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Parental Care: A Challenging Situation in the Modern Era

Rahul Jarwal[1*] | Dr. Krishna Mishra[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Zoology, S.P.C. Govt. College, Affiliated to M.D.S. University, Ajmer, Rajasthan.
[2]Professor, Department of Zoology, S.P.C. Govt. College, Affiliated to M.D.S. University, Ajmer, Rajasthan.

[*]Corresponding Author: rahuool888@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In today's modern era, parental care is a challenging situation for everyone, be it humans, animals, or birds. Whether it's a father or a mother, in this increasingly fast-paced modern world, no one has the time to care for their children, sit with them, share their feelings, and nurture them emotionally and physically. And when it comes to nuclear families, this situation becomes even more serious. As a result, children are unable to connect emotionally with their parents, leading to loneliness, which negatively impacts their mental state. Regarding animals and birds, villages are disappearing. Growing industrialization and expanding buildings in cities are destroying their habitats, making survival increasingly difficult. Forests are already on the verge of extinction. And the mining of Aravali, which has already been done to a large extent, has further worsened these conditions.

***Keywords**: Parental Care, Modern Era Parenting, Childhood Depression, Parent-Child Relationship.*

Introduction

Parental care is a behavior in which parents make special efforts to protect, nourish, develop, and increase the chances of survival of their offspring. Examples include nest construction in birds, selection of a suitable breeding site, protection from enemies and adverse conditions in fish, and food-based nutrition in mammals. Maternal care is predominant in most mammals. Male-only care (by the father alone) in seahorses and biparental care can be seen in most birds. If we broadly divide parental care into three categories, we can categorize it as birds, animals, and humans. Parental care is important in all of the above categories. However, in today's modern era, parental care can be seen in a challenging situation. The following challenging situations can occur in all three categories:

- **In birds:** Negative effects due to lack of shelter and food can result in challenging parental care.
- **In animals:** Negative effects due to lack of shelter and food can result in challenging parental care.
- **In humans:** Negative effects result from lack of developmental and emotional support for children when both parents are working, and challenging parental care due to various factors.

The most significant reasons for the decline in bird and animal habitats are the expansion of cities, the shrinking of villages and forests, and the lack of vegetation. Birds and animals lack space in cities. Tall buildings, shopping malls, and cinema halls, built by felling trees and plants, have taken away the space of birds and animals. Who cares about them? Isn't their existence vital to nature? Don't they have a right to nature? Aren't they part of the food chain? And what about food? Humans have taken away the food they receive directly from nature by destroying plants, greenery, and forests. How many of

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us feed animals and birds? It is becoming increasingly challenging for them to protect themselves and raise their offspring. In such challenging circumstances, how will they be able to successfully provide parental care to their children? Will their children be healthy? Will they be able to save their children and their future from enemies? Will they be able to save their children from the changing weather - cold, rain, scorching heat? Who has the answer to these future problems? Therefore, we should think about it. We should make efforts. According to a daily newspaper, the movement of leopards in cities is an indication that they are facing less living space. There are 90-100 leopards in 62 square kilometers. Due to which their territory is getting smaller. The biggest reason for parental care challenges in humans is the working environment and the existence of nuclear families. Financial constraints in families, with both parents working and being away from home for work, are perhaps making successful, high-quality parental care challenging today. But what about the emotional and physical health of children? How many parents are emotionally connected to their children today? How many parents are able to devote adequate time to their children? Are they able to understand their thoughts? The answers to all these questions will likely be negative. As a result, children face worrying situations such as loneliness, irritability, separation from parents, lack of values, social media friendliness, mobile phone addiction, depression, anxiety, obesity, lack of self-confidence, unknown fears, falling prey to bad company and bad habits, and suicide. If we look for reasons for working parents, they may include the following:

- Economic crisis
- Underutilization of education among women
- Desire or need to become self-reliant
- Nuclear families
- Family responsibilities
- Social pressure
- Competition with others

Negative effects on children as a result of poor parental care:

- Loneliness
- Emotional insecurity
- Lack of values
- Social media-friendly
- Falling into bad company
- Drug addiction
- Emotional separation from parents

If we consider the consequences of this on parents, the percentage of parents living alone in old age may continue to increase, and they may be deprived of care by their children, or forced to resort to old-age homes, dependent on someone else for care, or hired for a fee. You will have to be prepared for such circumstances. The main reason for this is the lack of emotional attachment of children to their parents.

