

ESSENTIALITY OF FAMILY EDUCATION IN FOSTERING A REFINED SOCIAL ORDER

Swami Gurunand Jnanathapaswi

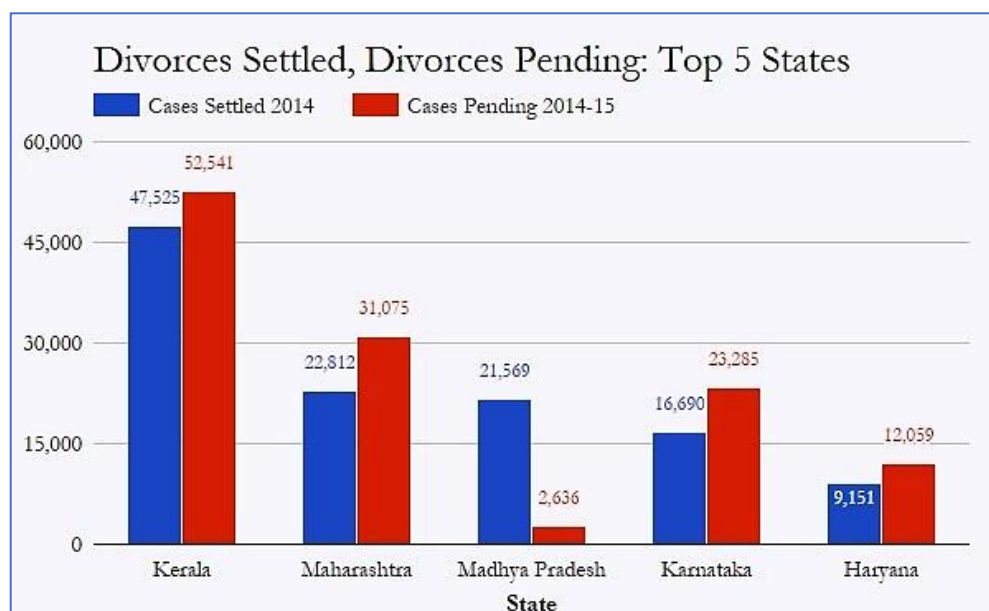
Research Scholar in Education, University of Kerala, MTTC Research Centre,
Thiruvananthapuram-15. e-mail: swamigurunand@gmail.com, Ph.: 7012108050

Prologue

The family is the first line of defence especially for children and a major factor in their survival, health, education, development, and protection. It is also a major source of nurturance, emotional bonding and socialization, and a link between continuity and change. It has the major potential to provide stability and support when there are problems. Human development can, thus, be enhanced by enriching family life (Desai, 1995a). Families in India are undergoing vast changes like increasing divorce and separation rates, domestic violence, inter-generational conflicts, social problems of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency etc. These changes indicate the inability to cope with the pressures of the modern life. In a fast-moving world that runs after money, power and pleasure; parents are facing constraints in spending 'quality time' with their children. They are trying to substitute their 'presence' with 'presents.' This is affecting the children's emotional and moral development to a large extent and nothing to say about spiritual development. At the same time, many of the so-called parents were not able to provide themselves as effective caregivers. The majority of the parents are unsure of their childrearing practices. They slither along the path of childrearing and it is the children who are being left alone in a dilemma.

