

CONTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILY IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

DR. ANJANA SINHA
M.A. Ph.d., Psychology
Muzaffarpur

Before discussing the contribution of the family over child's personality-development, it is necessary to know about —Family and Personality Separately.

What is Family?

Family is a single word, with multiple meanings

- ◆ It is a fundamental social group in society usually consisting of one or two parents and their children.
- ◆ Two or more people with shared goals and values, having a long-term commitment to one another and usually residing in the same dwelling.

Family is an organized and systematic social group in which various responsibilities are fulfilled for the proper development of child. If we bind the family in one sentence it can be said that "A lady with her child/children where the male takes care of them Personality Development

Personality development is defined as the relatively enduring pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that distinguish individuals from others/one another. In other words, personality development is the 'development of the organized pattern of behavior and attitude that makes a person distinctive.

Psychology today predominantly holds that personality emerges early and continues to change in meaningful ways throughout life.

Advanced personality traits are believed to have a basis in infant temperament, meaning that individual differences in disposition and behavior appear early in life, possibly even before language or conscious self-representation develop.

Personality development occurs by the ongoing interaction of temperament, character and environment. Personality development makes every individual unique and is recognizable soon after birth.

Contribution of Family in Personality Development

Family is such an important and required organization for the personality development of a child:

1. Where child takes birth
2. Child develops and grows with various family circumstances and incidents
3. With the advancement of age, the child develops characteristics specific to him/ her
4. All special personality characteristics are influenced by what the child experiences within the family.
5. All these situations help the child in developing characteristics that make the child's personality unique.

During the initial stage of life, the child is completely dependent on the family and all activities, including behavior are according to the instructions or guidance of parents and other adults in the family.

According to Waldwin “Stability in relationships comes with several difficulties but with time they get their proper roots, though any person can change his/her relationships at any time and the size of the group influences these relationships”.

It is the family that introduces the first knowledge of the world and people to the child and *the* type of family has a significant influence on the child's personality For a child, family should be:

1. Where she/he is free to do various activities
2. Where she/he feels safe, comfortable and relaxed
3. Where she/he gets the opportunity to regain lost energy
4. Where she/he can freely share feelings, thoughts, joys and sorrows

All the above factors have a significant bearing on the adjustment of the child within the family.

Importance of the family for the child

Family fulfills the following necessities for the child :

1. Psychological necessities
2. Child learns co-operation
3. Family fulfills the physical necessities of the child
4. *The* child learns *the* qualities of good socialization from the family
5. The child gets emotional protection whenever required
6. All necessities concerning education are also fulfilled by the family
7. Family plays the role of an idol so that the child can develop in overall fields of physique and behavior and grow into a person with a complete, appreciable personality.
8. All the family members help the child in various fields for his perfect personality development

Family relationships and children

Family relationships and dynamics have a deep and lasting impact on the behavior and attitude of the child. For example:

1. Idols from parents:

Family and parents are a significant institution for the child where the behavior of the parents is the idol and the child's behavior is shaped by the behavior of the parents. The impressions that the child imbibes from the parents in childhood are permanent.

2. Family experiences:

_ Experiences within the family environment and the child's perception of these experiences have a lot of influence on the development of *the* child. According to Freud, *The* parents providing over-protection to their child/children can have a negative impact on their psyche at a later stage?.

3. Attitude of the child :

Familial relationships carry a lot of influence on the attitude formation of the child, self-expression and behavior is dependent on family relationships.

- a) Children who suffer neglect/dejection within their families often develop tendencies to over-eat
- b) Children from families that have a constant, prevailing tense atmosphere might grow up to be juvenile delinquents.

4. Adjustment:

- a) Receiving affection, care and love from the family allows a child to adjust to any situation, even outside the fan*
- b) The **extent** of importance given to the child also allows the child to adjust anywhere.
- c) The level of appreciation a child receives for any activity also influences the ability to adjust in society. The greater the appreciation, the higher the qualities of adjustment.
- d) Negative behavior makes the child into a mai-adjusted member of society.

5. Broken Families :

Children from families where the parents are separated or divorced, might develop psychological and mental weakness because they have to face a major problem in their life, especially when it comes to choosing a parent to side with, despite being equally attached to both.