The evolution of parental care, writes Sigal Balshine, leads to social development, such as the formation of family groups, which provides a bridge to more complex forms of social structure. Parental care can vary across species, with expensive feeding being a hallmark of birds and mammals. Furthermore, many species of fish, amphibians, and reptiles provide simple but vigorous protection and care for their young from predators. In some species, the mother, in others, care for the young.

WJ Han, DP Miller (2009) examined the association between depression and time spent with parents in adolescents aged 13-14 years. As a result, they found that increased maternal work at night was significantly associated with lower home quality, poorer diets, and an increased risk of depression in middle-aged adolescents.

While evening work by fathers was significantly associated with lower paternal closeness, the mediator was significantly associated with increased depression in adolescents.

M Kizuki et al. (2018) wrote in his research article that parents' working hours impact children's mental health. He analyzed school-based survey data using a sample of primary school students to

examine the relationship between parents' return time from work and children's mental health. The results showed that children whose parents returned home late from work had higher scores on total difficulties, behavioral problems, and hyperactivity/inattention than children whose parents returned early. Therefore, they concluded that late or irregular arrival times for both parents negatively impact children's well-being, and this relationship was partly due to the reduced frequency of parent-child communication.

Using a large modern data set, WJ Han, et al. (2010) studied risky behaviors in adolescents aged 13 or 14. They found that mothers who spent less time with their children due to work had a less positive home environment. All of these factors were associated with adolescent risky behavior. Subgroup analyses showed that boys, children from low-income families, and those whose parents had never held professional jobs may be particularly affected by mothers working night shifts, as they spend less time together, are less close to their mothers, and have a less positive home environment.

Multilevel linear regression models were estimated to analyze the association between parental work schedules and working hours and adolescent mental health measures obtained from the SF-36 Health Survey, according to the Journal **Social Science & Medicine** (2009). Evidence of negative effects of parents working non-standard hours on adolescent well-being is found primarily in single-parent families.

Materials and Methods

Two types of methods were used for this Study.

- **Direct Observation Method:** Dogs were used as animals, and Dove, pigeons were used as birds. And A total of selected cases were observed using direct observation method.
- **Survey Method**: In this method, questions related to human parental care were asked to the participants through Google Forms.

To understand the condition and problems of birds and animals, they were observed for 2 months at different urban places and photographed. Among birds, pigeons and Doves were included, and among animals, dogs were included.

- A female dog with her puppies wandering around in search of food, searching for food in a garbage heap. (Pictures 1.1, 1.2).
- A Dove making a nest under the shade of a climbing vine on an artificial house on the roof of someone's house and incubating its eggs. (Pictures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).
- Pigeons making a nest on a window of a building, laying eggs, and incubating them. (Pictures 3.1, 3.2).



Fig. : 1.1



Fig. : 1.2



Fig. : 2.1

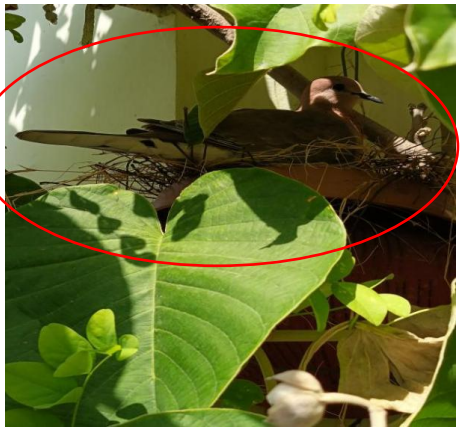


Fig. : 2.2



Fig. : 2.3



Fig. : 2.4



Fig. : 3.1



Fig. : 3.2

Results

In picture no. 1.1 and 1.2, the helplessness of hunger was clearly visible on the faces of the female dog and her three children. They were searching for food in the garbage heap with great hope (picture no. 1.3 and 1.4) Dove made a nest on the roof of someone's house and laid eggs, and after a three weeks of incubating those eggs, babies came out of those eggs. (picture no. 2.5 and 2.6) Pigeons made a nest in a corner of the roof or window of someone's house and laid eggs, and after incubating them, babies came out of them.(3.3 and 3.4)



