

“PARENTING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN NURTURING PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY”

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ABSTRACT

The challenges of parents and society is to rear children to realize their full potential in their foundation stage. The main challenge is how children grow, develop and how parents action influence children's feelings and behaviour and their overall development. Good parenting is essential for care and development of pre-school children. Parenting is potentially a prominent process which affects preschooler's physical, social, cognitive and academic development. Parenting in this period involves, balancing acceptance of child and his/her individuality with control. And giving reasons for rules in terms the child can understand, helping children master challenges, so they have successful experience in making things carrying out their plans. Parenting styles have a crucial role in children's care and development (Holden & Edwards, 1989; Baumrind, 1991; Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Chao, 1994; Paulsen, 1994; Lorenz, Hoven, Andrews & Bird, 1995; Reiss, et al., 1995; Palmer & Holkin, 1996; Radzi & Zewska, Richardsorn, Dent, Flay, 1996, Holdren, 1997; Wuerido, Warner and Eyberg, 2002; Sabatini and Leiper, 2004; Dixon, Hareilton-Giachritis & Browne, 2005). Teachers and other childhood professionals are the key resource persons who disseminate information to the parents and encourage parents to choose the effective parenting style. Children's behaviour and psychological development are linked to the style of parenting with which they have been raised. Parenting is ongoing interaction between parent, child and society. Parenting shape children's character into mature adults who will learn and understand the nature of their own divinity and serving mankind with love. Effective parenting needs 3Fs (Firm, Fair and Friendly).

Parents are very possessive and interfere in their children's activities, so they are creating many problems and parenting challenges are more in the society. So, increase of support and security, feeding, bathing, toilet training, sleeping, fear and aggression, empathy, discipline, tragedy and school, playmates, attachment to parents increase parenting challenges. The objective of the study is to ascertain the parenting challenges towards preschool children and their development and wellbeing. A total of one hundred children (preschool age group) and one hundred parents were taken as the subject. Different scales were administered in the present study to asses the attitude of parents towards their preschool children. Data were derived from different districts and different schools of Odisha. Questionnaire method was adopted. For data analysis SPSS package was also adopted. The result of the present study revealed total parental attitude of preschool children. According to the findings of the study, preschool children had more feeding problems and less interested in food. Parents give maximum support and security when their children are sick and incase of problematic situation. They are also short tempered. This study suggests that preschoolers need constant supervision and interaction with their parents. They should spend sufficient quality time with their children.

KEY WORD: *Parenting, Challenges, Pre-school., Children*

INTRODUCTION

Parents provide discipline, security, encourage responsibility, express confidence to their children. Research shows that parenting is a challenge as well as a pleasure. Parenting is a challenge to teach children skills and teach children how to fight back. Study shows that parental generativity was related to father's societal generativity. Children who receive positive attention from their parents do better in most aspects of their lives (home, school work) than children who do not receive this attention. Research finds parents who read to their children on a regular basis tend to raise children who are superior readers and who perform better in school.

Children are major beneficiaries when they are raised by warm-loving mothers and fathers. Activities that promote children's academic, intellectual development are related to mother societal generativity. Regular and consistent involvement of parents in child's life plays a key role in his/her development. Parents of preschool children face many challenges in day today life. The findings on examining the challenges faced by parents in tabular form.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate and identify various challenges faced by parents of pre-school children in context of their care and development.
- To find out the correlation between parenting challenges and physical, social, cognitive and academic development of pre-school children.

METHODOLOGY

The total sample consisted of 200 samples. 100 children and 100 parents belonging to homogenous group of population as SC, ST, rural, and urban areas of different socio-economic status were taken as samples. Out of these sample 100 no's pre-school, all samples (children) belonged to the age range of 3 to 6 years. The samples were taken from pre-nursery stage. As far as possible all the subjects were selected from the same age group, different socio-economic status with regard to the income, profession and educational level of parents as could be possible. Out of all the samples they belonged to single and dual earner family. The samples included both rural and urban areas of Orissa.

PROCEDURE

The investigator took written permission from the District Inspector of Schools to do the survey in different schools of Orissa. The principals of the different schools of Orissa were contacted by the researcher and the purpose of the study was explained to them. Data were gathered during regular class sessions. Students were assured that all their answers would be confidential. All the instructions and questions were read out to the students by the researcher. Class teachers remained in their class room and filled out the questionnaire given to them, at the same time as their students. Parents from the participating schools were also contacted. Parents were explained the purpose of the study and asked to complete the questionnaires. Two version (English & Odia, the regional language) of the questionnaire were administered to the subject and their parents depending on the fluency of the language preferred by the respondents.

