

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter presents results of the study in two sections. In section I the findings are presented for sharing, conflict resolution and perspective taking among children. The variables of analysis were age, gender and ordinal position of children, the family background in relation to family type, income, occupation and education of parents.

The data has been obtained from children through observations in the preschool context, simulated tasks on sharing behaviour and verbal responses of children on different tasks. In view of multiple responses, the analysis is done mainly in terms of frequencies and percentages.

The section II presents the findings obtained from teachers and parents through interviews. The perceptions of teacher about the sharing and conflict resolution behaviours of children were analyzed and teacher's observations of each child were also examined to understand the overall profile of children. The interviews of parents mainly focused on their perceptions about morality and young children with special reference to the role of parents in guiding young children.

Section I

Sharing Behaviour of Children

The sharing behaviour of children was examined as one of the major indicators of socio moral behaviours which reflects perspective taking abilities of children. Providing insight about the extent of sensitivity and willingness of children to respond to peer's needs.

The sharing behaviour of children was specifically examined and analyzed in relation to the types of sharing, reactions of children and peers to sharing, context of occurrence of sharing and the outcome of sharing. These sharing behaviours were observed for each of these aspects during indoor and outdoor free play sessions and the art session.

The overall findings reveal that majority of the times children were willing to share, irrespective of their age, gender, ordinal position and the family background.

The younger children and boys shared maximum in comparison with older children and girls indicating more than twice the difference in terms of the percentage of sharing. The overall trend in terms of ordinal position revealed that second borns shared as high as 59.4% times, followed by first borns.

with 37.6% times of sharing while third born shared the least upto 10.3% times as evident. (figure 4). In terms of family type, children from joint families shared most frequently as compared to children from nuclear families with 68.5% and 31.5% times respectively. A surprising trend was that children from highest range of family income shared the least upto 10.3% times while children from lower and middle income families shared 47.9% and 41.8% respectively. The overall findings regarding the educational levels of fathers and mothers show a similar trend. The children of post graduate parents and non literate parents shared the least while children of 12th standard pass and Diploma holders shared maximum followed by children of graduate parents. However the difference in the percentage of occurrence of sharing behaviour was relatively greater amongst categories.

The total number of occurrence of sharing behaviour of children indicated the mean of 5.32 with 2.77 sd. The range of sharing episodes varied widely across subjects. The maximum sharing in a span of 120 minutes was 10 times for a child and the minimum sharing response was nil occurrence in the total period of observation for two children across indoor and outdoor free play situations and art sessions.

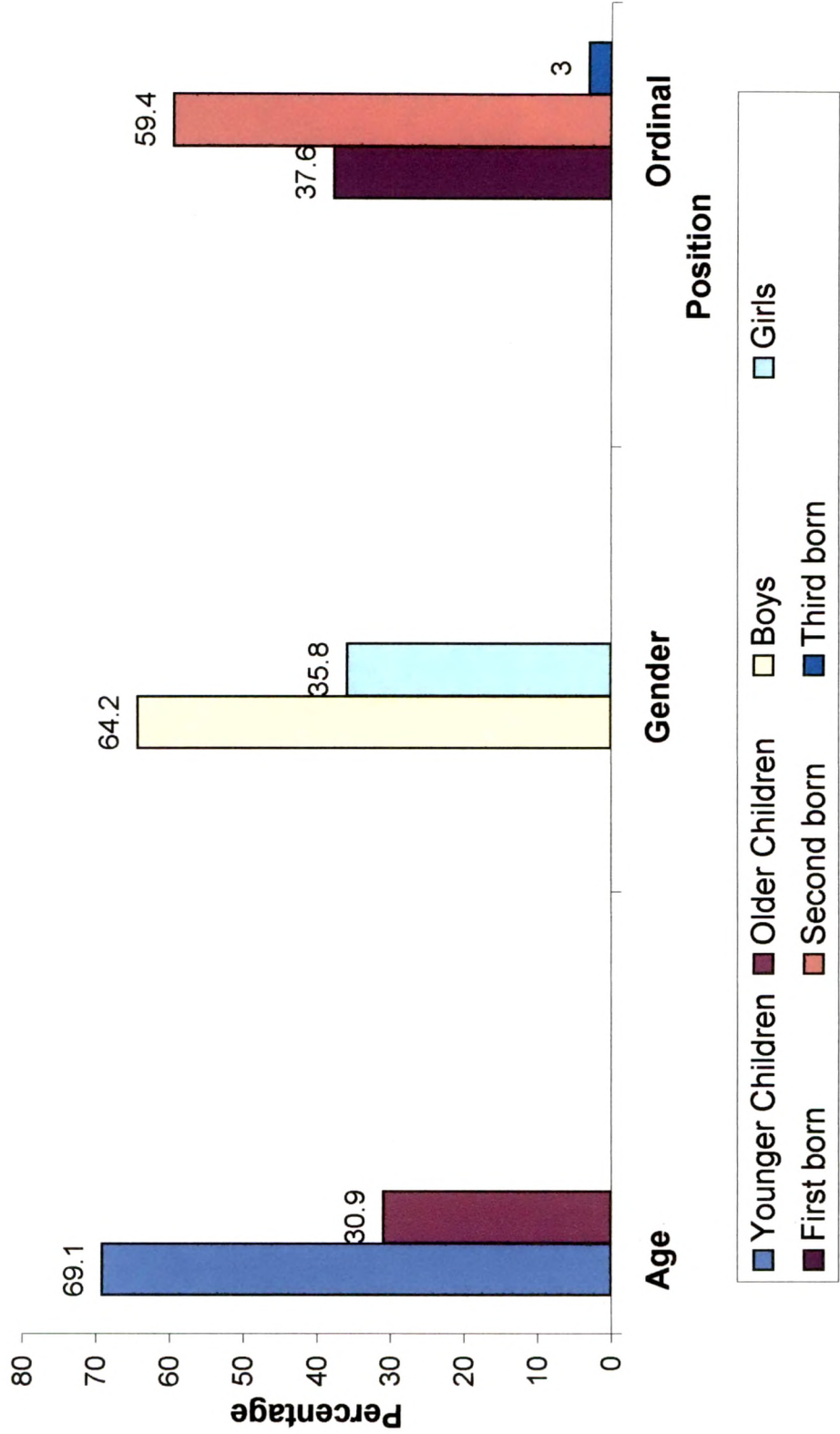


Figure 4 The Overall pattern of sharing in terms of Age, Gender, Ordinal Position

The two children one girl and one boy did not indicate any sharing during the total span of observation in the free play and art sessions. These children also indulged minimum in conflicts and were therefore categorized as low on conflict indulgence. The boy was second born from the low income, joint family background with primary schooling and higher secondary pass educational levels of father and mother respectively. The girl was first born from the low income, joint family background with ITI pass father and mother with primary schooling. She belonged to muslim family having small scale business.

The interviews of parents of both these children revealed that they were steady, cool, composed and had high aspirations for their children. They had faith in the almighty and believed in giving good sanskars to children such that they contribute to family and society at large.

The pattern of sharing behaviour was analyzed in terms of type of sharing to gain greater insight about the nature of sharing across variables.

