

Chapter 2

Introduction to South Asian Heritage and South Asian Parenting Styles

ABSTRACT

This chapter sets the scene of Universals in parenting and discusses the unique characteristics that parents of South Asian heritage have. It highlights how in the process of migration from one country to another, families can experience a shift and change in social, cultural, and societal expectations and norms. Demands around accepting, rejecting, and adapting to the new social norms and expectations can be very stressful, time consuming, and in many cases, can impact the parental relationship along with the parent-child relationships. Therefore, the pressure on the parenting for immigrant families is exemplified with multiple influences interacting at the same time. The values and beliefs of Asian families are discussed. Interdependence, welfare of family, moral responsibility towards one's family and parents are some important guiding values of most South Asian families.

INTRODUCTION

The universal nature of parenting is indeed a significant aspect that governments and policymakers around the world recognize and support through various policies. Maternity and paternity leaves, along with family allowances, are essential components of this support system, reflecting a

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societal acknowledgment of the critical role parents play in the early stages of a child's development. These policies are not just about financial aid; they are about providing parents with the time and resources needed to foster nurturing environments that are conducive to the healthy development of children. Research, such as the studies conducted by Daly in 2015, underscores the importance of social support systems that go beyond financial assistance. Information dissemination, education, and skill development are crucial for empowering parents, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to support their children's growth effectively. These elements of support contribute to a more inclusive society where the needs of all families are addressed, and disparities in parenting resources are minimized.

The interaction between a parent and child is a complex and dynamic process that has profound implications for the child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Coren and Barlow's research in 2000 highlighted the significant impact of these interactions on both the child and the parent. Engaging in meaningful activities, communication, and emotional exchange strengthens the bond between them, which is vital for the child's overall well-being and development. Furthermore, nurturing environments are not just beneficial for children; they also have a positive effect on parents. Such environments can reduce stress, improve mental health, and promote a sense of competence and satisfaction in parenting roles. When parents feel supported and have access to resources, they are more likely to create stable and loving homes, which are the foundation for raising well-adjusted and resilient children.

Universal parenting support policies are a testament to the collective understanding that raising children is a shared responsibility. By acknowledging the universal aspects of parenting, governments and policymakers can create frameworks that support families effectively, leading to healthier societies. The continuous evolution of these policies, informed by ongoing research and societal feedback, is crucial for addressing the changing needs of families and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

What Is “Universal” in Parenting?

Parents all across the world shoulder the responsibility of nurturing a newborn, based in a matrix of families that is uniquely placed in a social and cultural context. All parents have multi fold responsibilities of not only caring for the child/ren but also ensuring that there are sufficient resources to enable

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