The use of this consent procedure in data collection affected the interpretation of the result of the research accurately. The chances of findings are significant relation, between parenting challenges and children's outcome. It is important to know, for methodological as well as theoretical reasons, whether parents' actual behaviour towards their children is associated in similar way with the outcomes assessed.

SELECTION OF TOOLS AND MEASURES

Out of so many tools and techniques it is of great importance for an investigator to select the most reliable tools/ instruments for the collection of data for the research. A successful study is possible when the technique is appropriate. Observation, questionnaire, interview and testing are different types of techniques but all are meant for different types of research problem (s). The nature of limitations, merits and other aspects of a technique should be considered before it is used. The investigator must have good knowledge of constructing tools. A search of the available tools appropriate for the present study was made by the investigator. Among the different tools / instruments available for the study "Parental Challenges:

To study parenting challenges: Parenting challenges of pre-school children in context to their care and development.

To assess children's Involvement in context to

- * Physical development
- * Social competence
- * Intellectual development (Cognitive)
- * Academic Achievement

INSTRUMENT USED

The multi-method approaches were used in the present study in collecting data from the children and their parents. All the tools are pretested tools as they are repeatedly used in several of the research study. A pilot studies was conducted to develop several tools to be used in the present studies.

Parenting Challenges of Children:

Assuming parents to be friend, philosopher, guide and the closet social determinants to influence the children in their achievement. It has already been tested, speculated and programmed in other spheres on the encouragements of parents to develop ability of the children towards achieving all the type of successes. Becoming a parent is the most satisfying and blissful experience. As the child grows-up, every stage of parenting seems to be a challenge to every parent in discharging the role of parenting. Every parent faces a lot of problems difficulties which pose as challenges in parenting.

Instrument for examining the parenting challenges of preschool

This instrument is a self-developed inventory by the investigator. A series of interviews taken

with the parents of children belonging to the target groups. Based on the answers given by parents and in reference to the challenges faced by parents found on the internet, this self-inventory was formulated to identify the challenges faced by parents during rearing of their children.

Instructions:

This inventory consists of 33 items which reflects the challenges of parents. Parents were asked for fill up the columns accurately. The dimensions measured with the inventory common included the following:

Preschool children (3 to 6 years)

Other separate dimensions measured included the following for pre-school children. These are (1) Support security, (2) Feeding bathing, toilet training, (3) Sleeping, (4) Fear and aggression, (5) Empathy, discipline, tragedy, (6) School playmates, attachment to parents.

Scoring

A total of 33 scores were obtained from the questionnaire. The scoring of the parenting challenges of the children, the parents were instructed to rate their child on each item. The score of each item were given as 5 = Always, 4 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 2 = Very often, 1 = Never. They were asked to answer the question with (✓) mark which one is right. All the scores were added to get a total score.

Plan of Data Analysis:

For the statistical analysis, we first take the sample group from preschool, (both children & parents) from rural and urban area. The data obtained from this study were analyzed and correlations were found out.

Special package for social-sciences (SPSS) was used for doing data analysis. It is a very user-friendly database, through which statistical analysis can be done very easily, correctly and also very minutely. Mean, SD, Correlation was calculated. Pearsons's correlation was done to get the interrelation between variables and also significance test was undertaken.

The present research mainly concerned with the study of "Parenting challenges followed an "ex-post-facto" Design (Kerlinger, 1986 (Original work, 1946)). Actually, the present study is exploratory nature in which the researcher starts with the observation and recording of the dependent variables. She/he then studies the independent variables in retrospect for their possible relations to and effect on the dependent variable. Thus, a 2×2 and 2×2×7 ex-post-facto factorial design was considered suitable for the study. Each dependent variable was studied separately. Each independent variable in this study has three or two level.

RESULTS

Parents of preschool children face many challenges in day-to-day life. The findings on examining the challenges face by parents available to the target group of respondents are presented in Table 3. Many challenges like, 1) Support and security, 2) Feeding, bathing toilet training, 3) Sleeping, 4) Fear and

aggression, 5) Empathy discipline, tragedy and 6) School, playmates, attachment to parents these are the common problems created by the preschool children which are solved by the parents. In case of support and security, parents give support when their children are sick. In this case mean score was high. They also support their children when they are in trouble, they need them and sharing their feelings with their parents.