Fig. 1.3



Fig. 1.4



Fig. : 2.5



Fig. : 2.6



Fig. : 3.3



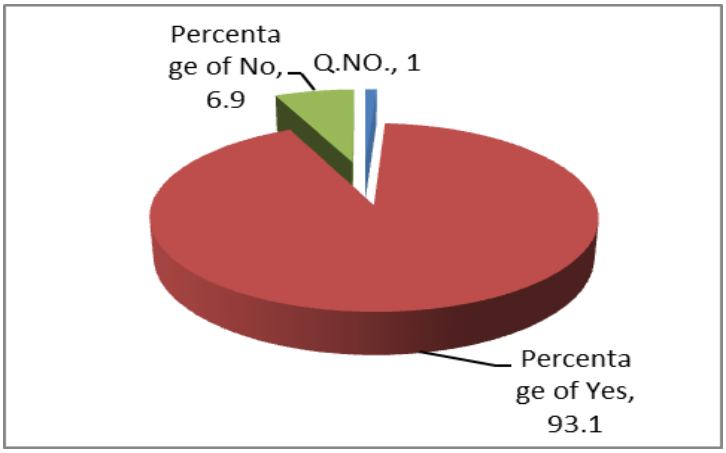
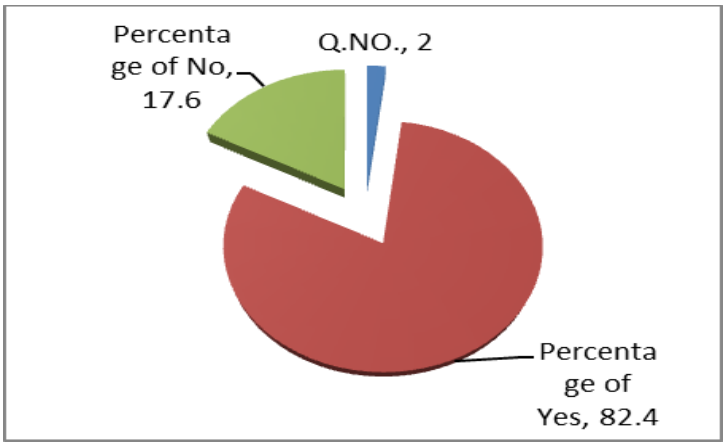
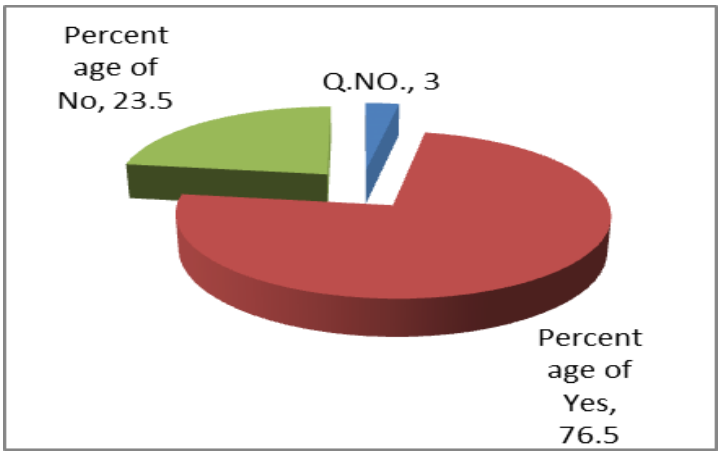
Fig. : 3.4

Additionally, using the survey method, 102 people were asked to fill out a form prepared through Google Forms. Ten questions related to parental care were asked, which were based on human parental care. The results were quite surprising. Based on the survey results, percentages were calculated using the following formula.

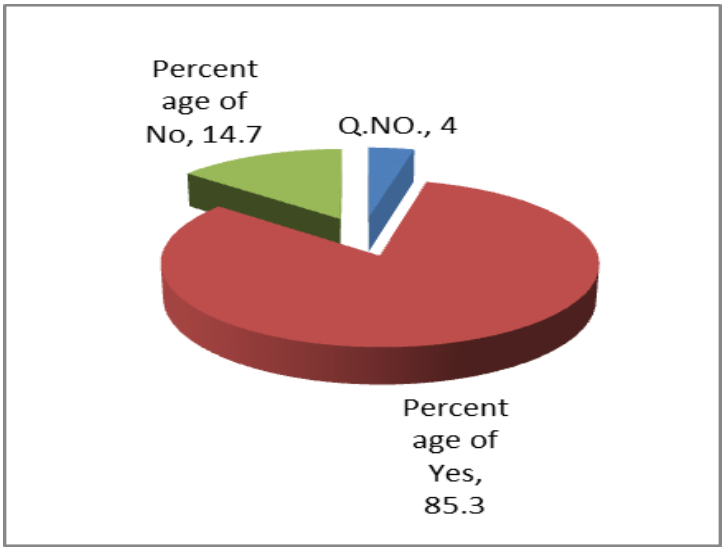
$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of responses}}{\text{Total No.of respondents}} \times 100$$