8. Relationship between a Child and guardians:

The child forms ideas about his/her environment on the basis of the behavior that is observed in the parents and other adults within the 'family'. The child also develops the ability to shoulder his/her own responsibilities on the basis of the relationships with other members of the family. These influences become apparent in the following manner:

a) Training :

The purpose of training, whether formal or informal, is to help the child develop the ability to adjust harmoniously with his/her environment. Many parents raise their children in the same manner that their parents reared them. Training of a child usually follows two philosophies:

i. Dominating Attitude:

In such an environment, the parents are strict disciplinarians and punishment is often used to keep the child away from bad habits.

ii. Democratic Attitude:

Parents with a democratic attitude raise their children in a balanced and fratidly environment. They listen to the view of the child, encouraging and guiding them in making decisions. Such children grow up into confident indi Adults with a democratic bent of mind and always have a positive attitude towards society

bj Birth sequence:
On the basis of birth order/Sequence, different attitudes about adjustment **are developed** in the child. This also affects **the nature** of the child.

i. First Child:

The first or eldest child is brought up with tots of love, affection and care. **to** Indian society, the first child used to **have** more authority over the parents property. These ideas develop pride in the child. The (.0 of the first-born child is also seen to be higher than the other children in the **family but** they also develop feelings of overprotec11011.

ii. Second Child:

it is generally seen that the second child is more emotionally independent **and** confident. The age-gap between the two children has several affects:•

- ◆ An age-gap to the tune of 18 months leads to feelings of jealousy developing in the elder child.
- ◆ An age-gap of 3 or *more* years allows both children to grow up with a friendly attitude towards one another with the elder one often being protective of the younger.

iii. Other Children:

The parents usually raise a child having 3rd or 4th birth sequence, more casually as compared to the first or second-born child. Often, the expectation is that the child will learn automatically from the older siblings and the child is expected to get their experiences more easily from the older brother or sister.

Action and reaction exist between the parents and the child. The type of behavior parents give to their child, the same behavior they receive from their child. The parent-child relationship is the deciding index for the child's behavior and also influenCes the personality development of the child, depending on the following (Elizabeth B Hurlock, 1985):

a) Base of Personality:

If parents give proper honor to the child's personality or, if the child is considered an important member of the family or, if the child is included in decision-making in the family - such children give proper respect to their parents and have good character formation.

b) Developing the habit of holding responsibility:

If from time to time, the child is being given various responsibilities according to their age and capability, such situations help the child in developing the capacity of decision-making. In such families, the parent-child relationships are smooth.

c) Contributing in family activities:

If the parents ask contribution from the child by giving him responsibilities at various occasions, it helps the child in developing self-confident personality and they have the feeling that to obey their parents is their foremost duty". All these factors make strong relations between parents and children.

d) Family entertainment

In any family, wherever there is an occasion of any wedding or birthday party etc., on such occasions if the child is given the opportunity to enjoy freely with guests and other relatives, this helps in developing feelings of co-operation. and unity in the children with family members.

in case the parents or the elders of the family scold the child in front of guests while the child is having fun, even in a healthy manner, the child feels guilty and it will surely spoil the relationship between the family members and the child.

e) Closeness among parents and children:

Close and free behavior among the parents and children indicates that both have faith on each other and as a result *the* children will try to as many expectations of the parents as possible, in the future.

Family Experiences and Personality Development

Personality development of the child starts Just after birth. Child puts many challenges to the parents and how well the parents are able to handle the added responsibilities of having a child becomes a deciding factor for the child's personality.

After birth, the child grows by taking the family circumstances and incidents as his/her experiences. With the influence of these experiences, development of some specific personality traits occurs and these traits play an important role in the personality of the child in the future.

The type of family in which he/she is being brought up also impacts personality of the child. A child raised in a nuclear family has a very different personality from a child raised in a joint-family. During the early years of life, family has complete influence on child's personality development. The way parents fulfill child's requirements also affects the personality of the child.

Family works in the following manner for the development of personality of the child:

- ◆ Provides controlled environment to the child
- ◆ Social values are, developed in child by the family
- ◆ Child gets training for his/her daily life from the behavior of the parents
- ◆ Family values help in developing limitation of freedom and entertainment

Every family tries to complete the responsibility of personality development of the child with full devotion and honesty. But as per fact, the family *has* to face a lot of difficulties and problems in Completing this responsibility. They have to cross many obstacles and face a lot of difficulties. We can say that for the personality development of the child, the family has to use various influences as follows:

• 1. Social Influence :

Every society has some values and norms of its own but these values keep on changing with time. Every family provides environment to the child according to these values and principles of the society, as these are central for the child's personality development It is better to say, 'family is a bridge between the self and the personality of the child'.

2. Completion of expectations:

As the child grows, expectations also increase and the family satisfies these expectations. Good, bad, happy or sad experiences of the family develop, various qualities in the child's personality.

