipline, allowing children more freedom. **Neglectful parenting** is less common but involves low responsiveness and low expectations, where parents may not be as involved in their children's lives. Indian parenting often emphasizes respect for elders, academic success, and the transmission of cultural and religious values, adapting to modern influences while retaining traditional practices.

1.2. Good Habit Formation

The most important aspect for the healthy development of any child is training him/her with good habits, such as, positive behaviour, understanding the surrounding, decision making, and self-control. Habits,

which are defined as repeated behaviours carried out automatically in defined situations, are greatly influenced by carers and parents. When it comes to developing habits, parents are crucial because of the regular advice and reinforcement they provide. The establishment of regular study periods or sleep rituals, for example, gives children structure that aids in the internalisation of habits. The use of praise and awards, which are examples of positive reinforcement, helps to perpetuate good habits by rewarding good behaviour. Parental role modelling is also very important since it teaches youngsters to watch and imitate the actions of adults around them. Problems with reluctance to change, technological distractions, and inconsistent reinforcement still exist when trying to build good habits using these methods. Children have a developing thought-process and they are surrounded by several environmental factors that lead towards shaping of their habits; therefore, impacting their development and wellness.

1.3. Indian Child Rearing Practices

The cultural traditions and ideas that are deeply ingrained in Indian child-rearing practices have been shaped by historical events that have placed a focus on the significance of family and society. Children learn to respect adults and follow the norms set forth for them within the context of their family, which forms the basis of discipline and obedience. Another pillar is reverence for one's elders, which helps to strengthen relationships between different generations and teaches one to be humble and respectful. As a means to an end—one's own and society's progress—and a determinant of one's professional and social standing, education is of the utmost significance. An individual's moral character, as well as their ability to act ethically and integrate into society, are profoundly impacted by their religious and spiritual practices.

Source: https://www.thepeproject.com/images/thepeproject/character/CharacterDiagram1.png"
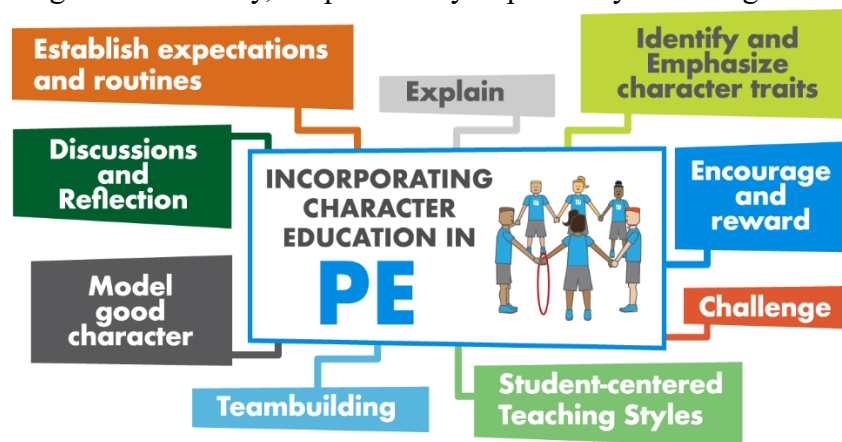
Child rearing is an important aspect and as mentioned in the above figure, incorporating character education can help a child develop on many grounds. Character education can comprise of organizing discussions among the children, provide reward to encourage them, help them understand the importance of team building, let them handle challenges, etc. All these factors can help children build a strong and positive character. This should be done both at schools and at home.