- 93.1 percent of people said that the percentage of both parents working is increasing.
- 82.4 percent said that parents have less time for their children.
- 76.5 percent said that parents have the facilities to provide for their children but lack the values.
- 85.3 percent said that it is very important for parents to give adequate time to their children.
- 88.2 percent of people believe that the trend of nuclear families is increasing in Indian families.
- 78.4 percent said that children are happier and healthier in joint families than in nuclear families.
- 84.3 percent said that children today are more emotionally vulnerable, have less tolerance, loneliness and depression are increasing, and their mental health is being negatively affected.
- 83.3 percent said that mental stress among children has increased to a great extent because they are unable to express their feelings to their parents, the main reason for this is that parents do not have time for them.
- 85.3 percent of people said that based on all the above questions, do you think that parental care has deteriorated significantly, which needs improvement for the mental and physical development of children?
- 89.2 percent of people believe that every effort should be made to strengthen parental care for the future.

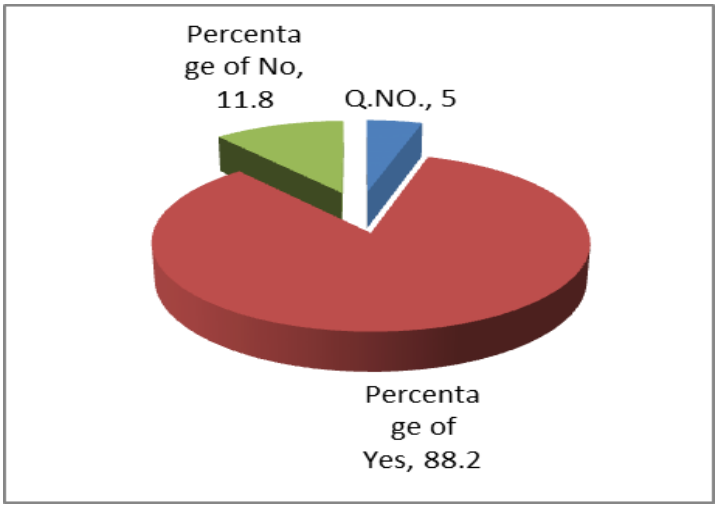
To understand the above data in brief, we can show it through a table and statistical calculations in the following way using Pie Charts.

Questionnaire for the Survey	**Results in the form of a Pie Chart**
1- Is the percentage of families where both parents are working increasing?	
2-Are parents having less and less time for their children day by day?	
3- Parents have the resources to provide their children with material comforts, but they don't have the time to instill values in them?	

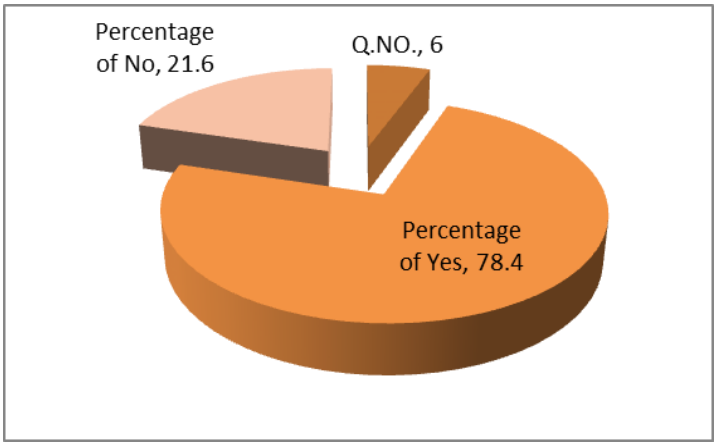
4- Is it very important for parents to spend enough time with their children?



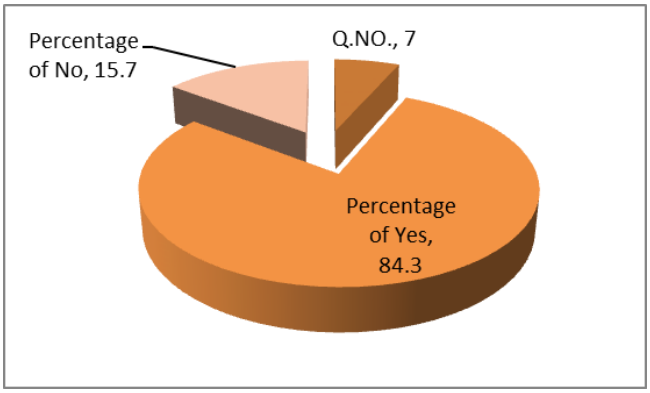
5- Is the trend of nuclear families increasing in Indian households?