3. Cultural development

The family transfers culture to the next generation. The ways of dressing up, eating habits, type of food, walking, talking, feelings about opposite gender etc., after a culture-related behavior is received from the family and influences a child's personality formation.

Child's social and cultural personality development with influence of the family takes place in the following manner

- a) The family significantly influences development of cultural traditions in the child. Cultural and related events help in developing cultural values in the child.
- b) How much value and importance the child gets in cultural ceremonies held at home or in the houses of friends, how much responsibilities are, given to the child at these occasions affect the personality of the child.
- c) Behavior changes with effect of childhood experiences and these changes affect personality
- d) Family provides safe and secure environment to the child and protects them from all the harmful happenings of the outside environment.
- e) All family members are related to each other due to various necessities and selfishness and the work done by each member affects others.

4. Over protection:

If there is only one child in the family, then he/she is given abnormally extra protection by the parents as well as other family members, which obstructs the development of self-confidence in the child. In future. Such a child faces difficulties in adjusting with friends and society.

5. Neglected child:

In case birth of the child has taken place in unwanted situation or, it is without willingness of parents, in such a case the child never receives the proper love and affection and also many times he/she has to face hatred from the parents. This develops negative feelings of resentment and hatred towards the parents. The personality of such children develops as mentally disturbed and they may have difficulty in adjustment in later stages of their life.

6. Behavior of the Father:

The father plays a very important role in performing social and economical responsibilities for the child. So the future of the children is dependent on the father.

- ◆ If the father's behavior is full of dictatorship and he always wants to impose his decisions and ideas on the child, then this attitude develops the child's personality with confidence and maladjusting nature in future.
- ◆ In case the father has friendly attitude/ behavior with children, such children develop with pleasant personality.

7. Role of the Mother :

When a lady becomes a mother, her responsibilities increase all of a sudden because the child is directly dependent on mother for his/her needs. The mother not only fulfills the child's physical requirements but also provides love, sympathy, care, emotional security, and social protection to the child.

Desired protection and right guidance from the mother gives the child great feeling of satisfaction, pleasure for his/her personality development.

8. Relationship between the parents:

Mother and father are two different personalities coming from different families, who due to special attraction attach with each other, form a family and are ready to bear all responsibilities jointly. But difference in nature and opinions is very natural. When these differences increase too much, they may spoil the relationship between the spouses and any bitterness in the relationship directly impacts the child's behavior and personality. In such

situation, if the mother's role is much influencing and if the child is a boy, he develops as an over-suppressed child, and if it is a girl then she develops with dominating and dictatorship attitude. Both situations are unfavorable for personality development of the child.

Electra and Oedipus glands of the children play an important role in personality development. If there is proper development of glands, developing the feelings of attraction towards the opposite gender then the personality development takes place on the right path.

9. Relationships between siblings:

Good or bad relationships between siblings are affected by several factors:

- If both siblings are sisters, feelings of jealousy increase
- ◆ If both siblings are brothers with little age difference, then there are several quarrels. In the case of a larger age gap, the older sibling develops a more authoritative nature
- ◆ Brothers and sisters tend to live with greater harmony and love. An elder sister usually is caring and protective of the younger brother and vice versa.

All the above factors impact personality development. Good and bad characteristics develop according to the behavior they observe and emulate within the family.

No-one can ignore the influence of the family on the personality development of the child because love, affection, co-operation, competition, sympathy, kindness etc., are all feelings the child gets from the family along-with anger, escapism, etc., also develop with the effect of family.

During the very young age, mothers often take the help of the saying "devil will come" to make the child quiet. This fear in the early childhood stage sometimes makes the child live in darkness and loneliness in future.

We can also say that family experiences provide stability to the child's personality and co-operates in all-round development of the personality. With a well-developed personality, the child gets good place in the society as well as work place.

All-round personality development includes the following characteristics:

- ◆ Development of good insight and child holds many good capabilities and characteristics.
- ◆ Knowledge Increases helping in development of self-confidence, which helps in forming of many clear concepts about the self.

References:

- P 217-226, Hurlock Elizabeth B. (1985) - Child growth and development, Tata McGraw Hill publishing company ltd., New Delhi
- AACAP and David Pruitt - Your Child Emotional Behavior and Cognitive Development from infancy through preadolescence. New York, Harper Collins, 1998
- Allen, Ben P. Personality Theories, Development, Growth and Diversity. Harlow, UK Allyn and Bacon 2002.