In context to feeding, bathing, toilet training, parents face problem at the time of feeding the children. They create major problem when they are fed. They reject food regularly, being dependent on feeding over their parents. Sometimes parents face problem in their daily activities. They do their daily work independently and do not create any major problem at the time of toilet training.

In case of sleeping, parents face major problems at the time of sleeping children had no sound sleep. They need their parents always be present at the bedside. Sometimes they dream frequently. Rarely did they wet their bed.

In accordance with fear and aggression the mean score was high in case of feeling unhappy to follow routine life in home and school. Parents face daily problems because their children are not ready to accept daily routine life regularly. They create major problem in this situation. Another challenge was their children become introvert; they cannot share their feelings with their parent in case of daily work. Preschool children throw things around when they become angry. But they cooperate with their parent in same cases like sharing their things with friends, not scared of strangers, they adjust with the loud music, noise and they are not afraid of darkness, wild animals and they do not feel danger about imaginary things. In these cases, parents do not face any problem and their challenges are less.

In context to empathy, discipline and tragedy the mean score was higher in case of emotions. Children can understand anything happening from the behaviour of family members. In this cases parents can control their emotional behaviour Infront of their children. This is a great challenge for every parent to control their good or bad emotions. Children's emotion creates a great problem in their later life. Children can share their feelings with their parents and sometimes they get reacted in tragic situation. In some situations, mean score was low, in this case parents face little challenges. For example – children react sometimes and they do not give back answer to their elders, teachers and classmates. With reference to school, playmates and attachment to parents, mean score was high in case of children those who are attached with their parents. If parents do not concentrate in their studies and do not take them for outing, they create many problems for their parents. Parents are facing many troubles and awkward situation in their day-to-day life. Parents are facing some problem at the time of school admission and when their children fighting with their playmates. This is a challenging period for them. Mean score was low in case of some situation. In same case no complain was received from their teachers so their parents never face any extra parenting challenges.

- Preschool children had higher feeding problems and they reject food regularly.
- Parents give maximum support and security when their children are sick and in case of problematic situation.
- They are sharing their feelings with their parents.
- When their children are emotionally upset in tragedy situation their challenges were high.
- When children have no sound sleep, they need their parents at the bed side.
- Preschool children are more attached to their parents.

- They are not prepared to follow routine life and they shows aggressive behaviour to their parents.
- By nature, they are very short-tempered.
- They are not afraid of imaginary things.
- Children's do not give back answer to their elders and teachers.

Preschool Stage:

- The present study reveals that pre-school children have more feeding problems and less interested in food. So, parents have to find the exact time when the child is maximum hungry and food should be palatable to them. They should change the food item at regular intervals to create their interest in taking food. Preschoolers need constant supervision and interaction with their parents. They should spend sufficient quality time with the children.
- Children share their feeling with their parents, 80 (eighty) percents should give maximum support and security when their children are sick and incase of any problematic situation. They should make them available in each and every activity of the child and understand their problem regularly.
- When children are emotionally upset in tragic situation it is very difficult to handle them. So, parents have to be very patient and try to understand the root cause of the problem by doing constant counselling and giving enough time and support to the children to adjust the situation.
- Preschool children are more attached to their parents, so parents should make themselves available at the bedside, while following the routine life. They should tolerate the aggressive behaviour of the children while making their habit to follow the routine life. They should be the role model to their children by doing the work systematically.
- Preschool children are more short-tempered and are not afraid of imaginary things by nature. So parents have to be extra vigilant in their day to day life and protect them at the time of need. Develop new skills and traits, right frequency, quality, interaction between children and their environment especially with their parents will result in each child reaching his/her full potential and develop positive self-esteem.
- Parents have no time for preschool children for discussion about their problems. In this case parents should give enough time for their children to improve their self-esteem to solve their problems.
- Parenting challenges was high when children were emotionally upset. They need their parents to be at their bed side. Children were more attached with their parents.
- Parents gave maximum support and security when their children are sick and in problematic situation. Children shared their feelings more with their parents.
- By nature, Preschool children are short-tempered, are not prepared to follow routine life and showed aggressive behaviour to their parents.
- Preschool children gave respect to their elders and teachers.
- With regard to physical development ideal height and weight are found in preschool children.
- Preschool children are sincere, but not studious, IQ is less, have no self-confidence, get tired easily, remained aloof and not active.