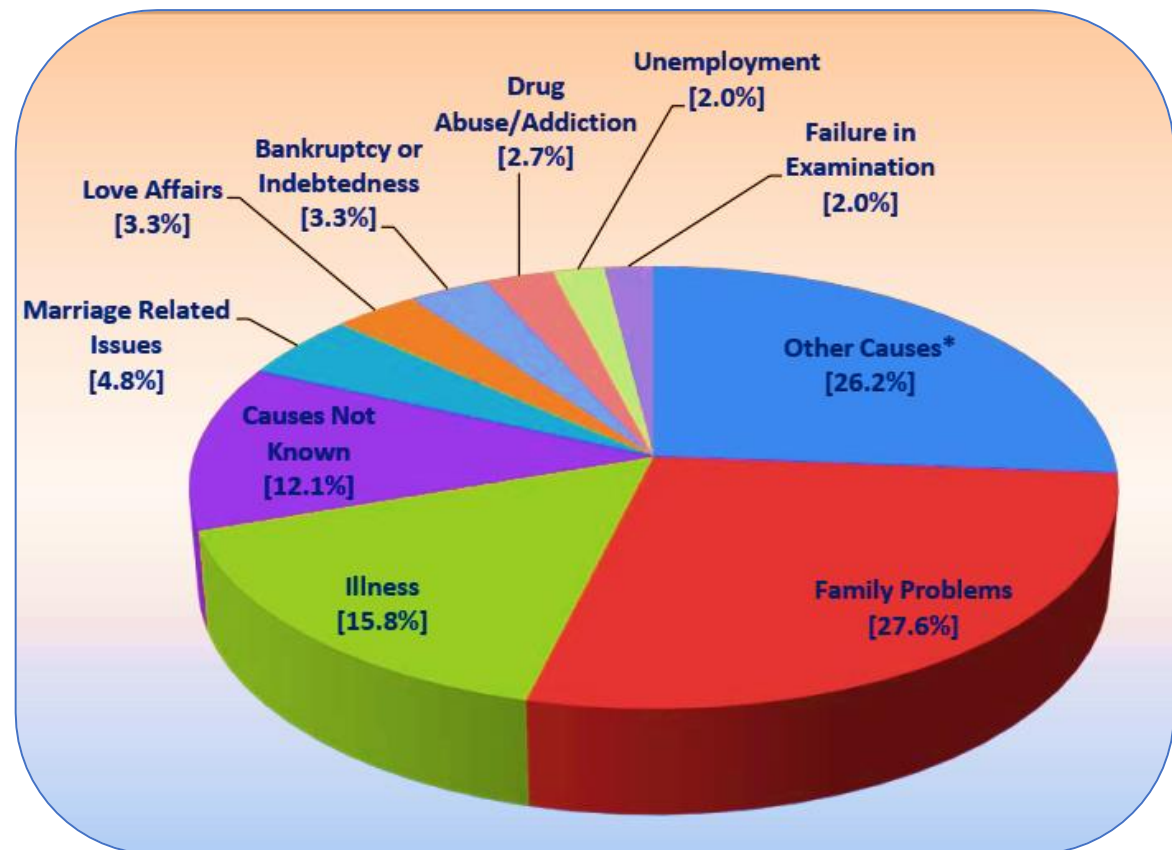
Statistical data on the vulnerability of India's family life.

India is one of the prominent countries in which there exist strong family relations. But recent statistical data exposes the vulnerability of India's family life. The number of divorce cases and hence the number of single parent families are in an upsurge.



Source: <https://scroll.in/article/810414>

The data published by National Crime Records Bureau testimonies that the number of suicides in the country during the decade (2005–2015) have recorded an increase of 17.3%. Of the 1,33,623 suicides reported in 2015 (an average of 366 suicide tolls per day), Family Problems accounted for 27.6% and Marriage Related Issues added 4.8%. Youth (18 and above- below 30 years) and Middle aged people (30 and above- below 45 years) were the most vulnerable groups resorting to suicides.



(NCBR, 2015)

This data shows that the family building skills of the most productive section of our nation are at risks.

Need of an effective Family Education programme

Children's nurturance is strongly influenced by the kind of childrearing they live through (Zahn-Waxler, 1979). Devoid of creative intervention, adolescents may be developing the same unhealthy parenting patterns they underwent in their own upbringing and the cycle of poor parenting will be carried on. As the most significant task confronting any society is the nurturance of future generations, it is important to think about this issue seriously as this could come out of the families and project itself as a social matter in near future when the number of troubled families and children increase profoundly. In such circumstances, the present-day adolescents, tomorrow's parents, by and large

lack good models of parenting and take no parenthood education before assuming the parenting role.