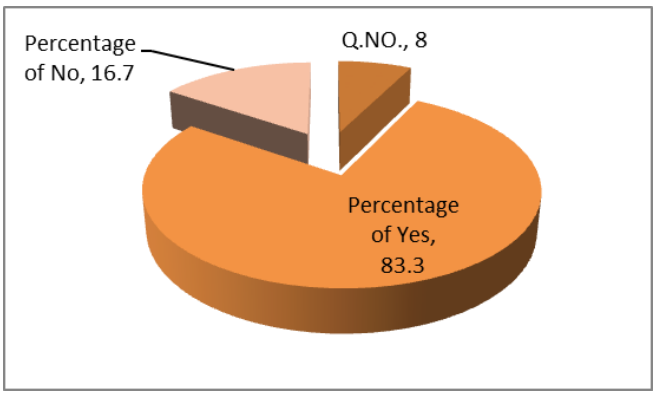
6-Are children happier and healthier in joint families compared to nuclear families?



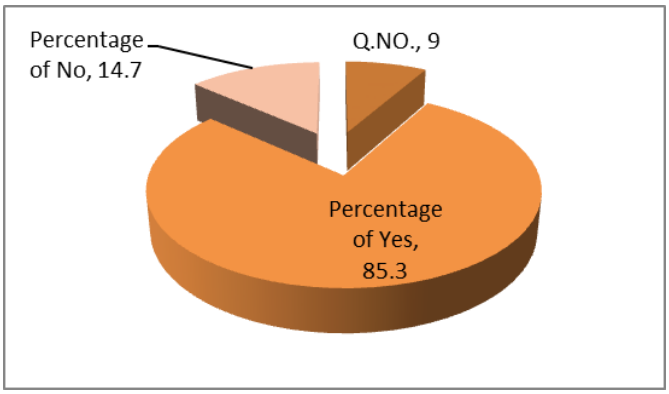
7-Are today's children emotionally weaker, with less resilience, experiencing increasing loneliness and depression, and is their mental health being negatively affected?



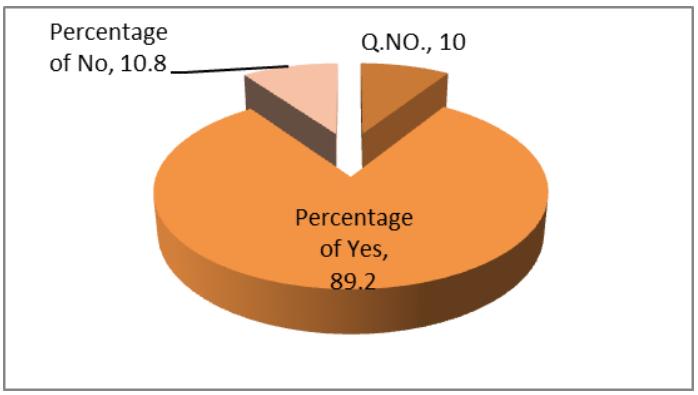
8- Children's mental stress has increased significantly, largely because they are unable to express their feelings to their parents. The main reason for this is that parents don't have enough time for them?



9-Based on all the above questions, do you think there has been a significant decline in parental care, and that improvements are needed for the mental and physical development of children?



10-From a future perspective, every effort should be made to strengthen parental care?



Conclusion

Female dogs, along with their young, wander around in search of food and eventually find food in garbage heaps, which they eat themselves and also feed to their young. This indicates that, in the modern age, people may consider throwing food into garbage more appropriate and time-saving than feeding animals. This may reflect a decline in humanity and a concerning attitude towards animals.

Furthermore, the female dove endured considerable challenges while building a nest on someone's rooftop, laying eggs, and raising her young. It was difficult for the female dove to find shelter, build a nest, protect herself from enemies, face the scorching sun and rain, changing temperatures and weather conditions, and provide food and water for her young.

Similarly, pigeons built nests in corners of roofs or windows and raised their young under conditions of fear and limited facilities. Nest building in windows or on roofs and parental care are emerging as challenging situations that may become a serious problem in the future. This situation requires attention and indicates the need for more research in this area.

Parental care in humans is also a serious and critical situation. Children, who are considered the future of the nation, may be affected, and their childhood experiences may be negatively influenced. It is concerning that this situation does not receive sufficient attention. From this perspective, the well-being of children and society may be affected. This growing problem among children may take a more serious turn in the future. It may indirectly affect families, society, and the nation. Therefore, it is crucial to address this situation.

In the modern age, everything should be modern. If we are moving forward with comforts, we should also move forward with good mental and physical health. This should apply to people of all ages. Only then can we truly be called modern, and this era can truly be called a modern era.

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