Types of Sharing

The data revealed that children engaged in different types of sharing in the preschool environment. They shared the

play material, adults attention with peers, space and they also took turns to share equipments and other available resources. It was found that children shared play material maximum times, followed by sharing exclusive space with peer. Also few times children engaged in turn taking and sharing adult's attention. The overall developmental trend revealed that play materials and adults' attention were shared by older children more than the younger subjects. But space was shared more by younger children, though they did not share adult's attention any time, while older children shared attention of adults few times as evident (Figure 5). These findings show the developmental trend towards increasing social development. Also culturally older children are expected and encouraged to share more willingly and promptly. Hence the family and social practices encourage sharing in children.

It is interesting to note that there was high frequency of sharing play materials irrespective of the age of children. One of the reasons could be that the individual response profiles of children indicated that they engaged in sharing but most often it was with their close peer. The close peer was either staying in the neighbourhood or was cotraveling in the same auto rickshaw. Sometimes the close peer happened to share the

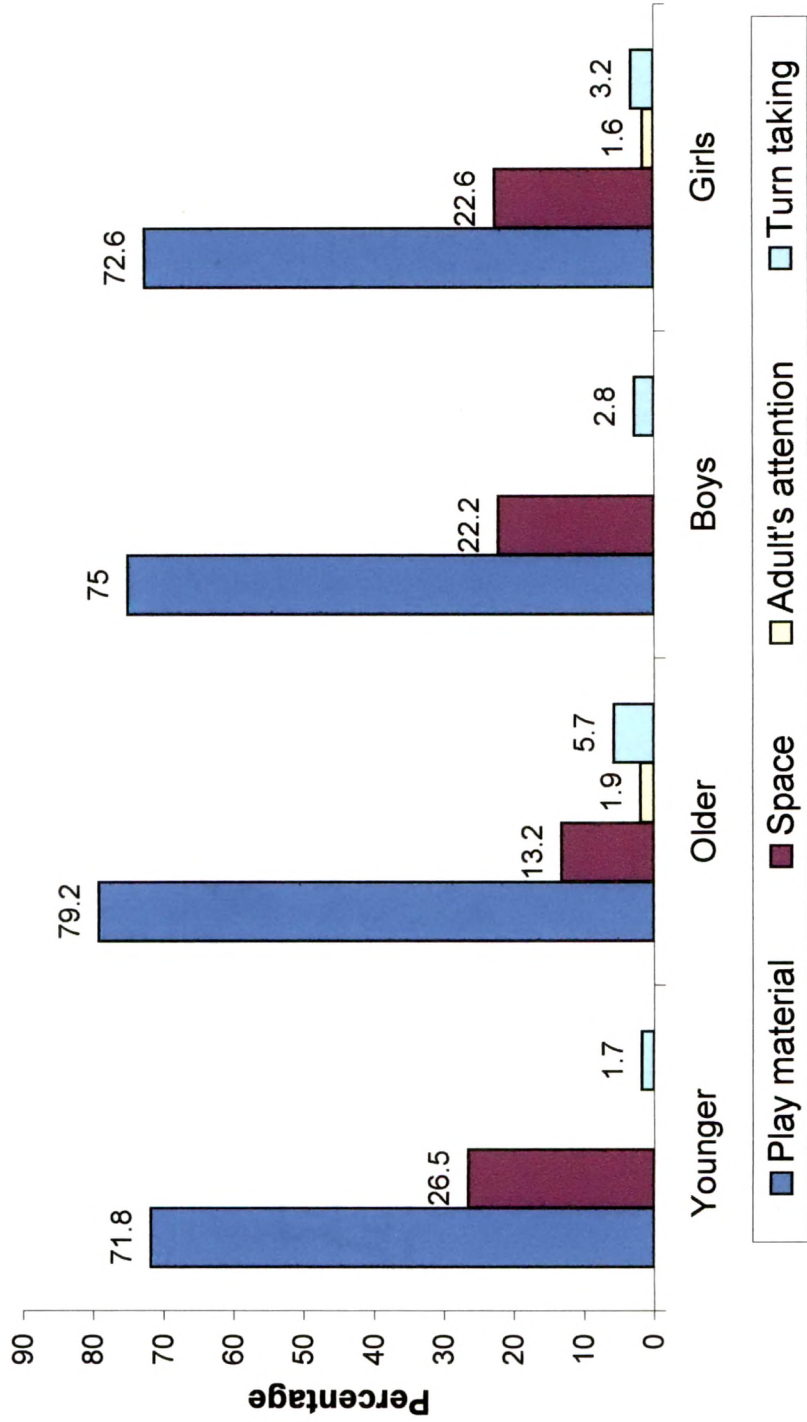


Figure 5 Nature of sharing in terms of Age and Gender

personality trait of being quiet, very extrovert or vibrant. At other times the close peer was the one who was compliant and responded promptly to the focal child's needs, requests or demands, leading to sharing with that peer.

This observation of sharing play materials more frequently was also reiterated during the simulated task when the focus child was directly asked to show the most favorite toy or play material in the classroom and the preference for sharing. The focal child most often preferred to share it with close peers. During observations it was also found that sharing behaviour of any kind occurred more often with the same peers whom the child had named while responding to the simulated tasks on sharing. This finding points out the common trend of sharing as evident through observation and verbal responses of children.

The literature too supports that sharing behaviour occurs more with peers than acquaintances (Buhrmester, Goldfarb, Cantrell, 1992). The sharing also occurs when the names of sharers or donors are declared or acknowledged at individual level or in the group.

The nature of sharing with gender in focus revealed that the play materials were shared the most by both boys and girls.

