

Book Review

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Title of Book- "Parental Behavior and Psychological Adjustment of School Children", by Dr. Seema Munaf, from the Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Karachi.

This book has been printed at BCC and T Press, University of Karachi, in 2012. Its total pages are only 77, inclusive of content and preface. It is a paperback edition with a price of PKR 50/=, US \$ 05, with ISBN-978-969-8883-05-8.

This book is based on parental behavior and psychological adjustment of children of all age groups. From the citation of National and International researches as well as from the personal clinical experience of the author it is clear that this book is not restricted to a particular age range as every stage of development is important and there is need for proper parenting at each step of maturity.

Although in Pakistan many researches on the subject of children social and psychological issues have been published, however the uniqueness and diversity of this book from the previous published work can be seen from the start as its write-up begins with researches supporting the title and ends with the personal experiences.

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Agha,

Assimilation of intensive relevant researches and communication of clinical experience of the author, including teaching and internship supervision, mentoring, analysis of case studies and chairing of sessions in case conferences in the form of book, in my opinion is the first of its kind in Pakistan and provide an excellent piece of work that reflects the way the knowledge will be used in real life.

Foreword of this book is from the renowned Clinical Psychologist of Pakistan namely, Dr. Khalida Shafi, who is a Professor at the Institute of Professional Psychology, Bahria University, Karachi. According to her the book “throws light on the role of parental behavior such as permissive, authoritarian, authoritative behavior etc., in the personality development of their children. Further it also focuses upon parental acceptance, rejection, overprotection and various behavioral patterns upon psychological health of children”.

A detailed review of the book is made chapter wise, as the write-up of it is divided under three most important chapters and a chapter on conclusion.

Chapter-1- “Parental Behavior - An International Perspective”, is divided in six research based subheadings of, theoretical background of parenting, parental behavior and psychological adjustment, parental behavior and psychopathology, parental behavior and misconduct, parental behavior and academic achievement, sex discrimination by the parents followed by a summary. This chapter is particularly interesting as findings of international researches are mentioned section wise which has made this chapter prominent and influential. It can be concluded from the researches that negative parental behavior, style and attitude can have negative impact in childhood, adolescent and adulthood stage, whereas healthy interaction between child and parents results in healthy personality development.

Chapter- 2- “Parental Behavior - National Perspective”, is divided in three research based subheading namely, parental behavior and psychological problems of Pakistani children, parental behavior and academic achievement of Pakistani children and sex discrimination by the Pakistani parents. The entire chapter is worth reading as it focuses particularly on Pakistani parental behavior. Results of published researches of Pakistani scholars are also mentioned in an organized way and according to the subheads matching the results of various researches. Researches of this chapter particularly those related to sex discrimination are interesting and note worthy.

Chapter-3- “Parental Behavior and Children – Clinical Experience”, is the core chapter of the book as in this chapter clinical experience of the author related to different parental behavior has been communicated. This chapter is divided in twenty two sub heads based on diverse parental behavior and certain other factors of home environment, having its impact on their children. These aspects are named as, demanding parents, punishing parents, rejecting parents, neglecting parents, parental attention, over protective parents, parental dependency, permissive parents, authoritarian parents, authoritative parents, selfish parents, parental dysfunctional attitude, parental “Yes Boss” attitude, encouraging parents, physical/verbal/emotional child abuse, acceptance /rejection of aggression, sex discrimination, sleeping habits, parental conflicts, parental separation, questions related to physical changes and parent teacher meetings. Finally summary of clinical experience is given, followed by the final chapter of Conclusion.

Chapter-4-“Conclusion” is based on what is abstracted from above three chapters emphasizing importance of parenting, nevertheless uniqueness of the child is not ignored as well as various other related variables which may also in combination with particular parental behavior play a mediating role. After conclusion, references and subject index is given.

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This book is an excellent piece of work which can develop awareness among parents about the impact of their behavior on their children. Overall this book can be taken as a guide for parents in general and Pakistani parents in particular. It is an eye opener for parents as one learns from the book how parental rejection, permissiveness, neglect, rejection, overprotection, rigid, dysfunctional attitude and many other parental psychopathological behavior, parental conflict, drug abuse and sex discrimination can contribute in the development of psychological problems, misconduct and academic problems in childhood stage as well as in adulthood.

Although it comprises of only seventy seven pages, however one can say that quality of the book is more important than quantity.

The only limitation of this book is that the author has not touched upon or mentioned various parental behaviors like effect of parental past experiences on child development, which can contribute in the development of psychopathology. Separate attention has also not given to various childhood disorders as mentioned in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR).

Though there are few limitations, in spite of that it is an interesting, clear and readable work. Its language is very simple which is easy to understand. I found this book to be informative for the parents as well as for students involved in developmental research.