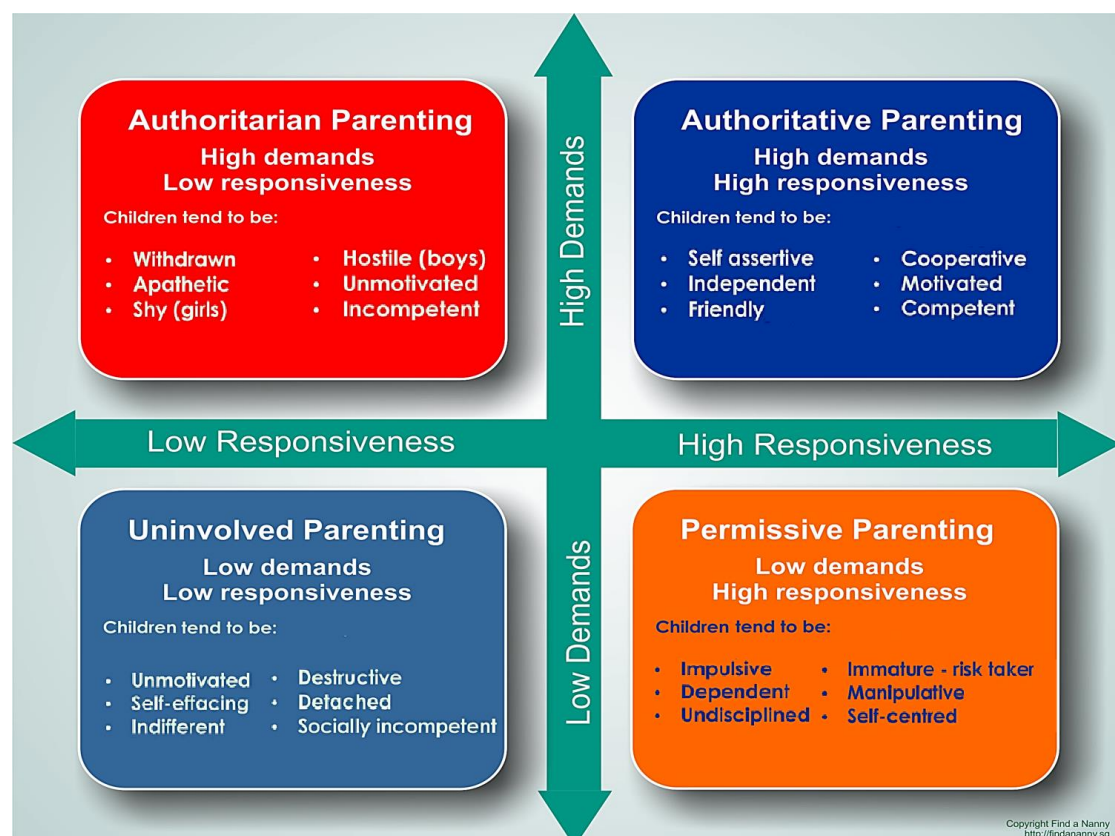
In this milieu, only an efficient family education program could remediate the recurring cycle of poor parenting with the youth before they themselves become parents. By this, the adolescent will also be enabled to prepare more realistically for eventual parenting responsibilities and build a more effective relationship with their current parents.

Suggestions towards a Family Education programme

Education for parenting should introduce the youth to basic parenting practices that maximise the healthy development of children and recognise their intricate needs. A healthy lifestyle with positive attitudes, knowledge and skills associated with parenting roles and responsibilities along with healthy habits should be encouraged. The students should be exposed to a variety of experiences and strategies so that they perceive their own conceptions and preferences about becoming a parent. The areas to be taken care of are discussed hence forth.