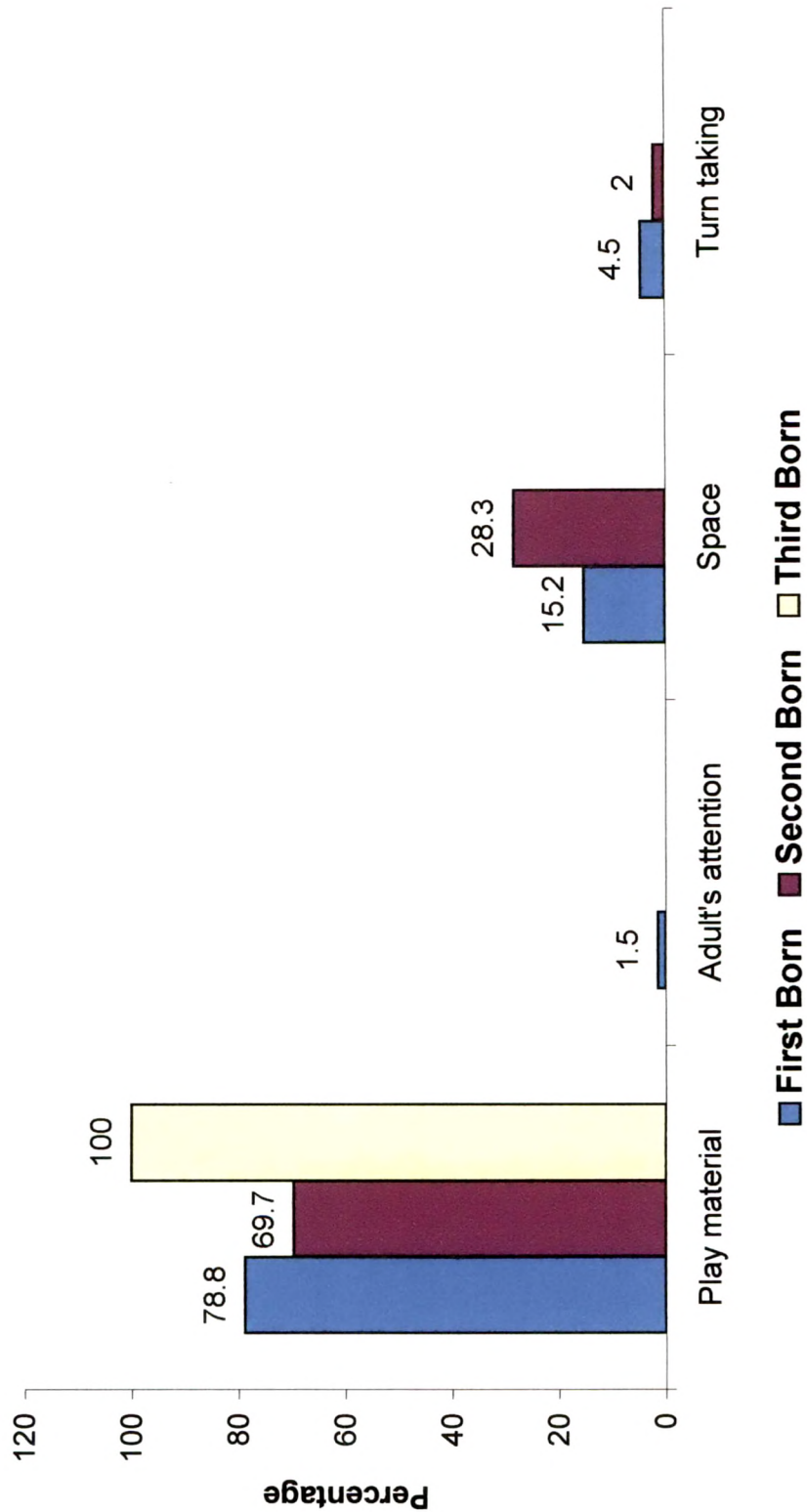


Figure 6 Nature of sharing in terms of Ordinal Position

upto 75% and 72.6% times respectively. Space was second highest revealing that exclusive space was shared by boys and girls and it was usually in the art room and dollhouse. The turn taking episodes were very less for boys and girls, showing marginal difference in terms of gender. Also only 16% girls shared attention of adults with peers while boys were not observed sharing attention. To conclude, there was least gender difference in the sharing specifically play materials, adult's attention, exclusive space and turn taking behaviours. This finding reveals that although in the overall pattern of sharing there was remarkable gender difference indicating 64.2% and 35.8% respectively for boys and girls but within categories there was considerably less gender difference.

The pattern of sharing in terms of ordinal position of children revealed that although the second borns shared greater than other children, irrespective of ordinal position children shared play materials maximum times, followed by sharing exclusive space, turn taking and attention of adults. (Figure 6). An interesting finding was that third born shared play materials 78.8% times followed by first born being 78.8% times and the second born, indicating 69.7% times.

The second borns however shared exclusive space more in comparison with the first born indicating reasonable difference in terms of frequency of sharing. Also only first borns shared little attention of parents while it was not evident in other children. This finding also perhaps shows cultural practices of encouraging greater sharing in older children. While younger children are at times ignored if they do not share and if the age difference between siblings is greater, the older child is discouraged to expect younger sibling to share in many families from middle socio economic background.

The pattern of sharing behaviour of children was also analyzed in relation to the family background. The sharing behaviour of children reveals that children from joint families shared more in comparison with children from nuclear families, the difference being double the percentage of times, indicating the overall sharing pattern in terms of family type. However between categories there was marginal difference in the pattern of sharing play materials being 74.4% and 73.6% for children from joint and nuclear families respectively. Also space was shared exclusively by children from both types of families, revealing 23.9% and 18.9% times of occurrence for the joint and nuclear

family background of children indicating moderate difference (Table 1)

Another highlight was that 7.5% times children from nuclear families engaged in turn taking while only 0.9% turn taking behaviour was evident for children in the joint families. Also only 0.9%, times children of joint families shared adult's attention while in case of children from nuclear families, it was absent

However, children from joint families shared double the number of times than children from nuclear families evidencing 68.8% for joint and 31.2% times for nuclear families. This finding draws attention to the collectivist value orientation as an essential standard of behaviour in the Indian cultural context.

Further, the data reveals that children in the lower family income range shared the most with 48.2% times of sharing of which the play materials were shared maximum indicating 81.7% times of occurrence. The next highest percentage was sharing the space exclusively while playing indoors, doing art activities and playing on the swings in the outdoor play ground. But the percentage was 17.1% for sharing space. The attention

of adults was shared 100% only in the families with middle income bracket while in other income brackets it was absent.

The play materials were shared the least by children in the highest income bracket and the percentage was 44.4%. One of the reasons could be that these children resided in independent apartments or row houses in the societies wherein the interaction is selective in terms of time and the types of people. Hence children often play with their resources alone or only with a particular neighbour. While children from the lowest income group either stayed in "chauls" in the city area or in the university servant's quarters and hence the interaction was more open kind enabling frequent scope for sharing and playing with various play materials, quite often outside their house.

Another interesting finding was that turn taking was most frequently evident for 12.5% times in case of children from the middle income families, while in the highest income bracket turn taking was totally absent. The attention of adults was shared 2.6% times by children from the middle income range. Also these children shared play materials 78.9% times, being second highest in the categories of family income. (Table 1).

The pattern of sharing space exclusively by focus children indicated that consistently in all the four categories of family income, the space was shared by children. But the highlight was that children from the families with the highest income range shared the space maximum, amounting to 55.6% while the percentage was less than 22% for other categories. The children from the lowest income range shared the space 17.1% times, indicating least sharing in comparison with other categories.

These findings concerning the differences in terms of sharing exclusive space indicate that the children from higher income families tend to have relatively more spacious homes and hence at psychological level too perhaps they were more secure and content in sharing the space with peers in the preschool context. Also some children from higher income bracket also belonged to joint families and inspite of having larger homes they had to share the space with cousins and siblings. Therefore they indicate higher percentages as it is encouraged as a regular practice at home.

The overall sharing pattern in terms of family income however indicates that children from lower family income bracket shared maximum upto 48.2% times and minimum 10.6% times from the

highest family income bracket indicating major difference in percentages. The children from the middle income bracket however showed atypical pattern with 22.4% times of sharing. This trend thus reveals that lower the family income, higher was the percentage of the occurrence of sharing behaviour.

