

## Chapter 6

# Windows of Parenting: Real Families and Their Real Stories

### **ABSTRACT**

*As discussed in earlier chapters, the socio-cultural influences of parenting of South Asian heritage parents are undeniable. Many books have been written on parenting capturing the theoretical and academic perspective of parenting and its influence on families. This chapter captures five stories of different families about their psychological, social, and emotional aspects. Each story is showcased and presented in the “window” of parenting and talks of real struggles, real achievements, and the meaning of parenting itself. Some parents shared pictures that described their parenting as part of the semi-structured interviews. Each window of parenting is a unique opportunity to see inside the parenting style and capture the story that is unique to that family in the social and cultural context. Although each of these parenting windows is unique, these families are all united by one common thread of their South Asian parenting and that the country that they now belong to is the United Kingdom.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Migration is a complex and multifaceted process that can significantly alter the fabric of family life. As families move from one country to another, they are often confronted with a new set of social, cultural, and societal norms that can be vastly different from those they left behind. This transition requires

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-9140-9.ch006

a delicate balance of accepting, rejecting, and adapting to these norms, a process that can be both time-consuming and stressful. The impact of this adjustment is felt most acutely in the dynamics of family relationships, particularly between parents and their children.

The challenge for parents is twofold: they must navigate their own process of acculturation while simultaneously guiding their children through this new reality. This task is complicated by the varying developmental stages of their children, each requiring a different approach and explanation of the changes occurring around them. For younger children, who may not fully grasp the reasons behind the move, the focus might be on providing stability and reassurance. Adolescents, who are forming their own identities, may require more in-depth conversations about cultural differences and the reasons behind certain societal expectations.

Furthermore, the pressure to quickly adapt to the new environment can place an immense burden on parents. They must learn new systems, such as education and healthcare, and understand the unspoken rules that govern social interactions. This pressure is exacerbated by the need to establish financial stability and create a sense of home in an unfamiliar place. The cumulative effect of these demands can strain even the strongest of relationships, leading to tension and conflict within the family unit.

This chapter delves into the ‘lived-in’ experiences of migrant families in the UK, highlighting the unique challenges they face. It examines the strategies parents employ to cope with the stress of resettlement and the ways in which they strive to maintain a sense of continuity and connection to their cultural heritage. It also considers the resilience of these families as they build new lives, often in the face of adversity and isolation. The narrative of migration is one of courage and perseverance. It is a testament to the human spirit’s capacity to adapt and thrive in the face of change. By exploring the windows of parenting within this context, we gain insight into the complex interplay of factors that shape the migrant experience. It is a story of transformation, not only of the individuals who undertake the journey but also of the societies that receive them. Through understanding these ‘lived-in’ lives, we can foster a greater sense of empathy and support for migrant families as they become integral parts of their new communities.

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