1. Parenting Strategies

Sensitive-responsive parenting is connected with positive emotionality in children, while aggressive children tend to receive less supportive, problematic parenting. More specifically, parenting characterised by inconsistent, rigid or irritable explosive discipline, as well as low supervision and involvement, is closely related to the development of child conduct problems. In many situations, flexible and warm, authoritative parenting style is most beneficial for a child's social, moral, intellectual, and emotional growth.



Each parenting style has its own pros and cons. Hence it is essential to include this as the primary domain of family education. This enables the youth to compare and contrast their own family life and provide them with the mindset to reflect upon the parenting style of their own parents and prompt them for developing their own style. It is important to aid prospecting parents in adopting appropriate parenting techniques and strategies to ensure that children receive guidance that will best allow them to succeed in later life. (Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development', n.d.)

2. Family Building

The parents must have a philosophy of their own, around which all the parenting activities are to be aligned. They must have a vision about the values and qualities that their child might imbibe through them. Parents who have a good understanding of what behaviours are typical for children of different ages and stages are more likely to have appropriate expectations for their children than are parents with little knowledge about children.

The relationships we build with children, families and colleagues are at the foundation of everything we do with children. Spending quality time together in family activities promotes unity and foster relationships of trust amongst family members. This confidence develops as the family works together, having common goals and values. These trusting family relationships can help families survive the tough times, as well as strengthen and support individual family members through their own personal struggles. When family members behave without considering others in the family, it weakens the sense of family unity, stability, and trust.

Hence it is important that before going forth for a family life, one must know well about the strategies, coping and adjustment skills essential to build a strong family relationship.

3. Cognitive Neuroscience

Awareness of neuro-biology is a vital area to be considered in family education. As the present-day world depends heavily on academic prospects and the emotional stability, the parents are supposed to know about the secrets of brain functioning and maturing of a child to become an effective parent. From the moment of their children's birth and even before; parents' behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes affect children's cognitive development and behaviour and even the establishment of achievement gaps (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008).








Readiness for school starts from the conception itself. The first option to get children prepared for school is in the mother's womb. However, drugs, smoking, nutrition, the state of mind and heredity all affect the embryo (Van Dyke and Fox 1990). A developing foetus is very sensitive to stress and poor nutrition. Most brain cells are produced between the fourth and seventh month of gestation. The hard-wiring that takes place in the child's brain determines his destiny in life. The first 48 months of life are critical to the brain's development. Experiences of the first year of life can completely change the

way a person turns out (Kotulak 1996). Known as “attunement,” this process must happen during the critical first year of role modelling or children may end up emotionally corrupt (Jensen, 1998).

In general, a thorough knowledge of the cognitive neuroscience is essential for the proper upbringing of a child, which the youth have to be aware of before they enter the phase of parenting.

4. Child Care

The development of personality, morals, goals and problem-solving ability that occurs during the first years of life is critical and unique developmentally unlike any other times in the life course. Child-rearing attitudes are cognitions that predispose an individual to act either positively or negatively toward a child. As parents guide their young children from complete infantile dependence into the beginning stages of autonomy, their styles of caregiving can have both immediate and lasting effects on children’s social functioning in areas from moral development to peer play to academic achievement (Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development. n.d.).

	0–18 Months	18–60 Months
Emotion 	Provide loving care, safety, healthy stress response, hugs, laughter, smiles; bond with your child; avoid threats	Role model cause-and-effect feelings, empathy; provide a joyful home; set clear rules; avoid yelling
Motor 	Encourage crawling, sitting, pointing; promote the use of balls, rattles, a variety of toys; provide mobiles; handle, touch, and rock your child frequently	Encourage games (like hide-and-seek), spinning, drawing, walking, running, balance activities; give your child freedom to explore (with safety); play and encourage the playing of instruments
Vision 	Use many objects, a variety of movements, color identification; schedule eye exams; avoid TV	Play attention games and eye-hand coordination activities; teach how to focus; provide outdoor time; avoid TV; schedule eye exams
Auditory 	Provide exposure to short phrases and high volume of coherent input; repeat sounds; use melodies; monitor for ear infections	Provide exposure to longer sentences, second languages, larger vocabulary, a variety of contexts; schedule regular ear exams
Thinking 	Be overcurious about your child’s world, do simple counting, demonstrate cause and effect	Use demonstrations, ask plenty of questions, teach basic math and principles of motion and volume
Music 	Sing lullabies; give your child rattles; repeat rhymes; provide early exposure to common traditional songs and other nursery tunes	Sing; play instruments; listen to structured, harmonic music; provide exposure to more variety in kinds of music.
Nutrition 	Mother’s milk is still best; avoid excess juice; ensure sufficient nutrients; provision of moderate fats OK	Introduce a wide variety of foods; begin balanced meals high in fiber and vegetables; use vitamins