Thus the data raises a pertinent question whether single variable such as income per se, family typology, parent's education plays a role or any other variable in combination influences the pattern of sharing in children. Regarding the two extreme levels of family income one of the explanations could be that due to limited financial resources, there is a possibility of encouraging sharing between siblings and neighbourhood children more, especially for play materials. While children from

Table 1
Nature of Sharing by Family Type and Family Income (N=31)

Nature of Sharing	Family Income (%)			Family Type (%)	
	Low Income	Middle income	High Income	Joint	Nuclear
Play Material	81.7	72.25	44.4	74.4	73.6
Adult's Attention	00	2.6	00	0.9	00
Space	17.1	20.15	55.6	23.9	18.9
Turn taking	1.2	12.5	00	0.9	7.5

Note : Multiple responses

the higher family income bracket are likely to share less also because some parents believe in sharing at the thought level but in actuality in order to avoid any rift they have separate sets of resources for each child, thus leaving lesser scope for sharing with siblings. It is often a myth that the economically better off families cater to range of needs of children in terms of resources

The pattern of sharing behaviour of children was analyzed in relation to the education of parents. It was found that children of post graduate parents and non literate parents shared a similar trend indicating sharing of play materials 100% times. This observation though limited to the present study raises an important question whether the level of education has any implication on the nature and extent of sharing by young children. This finding also reiterates the earlier question whether a single variable has a major role to play in the overall pattern of interactions

The overall pattern of the type of sharing in relation to parents' education reveals that children of graduate and H SC.E pass fathers shared most frequently upto 34.1 and 33.5% times respectively. While children of H SC.E pass mothers shared maximum indicating 62.9% of sharing. The second highest

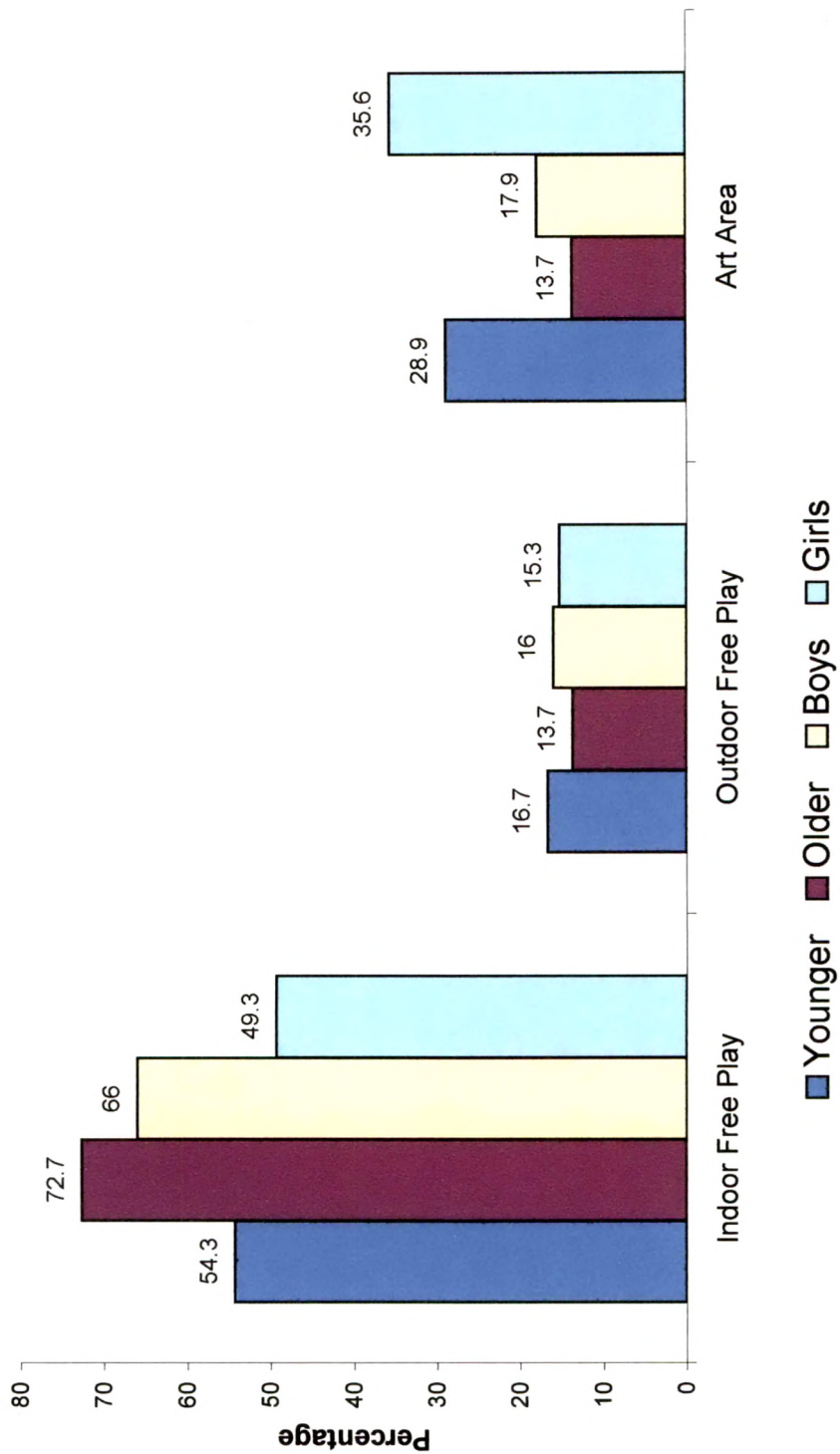


Figure 7 Context of occurrence of sharing of Focus Child by Age and Gender

percentage was 24.7% for children of graduate mothers. The children from other categories revealed very low sharing upto less than 6% of occurrence of sharing behaviour.

The pattern of sharing in terms of situation revealed a wide range from free play situation to semi structured situation in the preschool environment, sharing was maximum in the indoor session, followed by art area and the outdoor free play situation. As shown (Figure 7) older children and boys shared maximum during the indoor free play situation. While girls shared lesser indicating considerable difference in terms of age and gender. But interestingly younger children and girls shared greater in the art area as compared to the indoor free play context. The outdoor free play indicated little difference in terms of age and gender. The older children indicated a different pattern which perhaps reiterates their developmental levels and the age characteristic. One of the reasons could be that older children may be more possessive about the available resources and quite often they are aware about their strength in safeguarding their resources, especially from younger children or more shy and introvert children. They also tend to assert their right to certain resources if they had access to it first.

The observational data shows interesting findings regarding the overall sharing pattern of focal children in terms of gender. It was found that boys engaged in sharing oriented interaction 64.2% times while girls engaged in sharing 35.8% times during the course of observations both indoors and outdoors.

The detailed analysis reveals that maximum sharing occurred in the doll house, art session, outdoor free play for boys. While for girls maximum sharing took place in the dollhouse, manipulative area of the classroom and outdoor environment. There was least sharing by girls in the block and display areas.

In the language area the data indicated that the boys shared maximum upto 10.4% times in comparison with girls who shared only 5.1% times. This is quite interesting. One of the reasons could be that the girls quite often picked up resources, picture books played with them or read them for a while and then changed the resource. While boys often switched over to another book or resource abruptly, thus facilitating sharing and accessibility of resources.

The Art session however revealed a different pattern since girls shared 36.6% times and boys shared 17.9% times. It was also observed that at times girls promptly shared on request to a

close peer irrespective of gender. Thus the difference in terms of gender was maximum in the art session for sharing behaviour.