1.3.1. Types of child rearing practices in India

Indian child-rearing practices can be broadly categorized into several types based on cultural, regional, and social factors. Here are some of the common types:

Type	Practices
Traditional Practices	**Joint Families**: Extended families involved in raising children. **Respect for Elders**: Emphasis on obedience and respect. **Discipline**: Often strict to maintain societal norms. **Gender Roles**: Traditional roles for boys and girls.
Modern/Urban Practices	**Nuclear Families**: Parents primarily responsible for upbringing. **Education**: High focus on academics and extracurricular activities. **Balanced Discipline**: Mix of traditional and positive reinforcement. **Gender Equality**: Encouraging equal opportunities for boys and girls.
Religious and Cultural Practices	**Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian**: Involvement in religious rituals and teachings.
Rural Practices	**Community Involvement**: Neighbors and extended family help raise children. **Traditional Knowledge**: Skills related to local customs and agriculture. **Resource Constraints**: Reliance on traditional remedies and education methods.
Tribal Practices	**Cultural Transmission**: Teaching of heritage and traditions. **Community-Based Rearing**: Multiple community members involved. **Rites of Passage**: Ceremonies marking development stages.
Socio-Economic Variations	**Affluent Families**: Access to better education and healthcare. **Low-Income Families**: Focus on basic needs and early labor involvement.
Regional Variations	**North India**: Traditional values and strong family ties. **South India**: Education and cultural heritage. **East India**: Community involvement and academics. **West India**: Blend of traditional and modern practices.

Developing moral values and good habits in children today involves a blend of consistent modeling of desired behaviors by parents and caregivers, open communication about the importance of these values, and creating an environment that reinforces positive actions. Parents should lead by example, demonstrating honesty, kindness, and responsibility in their own actions. Regular discussions about moral values, their importance, and real-life applications can help children understand and internalize these concepts. Encouraging children to practice good habits through positive reinforcement, setting clear expectations, and providing opportunities for them to make decisions and learn from their experiences also fosters moral development. Additionally, incorporating stories, books, and activities that highlight moral lessons can make learning about values engaging and relatable for children.

1.4. Interplay Between Moral Development and Child Rearing Practices

Children are under developing stage and it is important for them to bond with others. A child is most attached to the mother and this relationship is of high importance. This relationship helps in the development of the child. Thus, in order to have a healthy society, it is the goal of both parents and

educators to develop moral children. The complicated network of cultural norms and social conventions that exists in India is shown by the relation between the moral growth and the parenting techniques in India. This relationship is very important because it demonstrates the complex network that exists in India. Traditions and family dynamics play a major role in Indian child-rearing methods, which have a profound impact on children's moral development. From a young age on, children internalise values such as reverence for elders, submission to authority, and the need of education as a moral necessity. Different cultural approaches to childrearing, characterised by a greater emphasis on individualism or communal values, might have different effects on children's capacity to reason morally and make sound decisions. The effects of these activities on children's moral development and ethical behaviour can be seen in real life through empirical research and case studies from India. Based on these insights, it can be understood that morality of the children can be shaped positively.

1.5.   Challenges and Contemporary Issues

Challenges and issues are part of child rearing and faced by all parents and teachers. Especially in India and other developing countries that are facing continuous technological and social developments, raising the children through maintaining a balance within the cultural and modernization aspects is a major challenge. Individualism and personal liberty coexist with more traditional values like honouring one's elders and sharing household chores. This contrast calls for considerate methods to combine traditional cultural values with modern social standards. A new set of dynamics is introduced into children's development by the ubiquitous impact of media and technology. The proliferation of digital platforms presents both opportunities and threats to children's development, including cyberbullying and excessive screen time. To overcome these pressures, we need preventative measures that teach kids to think critically and be good digital citizens from a young age. Complex issues such as social fairness, environmental sustainability, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence are also part of the moral and ethical challenges that modern civilization faces. Family, guardians and teachers can put a combined effort provide positive development to the children comprising of resiliency and reasoning that can develop them to face such challenges and understand what is right. It is important to understand that challenges and issues will be there in raising the children with good morale and positive behaviour but with right direction and dedication, these issues can be resolved.