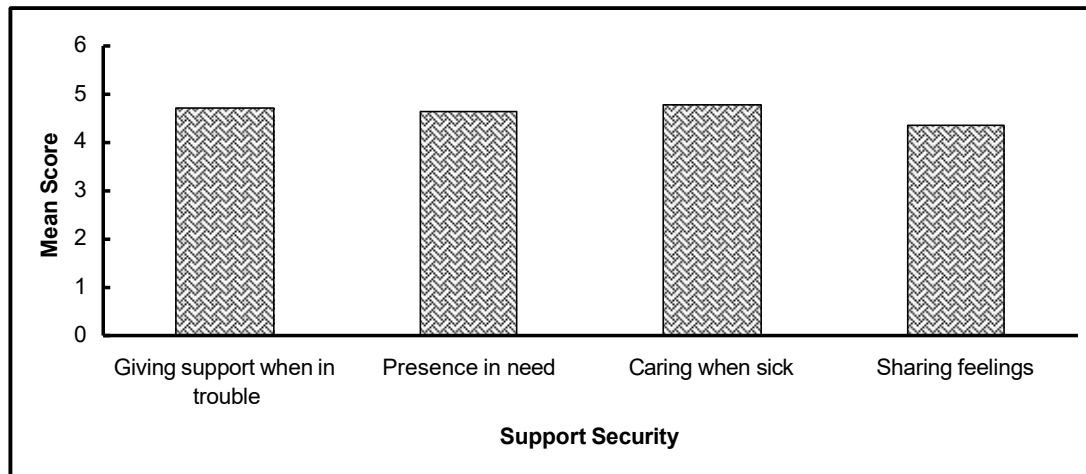
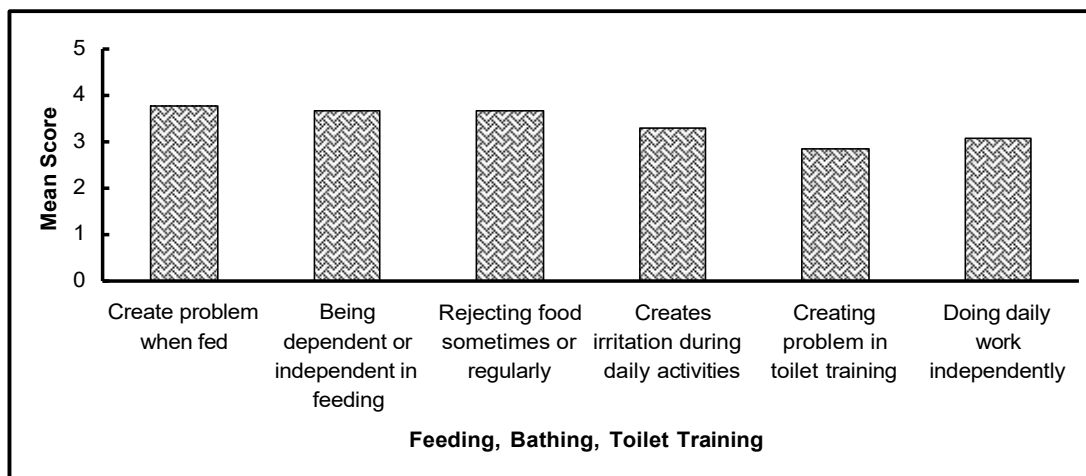
- Children's visual motor coordination was better in case of drawing some figure.
- Academically preschool children need proper guidance but they showed very good result in their academic achievement.
- Preschool children got more warmth and affection from their parents, but they had no time for answering children's question.
- Preschool children's fathers are not available at the time of morning walk but are engaged with their children in case of listening to their opinion and giving punishment at the time of fault.
- Fathers took full responsibility at the time of outing.