The focus of this study was on understanding the nature and process of interactions among focus children and their peers with special reference to sharing. The reactions of focal children were analyzed and it was found that they showed bodily reactions, they changed places, location of objects, reacted verbally and at times also gave space to peers indicating the inclination to share resources. Also children changed the place or position of objects most frequently. The older children reacted in this fashion most frequently about 41.93% times and boys in particular reacted in the same manner 32.09% times. This finding indicates a developmental trend because older children tend to use various strategies in order to divert the attention of peer or disregard it.

However the verbal reactions were more overt for younger children 27.38% times and girls reacted verbally 26.47% times. The verbal reactions were in the form of enquiry, telling, demanding or threatening the peer who indicated the need for sharing. The focus children also used verbal promises in responding to peer's request.

The bodily reactions of children were shown in the form of changing body movements, body position or staring and looking at peer, quite often not accompanied by verbal or any other response. The older children and especially boys reacted through body language 19.35% and 18.51% times. The younger children and particularly girls showed bodily reactions 14.28% and 8.82% times.

The comparison of the trend in the reactions of focus children and peers in terms of age and gender gives greater insight about how young children interact and whether developmental aspects or gender indicate major differences or similarities. The overall trend was that peers indicated considerably high verbal reactions as compared to focus children irrespective of age and gender.

In comparison with the reaction of focus children, the peers reacted in considerably high percentages indicating maximum verbal and physical reaction irrespective of the ordinal position for most categories. This finding indicates that the reaction of peers was natural since they had expressed the need to share toys, books, kits and other accessories either in the form of request, demand or at times verbal threats. The focus children

frequently used the strategy of manipulating objects or giving space to peers and buying time before parting with the toy. They often offered from distance and very few times gave toy in the hand of peer

It is relevant to interpret and note that the observations reveal that young children are aware about the need for sharing, the rights of their peers, though not necessarily well articulated. Also they indicated their awareness about social order, the social conventional day to day practices and the rules of the lab school. This was evident during observation of children's interactions in the preschool context during free play and art sessions. The verbal exchange was by giving hope, promises, asking peers to wait, at times responding positively and saying "પછી આપુ," "જા બહુ થોડીવાર પછી" meaning will give later dear. Sometimes there was bargaining for the number of play materials or turn taking like "હમણાં તને આપું તો પછી મને આપે" implying if one gives now, would the peer return later?

It was also interesting to note that maximum sharing occurred between close peers as they usually played together in dyads and in a small group of three or four peers. It was observed that during 30 minutes of indoor free play, only for few minutes a

peer or two left the group and played in another area like manipulative on language corner and returned to the same group. This observation also shows developmental shift because at a relatively younger age children formed group and continued to interact with most members of the peer group across various sessions of the day

Outcome of Sharing by Focus child in terms of Age and Gender

The responses of children were analyzed in relation to the request for sharing by peers in the indoor and outdoor free play and art sessions

The younger children in focus and older children gave positive response to peers frequently for 28.7% and 29.4% times. Since there were multiple responses it was evident that more older children ignored peer's demand by 63.52% and young children ignored the demand slightly lesser by 61.49%. The data however indicates that this difference in terms of age was relatively small.

It was also found that for younger children another outcome of request for sharing was either stopping the ongoing play and starting to play all over again with the same toys. Children also

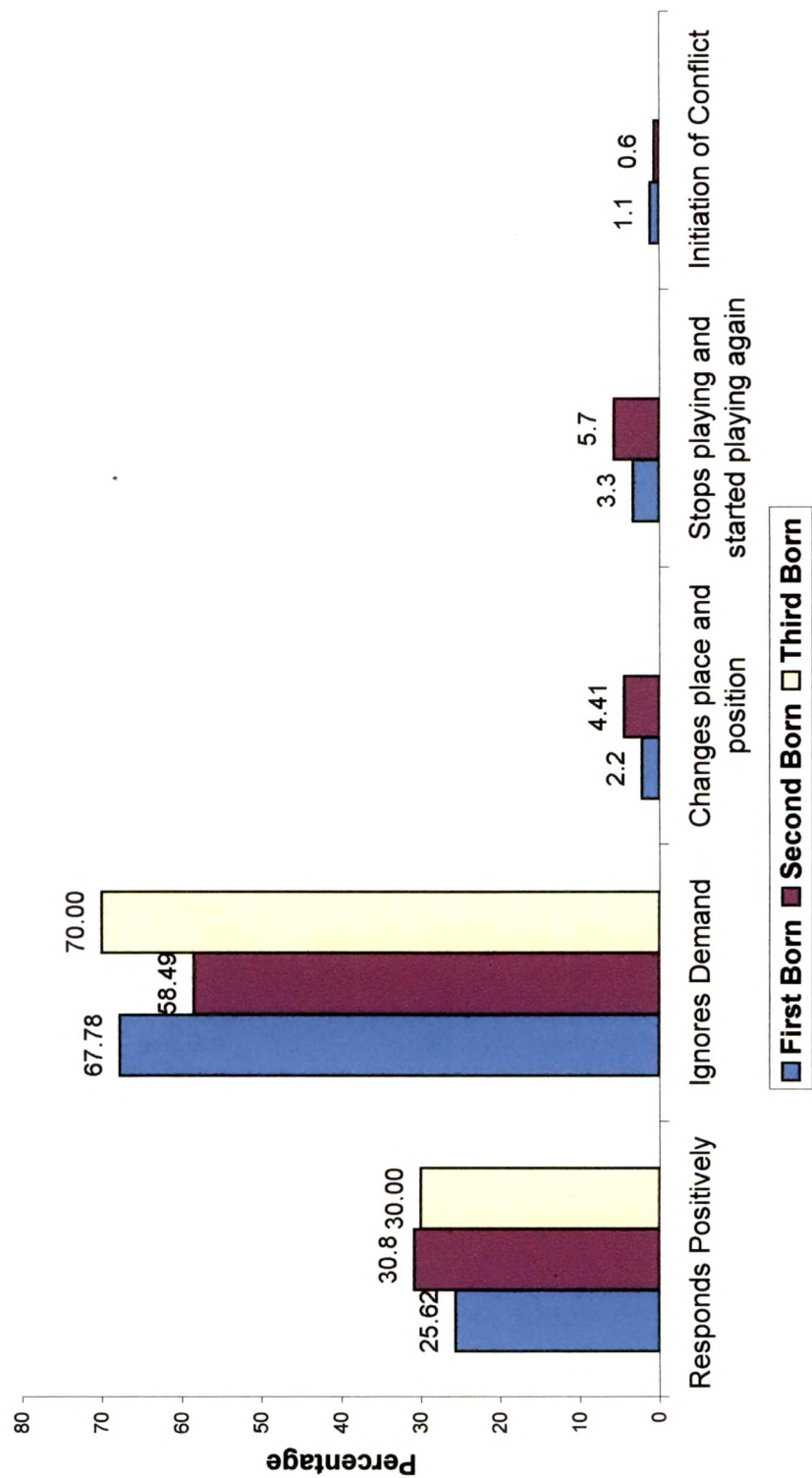


Figure 8 Outcome of sharing by Focus child in terms of Ordinal Position

changed their place or position indicating minor difference in terms of age and frequency of occurrence. The overall findings in terms of outcome as a result of request for sharing indicate that the younger children showed different kinds of outcome of sharing about 67.2% times while older children showed 32.8% times. To reiterate, there was marginal difference in the pattern of concluding the episode of sharing in case of both younger and older children, in terms of specific categories.