1.6.   Implications for Parents, Educators, and Policy Makers

Children needs to develop their moral grounds and good habits. This can be attained by combined efforts of the family, guardians and teachers. Modelling good behaviour, communicating expectations clearly, and creating nurturing environments are all ways parents can help shape their children to act ethically. By incorporating moral education into curriculum and cultivating a classroom climate that promotes empathy, critical thinking, and responsible decision-making, educators may bolster these values inside formal educational environments. Teachers can be better equipped to instruct students in moral reasoning and ethical principles if schools provide them with the necessary training and materials. Fostering stable families, expanding educational opportunities, and strengthening social networks are all ways to help children and their families from a policy standpoint. Efforts by policymakers to fortify parental leave legislation, expand affordable daycare options, and bolster social services that assist families in fostering the moral and social development of their children are commendable. With combined efforts, a positive

environment where children can attain a positive growth and make effective contributions towards the society can be attained. This will help in nourishing a positive mentality among the children.

4. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The research conducted by the Nucci (2001) over the cultural effects of the moral development of children evidently proved that there is a huge impact of the practices adopted by the society on the children's understanding of right and wrong. According to the findings of recent research conducted by Rao and Verma (2002) on moral education in India, the traits of respect for authority and community responsibility within family systems have been highlighted as being particularly important. Sharma and Srivastava (2010) investigated the ways in which religious teachings are incorporated into the process of forming children's moral ideals in India. the researchers found that there is a huge impact of spirituality over the development of morality in the children.

Another research by Banerjee and Srivastava (2008) that was conducted to investigate the impact of the factors associated with socioeconomic and morality of the children stated that there are huge differences among the development of moral values among the children belonging to different demographic backgrounds. Mishra and Panda (2018) conducted research to study the impact that different types of digital media have on the moral development of children. This was done in response to concerns that technology may interfere with the manner in which and the timing of ethical decisions made by individuals. The formation of children's ethical frameworks is influenced by a number of factors, including socialisation, educational methods, and cultural experiences. Brown et al. (2023) and Smith and Jones (2022) are two recent studies that have collated the most recent data on the development of morality across a variety of cultural contexts.

Educational interferences benefiting the learning of the children, especially in their development of the morality and habits, were evaluated by Green and Lee (2020) and White et al. (2021). The result showed that education is an important aspect and providing a properly structured education to the children can have positive impact over their learning. The formation of morality can be influenced by a variety of factors, including genetic predispositions, the effects of the environment, and the techniques of instruction. Researchers Johnson et al. (2019) and Garcia et al. (2020) conducted an analysis of these parameters in their respective meta-analyses. The findings of these researches provide a proper understanding of the methods that can be brought in use for developing a good moral and habits among the children. However, it was also highlighted that implementing all-inclusive methods that take into account the cultural diversity and the difficulties that are currently being faced in encouraging ethical behaviour in every region of the world has huge importance and cannot be ignored.

5. CONCLUSION

There are a great number of ideas that are not present in Western culture that are found in Indian culture. This study provides a review of prior research on the creation of habits and the development of children's moral characters. As this study demonstrates through its examination of Piagetian, Kohlbergian, and Gilliganan theories, the dynamics of the family, cultural norms, and socioeconomic level all play a part in developing the ethical thinking and acts of Indian children. In addition, the ways in which digital media and religious teachings have a role in influencing the moral choices that individuals make are also subject to discussion. The empirical research demonstrates that educational practices and parental guidance have a significant impact on the development of moral reasoning and beneficial habits during childhood. In

order to effectively address issues such as socioeconomic disparity and the pervasive presence of digital media, it is necessary to employ sophisticated tactics that encourage the development of ethical principles. The review recognises the significance of cultural variety in the process of shaping moral development and advocates for approaches that are culturally responsive in both educational and household settings. For the sake of future research, the changing norms of society and the consequences of technological improvements on moral education and the formation of habits should be the primary areas of concentration. Developing successful techniques to encourage ethical behaviour and character development in children all over the world can be accomplished by embracing multidisciplinary methods and cross-cultural viewpoints. This provides an opportunity in attaining a better understanding of the moral development of children and good habit formation on Indian child.

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