Courtesy: Jensen (1998)

Parents play a substantial role in shaping children's emotional health, particularly in early childhood. The prospective parents have to be aware of a wide variety of child development concepts essential for the various capacities of the child, an essential part of the concept of family education.

5. Planned Parenthood

It is very essential for boys and girls to know in advance about the objective of their marriage. Why are they getting married and what is the purpose of it? Children should get this learning from parents at home and from teachers at school so that their life after marriage may be healthy, happy, harmonious, and purposeful. Marriage, as commonly known, is the union of man and woman for their self-fulfilment, for procreation, for the continuation of the race. But what the duo is usually unaware of is their great obligation in this process, which is to beget on earth a noble, higher being who will help in altering the land's present conditions, do good to mankind, and take it further in its advancement towards perfection of the species, and not just engender another aimless being.

In the life of many parents, the conceiving of a child is accidental, or it just happens or takes place as an unexpected by-product of a sensual excitement. For many, the time to have a child is thrust upon them rather than consciously chosen. Some say that as the moment of death, there is never a perfect time to have a child, but that fate schedules it. In many ancient cultures becoming a parent is considered an enriching rite of passage, a momentous milestone presenting an opportunity for spiritual growth and deeper relationships. (Divine Delivery, n.d.). Planned parenthood is that effort to bring new progenies to our domiciliation, who could determine and guide the tomorrows in virtuous directions; the basis of spiritual-parenting.

Conclusion

By a sound knowledge of the aspects of parenting strategies, family building, child care, cognitive neuroscience and planned parenthood, today's youth could be moulded to be the parents of blessed progenies of the days to come; for that, they have to be educated accordingly. Family education should examine personal readiness, as well as physical and emotional factors for assuming the parenting role and the issues germane to raising healthy children and positive parent-child relationships. Both the boy and the girl, before entering the family life should have the in-depth insight of the greater responsibility they are about to take. For that, the concept of family education should be imparted to senior secondary students as part of their curriculum, as it is practically the final stage of mass education. Beyond that stage, the students will be on a voyage to take future plans and discover the relationship between their personal values and goals of life.

References

1. Divine Delivery. (n.d.). Retrieved 26 January 2017, from <http://www.ayurvedaelements.com/articledivinedelivery.php>
2. Encyclopaedia on Early Childhood Development. (n.d.). Parenting skills. Retrieved from <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/parenting-skills/synthesis>.
3. Jensen, E. (1998). *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. Virginia, USA: ASCD Publications.
4. Kotulak, R. (1996). *Inside the Brain*. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel.
5. News & Announcements / HFRP News / HFRP - Harvard Family Research Project. (n.d.). Retrieved 26 January 2017, from [http://www.hfrp.org/hfrp-news/news-announcements/\(year\)/2008](http://www.hfrp.org/hfrp-news/news-announcements/(year)/2008)
6. Van Dyke, D.C., and A.A. Fox. (1990). Foetal Drug Exposure and Its Possible Implications for Learning in the Pre-School and School-Age Population. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 23, 3: 160–163.
7. Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow and King, R. A. (1979). *Child Development* Vol. 50(2), 319-330.