The initiation of conflict too occurred 0.6% and 1.2% times for younger and older children and 0.6 and 1.1% times for boys and girls. This indicates that request or demand for sharing did not frequently result in the initiation of conflict irrespective of the age and gender.

In terms of gender specifically, the pattern of outcome of sharing by focus child reveals that both males and females responded positively with males indicating 31.4% and females indicated 24.1%. Therefore boys indicated positive response and shared with peers, more than girls. Another observation was that boys ignored the demand for sharing and continued to play with objects 60.46% times while girls showed this behaviour more than boys, revealing 65.5%.

The girls changed their place or position slightly more than boys with 4.6% and 2.9% respectively. Both boys and girls stopped playing momentarily on request or demand for sharing and started playing again around 4.7% and 4.6% times respectively.

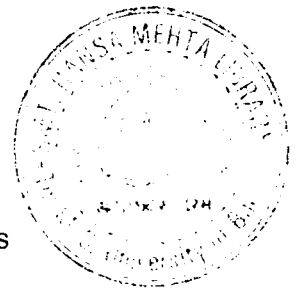
The conclusion of sharing episodes in relation to the birth order reveals that the third born and first borns ignored the demand for sharing and continued to play more frequently than the second borns. Interestingly the second borns indicated highest percentage of responding positively but they continued to play and ignored the demand for sharing quite frequently upto 58.49% times. (Figure 8)

Outcome of sharing by Focus Child in terms of Family Background

The sharing behaviour of children was analyzed in relation to family income, family type, education and occupation of parents. It was found that the request or demand for sharing resulted in the initiation of conflict in case of focus child belonging to the families in the lower income range. While children from the higher income range did not indulge into conflict of any kind.

These findings further indicate that focus children from the lowest income family ignored the demand for sharing and continued to play most frequently 69.72% times. This implies that these children also showed lesser frequency of positive response as compared to children from other income brackets. One of the main reasons could be that due to relatively fewer resources at home, in the preschool setting, they optimized the use of various types of play materials, thus satisfying their needs and hence ignoring. The children from the highest income families indicated 55.17% times of sharing.

In terms of family typology, the free play situation evidenced more frequent positive response from focus children, belonging to nuclear family indicating 32.9% and children from joint families revealing 27%. Although the difference was moderate, there was more readiness and positive inclination to share by children from nuclear families. This finding when viewed in the light of the family type one of the reasons could be that the children in joint families tend to have limited play materials and some times they are passed on from older siblings and even cousins to younger children. Therefore children from joint families perhaps gratify their need of playing with various resources in the preschool context.



The overall difference between joint and nuclear families was more than double the percentage indicating 67.2% and 32.8% times of sharing respectively. However between categories there was smaller difference in terms of family typology. The initiation of conflict specifically on the issue of sharing anything was very low with children from joint families indicating rare instances of conflict.

In terms of gender, peers continued to play with the existing objects with girls indicating 98.2% and boys indicating 93.2% times. The girls also rarely used the strategy of stopping the ongoing play and starting again 1.8% times. The boys however used other strategies like changing their place or position of play, bargaining, deciding to take turns and praising about 1% in most cases and 1.9% times.

The peers concluded their request or demand for sharing put across to the focus child in terms of family income, revealed that most of the times children continued to play with object 100% times for children from highest income families, 97.4% times by children from middle income families and 91.8% times for children in the lower income bracket.

Children from the middle income bracket also praised focus children 3.1% and 2.6% times while in the highest and lowest income families praise was not used at all.

The data in relation to the nature of sharing by children of working father and businessmen reveals little difference in terms of occupation. It was found that maximum sharing occurred for children of employed fathers with 62.9% and businessmen with 37.1% times.

The findings regarding the type of sharing are matching with parent's expectations about sharing. The interviews of parents indicated that most of the fathers and many mothers encouraged children to share play materials at home. Hence children were perhaps habituated to share play materials in the preschool. Another observation was that often children shared play materials, toys and their belongings with their closer peers and in free play situations they often played together. This observation also matches with the findings from the simulated tasks on sharing wherein many children responded that when there are limited eatables like chocolate and ice cream they would share with selected peers. The favourite toys too were preferred for sharing with certain peers named by them. Hence

it is essential to note that occupation per se would not necessarily influence the sharing behaviour of children.

Thus to sum up the observational data clearly revealed that on the whole majority of children shared on request and were positive irrespective of age, gender, ordinal position and the family background of children.

Major Findings for sharing behaviour of children

- Younger children were observed to share maximum in comparison with older children. Art area provided more scope for sharing in younger children followed by outdoor play area, doll house and manipulative area.
- Older children shared most frequently in the doll house, followed by language, manipulative and block areas.
- Boys shared in considerably higher proportion than girls. Girls shared maximum in the art area while boys shared more frequently both in the art area and doll house, though the difference in terms of percentage of sharing behaviour was twice higher for girls as compared to boys, in terms of the context of sharing
- Boys shared the least in the block and the display area in comparison with girls as evident in their interaction

- Children from lowest family income shared most frequently upto 47.9% times in 120 minutes of observation per child. While children from the highest family income range shared the least upto 10.3% times, evidencing considerable difference.
- Children of post graduate mothers, Diploma holders and non literate mothers shared the least while children of H.Sc.E. pass mothers shared maximum upto 63.5% times. Children of graduate and H.Sc.E. pass fathers shared maximum upto 34.5% and 33.9% respectively, indicating gender difference in terms of parent's education.
- Children from joint families shared as high as 68.5% times in a span of 120 minutes of observation of each child. The children from nuclear families shared less than half the percentage times upto 31.5% as compared to children of joint families.
- The second borns shared more frequently than first borns and the third born shared the least in the free play and art sessions.
- Children shared play materials most frequently irrespective of age, gender, family income, family type,

parent's education and the ordinal position of focus children. The attention of adults was shared the least, indicating negligible percentage across different variables, except children from middle income families who shared adult's attention 2.6% times.

- The focus children and peers were found to express reaction to peer's request for sharing through bodily reactions, changing place and position of objects, through verbal reactions and by giving space to peer, indicating that they were considering the request or demand for sharing
- The outcome of sharing across the variables of age, gender, ordinal position, family type, family income and parent's education, was that children responded positively to peers demand or request for sharing, although ignoring the request or demand for sharing was the most frequently occurring outcome of sharing.

Pattern of Sharing and Conflict Resolution in high and low sharers

The interactions of children were also analyzed in relation to the extent of sharing behaviour demonstrated by children and the extent to which children indulged in conflicts. The main

criteria for judging the levels of sharing and conflict indulgence was the frequency of occurrence and the overall range (Appendix K). The analysis in terms of high and low sharers in relation to gender reveals that out of a total of 31 children, there were 8 high sharers and an equal number of low sharers. The high sharers were 6 boys and 2 girls while low sharers were 3 boys and 5 girls. The moderate sharers were 15 children of which 9 were boys and 6 were girls as evident in table 2. Thus the number of high and low sharers was equal while more boys were moderate sharers as compared to girls.

