

CHAPTER-5

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

Children, being the most crucial human resources of a country, require special care and attention right from the birth to ensure their healthy growth and development. But, when mother and father both work either the child gets ignored or the mother gets overstrained. The conflict lies between her roles of a housewife and mother on one hand and occupational role on the other. In Indian culture, working women face number of problems due to traditional role expectations and non-conductive environmental inputs or lack of appropriate substitute care. The child and mother all get affected. Recognizing the crucial importance of child care practices and conflict faced by these mothers, the present study was undertaken keeping in view the following objectives:

1. To study the child care practices among working mothers
2. To ascertain the nature and extent of role conflict among mothers and its effect on child care practices
3. To identify the factors associated with child care practices

The study was conducted in rural and urban areas of Rohtak and Mohindergarh district of Haryana state. The rural sample was drawn from one block of each district and the urban sample was drawn from the district headquarters. The

respondents were 200 mothers serving at health centres or government schools in both the areas.

The socio-personal, economic and psychological characteristics of respondents viz., age, education, education (husband), family size, type of family, caste, occupation (husband), family income, occupational involvement, job commitment and family commitment were taken as independent variables. Various components of child care practices viz., feeding and weaning, bathing, toilet, sleeping, health and immunization, sitting and walking and speech, etc. were the as dependent variables. The independent variables viz., age, education, education (husband), type of family, family size, caste, occupation (husband) were measured through SES scale of Trivedi (1963). For family income job commitment and family commitment, indices were made. The dependent variable was measured through structured schedule. The data were collected personally with the help of an interview schedule and analyzed by applying percentages, co-relation and multiple regression technique.

Results

Profile of the respondents

The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 26-30 years (49.5%) and were matriculates (40.5%). Thirty-two per cent of the respondents' husbands were matriculates. More than 50.0 per cent respondents had small sized nuclear families and belonged to middle caste. Majority (73.5%) of the respondents' husbands were engaged in service.

Thirty-two per cent respondents were having family income above Rs. 3500 per month. Majority of the respondents had moderate level of job and family commitment.

Child care practices

Feeding and weaning: Majority of the respondents (82.5%) gave first feed to their child after 3-8 hours from birth and mother's milk was the first food. Majority (64.0%) were giving feed at fixed schedule and continued breast feeding upto 1 year (47.0%). The breast feeding was disrupted due to their working outside the home (25.5%). The highest number of the respondents (29.0%) started weaning foods at 5th month of age. Milk was the weaning food in case of 96.0 per cent of the respondents which was given twice or thrice a day. Mother-in-law was the main caretaker of children during the absence of the mother (44.0%). More than 50.0 per cent respondents reported employment to have affected the feeding and weaning both as it helped the child to forget breast milk and adapt to weaning foods easily. Though 57.5 per cent respondents were having medium or high level of feeding and weaning practices, yet a sizeable number (42.5%) were rated low on this practice. The feeding and weaning practices were more satisfactory in Mohindergarh district than Rohtak district. However, in rural areas, Rohtak district was better while in urban areas, Mohindergarh district exhibited better performance.

Bathing practices: All the respondents got their child bathed just after birth. Half of the respondents were bathing

their of below 1 year age child once a day and 2 or 3 year age child twice a day during summer. In winter, over half of the respondents bathed below 1 year age child after 2 days and 1 to 2 years or 2 to 3 year age child on alternate days. No significant difference was observed in both the districts.

At Rohtak, bathing was done in traditional way and at Mohindergarh in non-traditional way. The practice of massaging the child before bath was more common in Rohtak district (rural) than in Mohindergarh district. Mustard oil was the media for massage in rural areas and baby oil in the urban areas. Soap, in general, was used for bathing the child. Majority were satisfied by bathing practices adopted. However, time was the major constraint. Majority of the respondents were rated as following low (53.0%) to medium (34.0%) level of bathing practices. There was no marked difference in bathing practices followed in rural or urban areas of both the districts.

Toilet practices: Bowel and bladder movements were controlled by the 6th month and 18th month respectively. Toilet training was started at the age of 5th month. Simple conditioning method was employed for training the child. Time was a major constraint (68.0%). Over half of the respondents (52.5%) attained medium level scores on toilet practices. However, in rural areas of both the districts, respondents had better level of adoption of this practice.

Sleeping practices: Majority of the respondents (54%) were making the child sleep with them. Patting was the method used by more at Mohindergarh district and rocking at Rohtak district. About 71.5 per cent respondents reported child's sleep affected by their employment whereas 50 per cent of the respondents reported that employment promoted good sleeping habits in children. Majority of the respondents exhibited medium level (38%) followed by high level (32.5%) and low level (29.5%) of sleeping practices. The sleeping practices of respondents of Rohtak district were better than those of Mohindergarh district.

Immunization and health practices: Majority (95.0%) of the respondents had followed immunization schedule. The adoption was more in urban areas of both the districts. Only 8.0 per cent respondents checked the weight of their child regularly. Rohtak district was ahead of Mohindergarh district in adoption of this practice.

Sitting and walking practices: More than 45.0 per cent respondents's children started sitting, standing and walking at 7th month, 12th month and 13th month of age, respectively. However, the children of Mohindergarh district started walking a little earlier than those of Rohtak district. Nearly, half of the children acquired these skills a little late. Mother's work outside the home or physical weakness of child were the major reasons obstructing acquisition of these skills.

Language skills (speech): Babbling, in general, was started at first month of age. The children started using first

words and forming sentences by the 11th month and the 13th month of age. The delayed speech was caused due to the neglect of the child. Not much difference was observed in both the districts in rural and urban areas regarding speech practices.

Role conflict: Majority of the respondents (80.0%) had reported moderate level of job satisfaction, job stress and home role stress. They had high expectations from their job and home. On the whole, majority of the respondents (68.0%) had faced moderate level of conflict due to their home and job roles.

Relationship of independent variables with child care practices

The most important variables identified were job expectation followed by self education, home expectation, husband's education, job commitment and home role stress. The important practices identified were feeding and weaning, sitting and walking, immunization and health and speech practices.

Magnitude of effect of antecedent variables

The important variables which were causing variation were job expectation, home expectation, home role stress, occupational involvement, job commitment and self education. Bathing and toilet practices showed significant R^2 values. The variation among these practices is influenced by home role stress, job expectation and home expectation.

Suggestions

The study provided an in-depth information of the phenomenon and yielded valuable information. On the basis of findings of the study, following suggestions are submitted which can help the working mothers in better care of their children.

1. Proper measures should be adopted for educating people on different aspects of child care practices.
2. Greater stress should be placed on establishment of creches and day care centres for the children of working mothers.
3. Efforts should be made by government to provide accomodation to government functionaries working in health centres and schools of rural areas.
4. Frequent transfers of women employees should be avoided as these cause innumerable problems in accomodation and adjustment.
5. As a consequence of women's participation in gainful activities, certain changes should be brought about in the attitude towards traditional role of women and in the way in which domestic responsibilities are shared.
6. Contribution of family members in household work is necessary to help the working mothers to adjust successfully.
7. Expectations from working mother should be somewhat different from those of full time housewives regarding performance of home tasks.
8. Last, but not the least, it may be suggested that there is need of deeper probing into problem. An interview of households, parent-in-laws neighbours and employer of working mother will be useful. Further, comparison of

employed and unemployed will give further information on the different problems which will enable us to get different patterns of child care practices existing among them.