TABLE-1**Parenting Challenges of Preschool Children (3-6 years)**

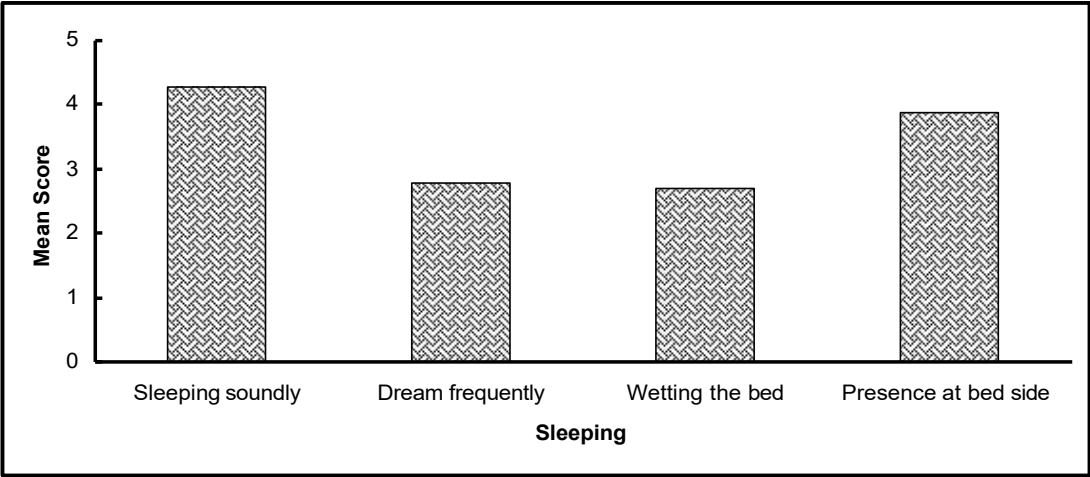
Description of the variables	Mean	SD
A. Support Security		
Giving support when in trouble	4.70	0.69
Presence in need	4.66	0.77
Caring when sick	4.77	0.65
Sharing feelings	4.35	0.98
Total Score	18.42	2.80
B. Feeding, Bathing, Toilet Training		
Create problem when fed	3.79	1.87
Being dependent or independent in feeding	3.65	1.18
Rejecting food sometimes or regularly	3.68	0.84
Creates irritation during daily activities	3.28	1.12
Creating problem in toilet training	2.86	1.29
Doing daily work independently	3.07	1.17
Total Score	20.26	4.05
C. Sleeping		
Sleeping soundly	4.29	1.02
Dream frequently	2.79	1.27

Wetting the bed	2.69	1.39
Presence at bed side	3.88	1.13
Total Score	13.57	2.82
D. Fear and Aggression		
Scared of strangers, loud music, noise	2.79	1.13
Scared of darkness, animals, imaginary things	3.09	1.13
Get angry	2.83	1.06
Throwing things when angry	2.77	1.27
Jealous of peer groups	2.32	1.28
Sharing things with friend	3.35	1.18
Happy to follow routine life	3.73	1.22
Feel unhappy to follow routine life in home and school	2.76	1.33
Being introvert or extrovert	2.84	1.28
Total Score	26.40	5.27
E. Empathy, Discipline, Tragedy		
Sharing feelings	4.15	1.10
Reacting differently	3.28	1.13
Recognizing emotions from behaviors	4.43	0.82
Back answers to elders, teachers, classmates	2.28	1.42
Shocked in tragic situation	3.63	1.19
Total Score	17.79	2.54
F. School, Playmates, Attachment to Parents		
Facing problem during school admission	2.00	1.36
Fighting with playmates	2.05	1.28
Complains from teachers/ school authorities	1.88	1.22
Creating problem when no relaxation	2.39	1.34
Extra parenting challenges	1.59	1.09
Total Score	9.94	4.21