Table 2 also reveals the number of children indulging in high, low and moderate number of conflicts in a span of 120 minutes of observation of each child. It was found that there were maximum number of children indicating lower occurrence of conflict amounting to 14 children while 11 children were in the moderate category of conflicts and out of 31 children, 6 children indicated highest occurrence of conflict in their interactions. In terms of gender an interesting picture emerges. There were 5 boys and 1 girl in the high conflict category and the observations revealed that she was clear in her thoughts, actions and demands. She was highly attention seeking, often with a stubborn expression. She was physically attractive and

always well dressed, impressing many of her peers who wanted to play with her and she chose the peers and also the play materials. Also she was a low sharer. (Appendix K).

Table 2 further revealed that there were greater number of girls who were low sharers while there were more number of boys who were moderate sharers. The overall profile in terms of high, low and moderate occurrence of sharing and conflict indulgence behaviour of each child is depicted (Appendix K) thus indicating the individual pattern of behaviour of children. These individual profiles will further enable an indepth understanding in relation to parent's perceptions and teacher's perception of children.

Table 2
Pattern of Sharing and Conflict occurrence in terms of Gender (N=31)

Children	Sharers (Frequencies)				Conflict Occurrence (Frequencies)			
	High	Low	Moderate	Total	High	Low	Moderate	Total
Girls	2	5	6	13	1	9	3	13
Boys	6	3	9	18	5	5	8	18
Total	8	8	15	31	6	14	11	31

Note . Multiple responses

The sharing behaviour of young children is an outcome of complex factors. The individuals' biological make up, temperamental factors and various aspects of one's immediate environment and other distal factors operate on children. The developmental levels and also the pattern of interactions in children's social sphere are likely to play an important role in varying degrees. The parental perceptions, aspirations and their guidance strategies would also influence children's behaviour and decision making process. At this point one needs to take note of the cultural norms, practices and religious philosophy which guide parent's belief systems which in turn govern their practices from early years.

The responses of children regarding sharing were obtained with this backdrop. The simulated tasks were designed to examine children's readiness to share eatables, their favourite toys and resources with peers in the preschool context and family members and neighbours in the home context. The main purpose was to obtain the first hand information from children and to analyze their responses in relation to the observed behaviour of children.

Children's responses regarding sharing eatables in the Preschool Context

The data concerning the tasks regarding sharing of eatables like chocolates and ice cream, the popular items with young children are presented in table 3

Table 3
Children's Responses of Sharing Eatables in Preschool Context (N=31)

Children	Responses (%)			
	Yes	No	Peers	Adults
Boys	56.00	44.00	85.71	14.29
Girls	61.54	38.46	100.00	00

Note : Multiple responses.

It is evident from table 3 that both boys and girls responded positively on the tasks concerning sharing favourite eatables like chocolate and ice cream. The girls expressed greater readiness to share in comparison with boys though the difference in terms of percentages was moderate. Another interesting observation was that irrespective of gender, children preferred to share to a very high extent with their close peers. They categorically named the peers in their preschool inspite of asking open ended questions with the help of pictures. The

observations also revealed that children often had their own groups and affinity for certain peers due to cotraveling in the same vehicle or generally liking and getting along more with those peers. This observation was especially evident during the indoor and outdoor free play situations. While in the art session they chose the activities and rotated rather than engaging only in those activities which their close peers were doing. In few cases children named those peers who were playing around and were visually in site. These names of peers however came through across various tasks. Also, during observations in free play too it was clearly evident that during various play sequences, the focus children were found to help, suggest, positively respond and involve those peers in play.

The readiness to share favorite eatables also indicated that willingness to share chocolates was lesser while for ice creams there was more prompt and frequent response especially for peers in the preschool context. Table 4 also indicates that 44% boys and 38.46% girls also refused to share chocolate and ice cream with any peers. Those children who were willing to share eatables showed some gender difference with boys willing to share 85.71 and girls 100% times with peers. One of the reasons for these gender differences in relation to sharing

could be that there were 58.1% boys and 41% girls in the total sample. Thus, in spite of lesser percentage of girls in the sample, the responses on the simulated tasks indicated greater readiness for sharing by girls. Another reason could also be that the sample comprised of 64.5% younger children and 35.5% older children. In view of these percentages for age and gender, it would be appropriate to conclude that there were more boys who were younger in age too and therefore perhaps they were in developmental transition thus indicating lesser percentages in comparison with girls. The literature in Human Development also consistently shows that the girls are biologically more advanced and therefore ahead of boys in certain competencies and age gives further head start.

Table 3 further reveals that 14.29% boys offered to share the favourite food items with adults in the preschool but none of the girls named adults be it student trainees in the lab school or teachers. This is an interesting finding and it requires further reflection in the light of the home situation as well.

Sharing eatables in the home Context

The simulated tasks also included the home context to know children's responses regarding sharing favourite eatables. Table 4 presents the data about the home context.

The trend for sharing eatables in the home context shows negligible difference in terms of gender. However boys expressed to share 60% times with siblings and girls mentioned 34.78% times. In the present sample there are more second

Table 4
Children's responses for sharing eatables in the home Context (N=31)

Children	Responses (%)					
	Yes	No	Parents	Siblings	Relatives	Peers
Boys	80.00	20.00	30.00	60.00	00	10.00
Girls	79.31	20.69	34.78	34.78	30.43	00

Note: Multiple responses.

borns indicating 58.1% and first borns indicating 37.8%. Also more boys were younger in comparison with girls and thus they were often second borns. This finding indicates that boys were willing to share more with siblings even if their siblings were older brother or sisters.

Table 4 also reveals that girls were willing to share chocolate and ice cream with other relatives too upto 30.43% times while boys either expressed to share with siblings, parents and peers rather than relatives. In most cases the relatives other than parents were grand parents in most responses and in few

cases they meant paternal aunt and uncle, popularly the verbatim was "બા-દાદા, ફીઈ કાકાને આપીશ" In the preschool context, girls mentioned names of peers and showed willingness to share 100% times but in the home context the reference of peers was absent.

It is clearly evident in table 4 that in the home situation, children were more willing to share favourite eatables while in the preschool context the percentage was comparatively lesser for the overall positive response presented (Figure 9) One of the reasons could be that 71% children were from joint family and 29% were from nuclear families therefore perhaps in the home situation, children were expected to share and eat. Also in the preschool context eatables like chocolates were usually equally distributed on special occasions like birthdays and celebration of festivals. Therefore there would be lesser scope for children to decide to share. The school rules also did not permit getting eatable from home, so from children's point of view, they had to imagine these hypothetical situations before responding. The investigator could observe a sense of wonder on children's faces when they had to respond about sharing eatables in the preschool situation.