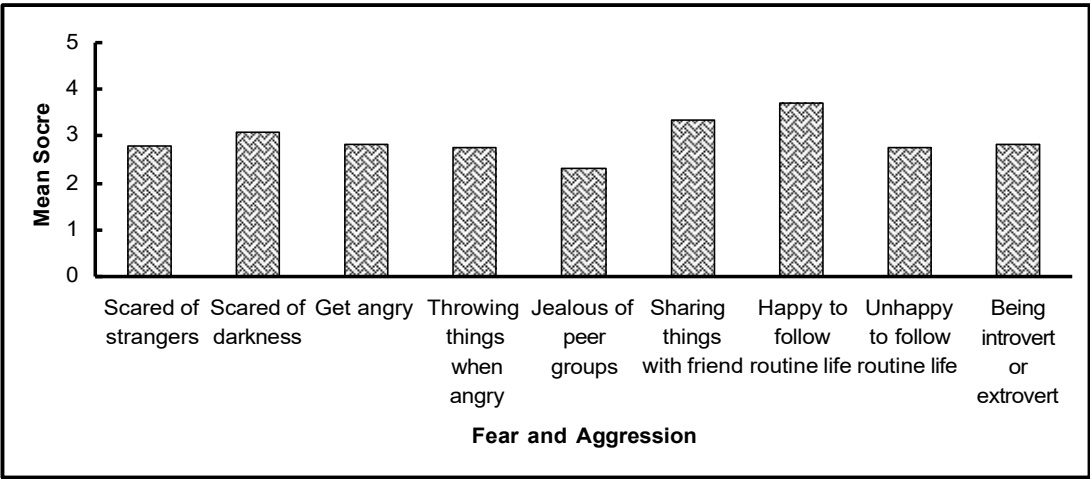
Grand Total Score	106.18	11.47
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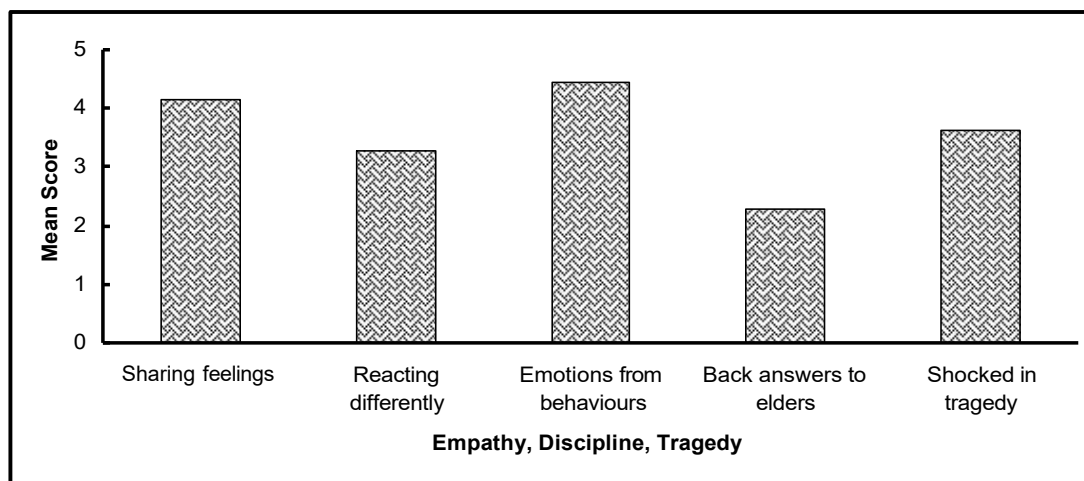
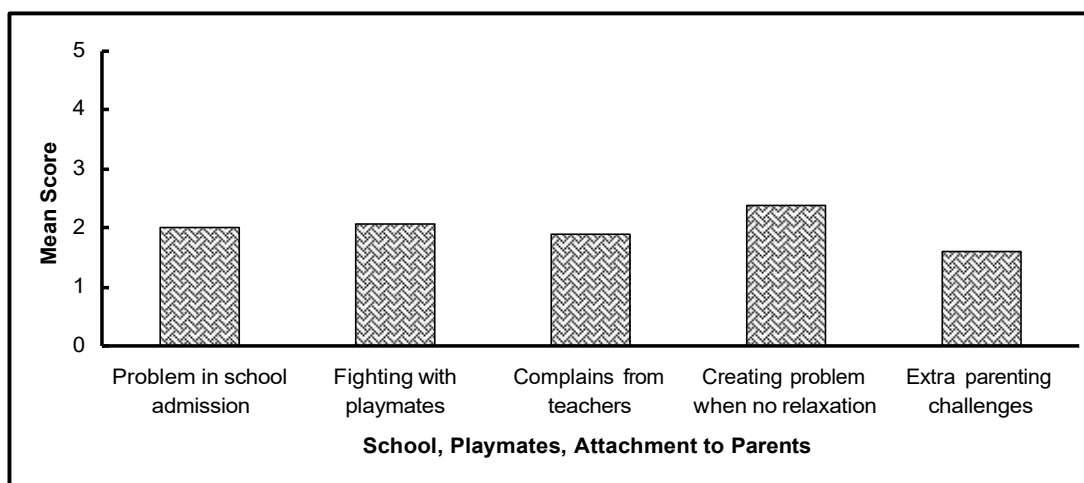
GRAPH-1**Parenting Challenges of Preschool Children****(a) Support, Security****(b) Feeding, Bathing, Toilet Training**

(c) Sleeping



(d) Fear and Aggression



(e) Empathy, Discipline, Tragedy**(f) School, Playmates, Attachment to Parents**

This will be possible when parents give enough time to their children. shows that incase of support and security, challenges are negatively correlated to physical, social and cognitive development. Excess of everything is bad. If a child gets maximum support and security from their parents, he will never develop his own personality and he cannot be self-reliant.

So, when he is exposed outside, he expects same support and security from others, either he/she becomes withdrawn or he/she will become violent. The present study indicates that feeding, bathing and toilet training are positively correlated to social development. This study supports our earlier research study.

Previous study shows that for many parents a child's emotion, social readiness for every training is most difficult to recognize, particularly since a child moves in and out of emotional and troublesome periods for feeding, bathing, toilet training throughout the early childhood period. By the preschool years, child is fascinated with social identify and his peer's behaviour will provide quite strong motivation for all type of training example – feeding, bathing and toilet training like other children of his age. If he has not already trained by this time peer pressure alone can motivate him to train himself.

Once he is aware of this training, child may choose to train himself. Present study focuses on sleeping as positively correlated to academic achievement at preschool stage. This study supports our earlier study. Research shows that sleep may be one of the most important factors for children's success. Children who are deprived of sleep perform worse in thinking and performance task than those who are not sleep-deprived. Research shows that children who sleep seven to eight hours in night do better on memory tasks than those who do not.

Present study indicates that fear and aggression are positively correlated with social and cognitive development. Aggression can also be problematic for some children during the early preschool years. They engage in instructional aggression like hitting, kicking and shouting to obtain a desired object. Fear is another strong emotion that many children experience intensely during early childhood or preschool years.

In this stage, children have very active imagination and are still learning the difference between reality and make believe, they are very susceptible to strong fears.

Research study shows that parents can help children by offering some extra emotional support in a way that does not ignore or minimize the true fear their children are experiencing. Parents can also foster autonomy and confidence by helping their kids think of creative and light hearted ways to deal with fears.

Parents attempt to reduce it and significantly interfere with daily activities and they also try to reduce fear of their children and improve their social and cognitive development. Present study shows that their was no correlation found between parenting challenges (Empathy, Discipline, Tragedy) with children's development. In case of school playmates, attachments to parents are positively correlated with social, cognitive and academic development of children.

This study supports previous study which indicates parenting is ongoing interaction between parent, child and society. It is a role with two major tasks of establishing warm relationships and providing opportunities for development. Study shows that parents give warmth and affection when

they have support from the community, relatives and friendship networks.

TABLE-2

Table-2 Significant Bivariate Correlations between Parenting Challenges and Physical, Social, Cognitive and Academic Development of Pre-School Children

Dimensions of parenting challenges	Physical Development		Social Development	Cognitive Development	Academic Development
	Height	Weight	Teacher rating	Figure Coping	Examination Grade
Support & Security		-.246*	-.359**	-.274**	
Feeding, Bathing and Toilet Training			.348**	.	
Sleeping					.199*
Fear and Aggression			.374**	.214*	
Empathy, Discipline, Tragedy					
School, Playmates, Attachment to parents			.322**	.250*	.248*
Total Parenting challenges scores			.451**		.199*

N.B.- * - Significant at 5% level ($P < 0.05$), ** - Significant at 1% level ($P < 0.01$)

Table-2 presents the significant bivariate correlation between parenting challenges and physical, social, cognitive and academic development of pre-school children. In case of support and security there was negative correlation existing between weight, social development and figure coping test and further positive correlation existing between feeding, bathing and toilet training and social development. Children social development was positively correlated.

Sleeping was positively related to examination grade. In case of fear and aggression are positively correlated to teacher rating scale and figure coping test. Empathy, discipline and tragedy was neither negatively nor positively associated with any variables of the developments.

Results suggested in case of school, playmates and attachment to parents there was positive correlation associated with teacher rating scale, figure coping test and examination grade and in total parenting challenges was positively related to teacher rating scale and examination grade of the pre-school children.

CONCLUSION

Present study shows that pre-school children create problems in feeding, when they are sick and emotionally upset. So, parents have to take extra challenges in these cases and set their children's food habits at an early stage. They are very much emotionally attached and dependent on their parents. Parents have to make them feel that they are the great support to them. So, they will not feel

insecure.

Parenting challenges are positively correlated to social and academic development of children. Parents are the main socializing agents. External agencies also are taking over the socialization roles in the lives of children. The greater parent involvement in children's learning positively affects the pre-school performance including higher academic achievement.

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