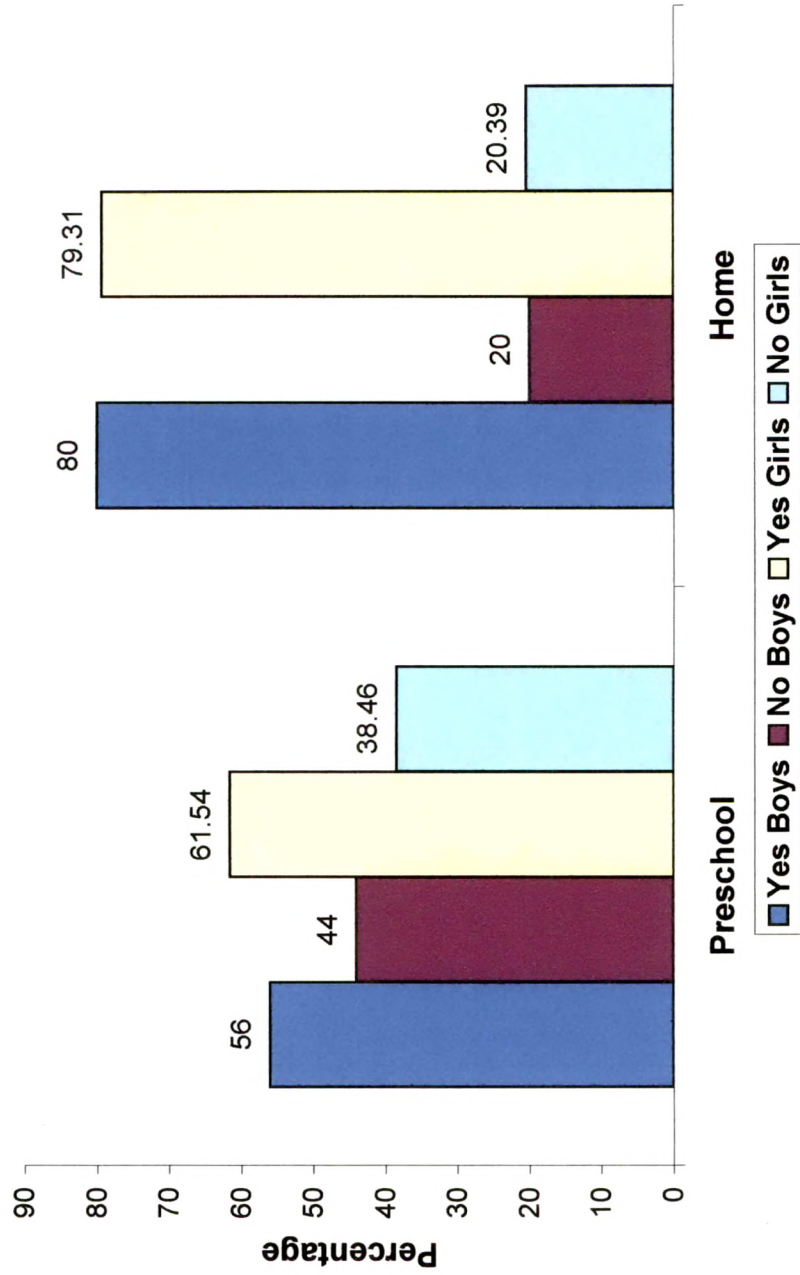


Figure 9 Sharing etables in the preschool and home context

These findings when interpreted from the cultural perspective, usually in Hindu Gujarati middle class families children would be expected and conventionally guided to share with children especially items like chocolates. The adults generally are not perceived to eat particularly chocolates in many homes. Therefore in the preschool situation too the percentage of response for sharing chocolates and ice cream was lower because children may not perceive the need to share with teachers. They might be assuming that the question was geared towards children. Also the practicality being that in the preschool, there would be as many as four adults due to the presence of student trainees. Hence the responses of children would be in accordance with the situation. Also children might respond based on their emotions and in the home situation expression of love and warmth by family members tend to be higher so children may have expressed intention to share eatables at home in higher percentages.

Sharing play materials and crayons in the Preschool

Context

The children were also administered two simulated tasks. In the first task they had to accompany the investigator to the classroom area where their favourite play material was located

In the second task they were shown crayons and asked that if there was only one crayon with whom would they share in the preschool Table 6 depicts children's responses in terms of percentages.

Table 5
Sharing play materials in the Preschool Context

Children	Sharing Play Materials (%)	
	Yes	No
Boys	42.86	56.52
Girls	57.14	43.48

Note . Multiple responses

The data reveals that greater percentage of girls were willing to share their play materials and crayon with peers upto 57.14% while boys indicated negative response upto 56.52% It was evident that most of the play materials were concerning the house keeping area like dolls, utensils, stuff toys, vehicles and puppets It is characteristically preferred set of play materials as between 3 to 4 years of age, house keeping area would be the most favourite play zone and in terms of needs of children, it would be at its peak Another reason could be that both socially and emotionally these play resources would relate to home situation, thus the element of familiarity and the feeling of comfort would perhaps lead to this preference In few cases

children also mentioned puzzles and blocks as favourite play material, but proportionately the number was smaller.

Regarding sharing crayons, many children said yes but first asked “કેમ?” This implies why and then they would name their closest peer and say “મેં રંગ ક્યારે પછી” which means only after one has completed the use of crayon, he or she would share. It was interesting to obtain children’s responses as in one case one of the most active children refused to share either at home or in the preschool. But in the home context he was ready to share with a cousin staying in a nearby town as he owns pistol and toys. This indicates that during early years children tend to associate their desires while interacting with others and the decision of sharing is influenced by children’s urges. In this case children were able to realize the needs of peers so they showed willingness to share the crayon but took a middle course of sharing after completing one’s activity

This finding thus indicates children’s perspective taking intentions and also moral rather than social convention reasons

Thus the overall responses of children regarding sharing favourite eatable and toys on the simulated tasks clearly

revealed that the girls expressed greater readiness to share than boys in the preschool context in response to simulated tasks

Perspective Taking

Perspective taking reflects children's understanding of being able to take another person's view point. The perspective taking abilities of children were assessed through the experiment devised by Wimmer and Perner (cited in Astington, 1991). Each child was individually assessed by the investigator

The results of the present study revealed that 29.03% times children were able to take perspective thus constituting 9 children. It was found that 70.97% children constituting 22 of 31 children were unable to take perspective of another person, as evident in the experiment. It was also found that out of 9 children, 7 children were prompt in responding and they were very clear about their response, while two children were fairly clear and moderately confident in responding correctly. Interestingly 6 girls and 3 boys were able to take perspective. It was also found that out of 9 children with perspective taking ability, three children also tried to give reasons about their response. These reasons were however regarding the factual

situation indicating absence of the doll since it had gone to play rather than the logic of their own response

The data also indicated that out of 22 children who were unable to take perspective 19 children promptly responded, although the response was incorrect while 3 children were confused and they had to be asked twice before they made an incorrect response. These children predicted that the doll would look for the chocolates in the new place where they were kept in the doll's absence. They were unable to understand that the doll would look in the old hidden place. Thus 22 children from a total of 31, children were unable to take the perspective of another person.

Further it was found that the children who were able to take perspective of another person were $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of age at the time of experiment. This finding is in line with research by Flavell and associates (Taylor & Flavell, 1984) who found that children begin to appreciate difference of appearance and reality between three and five years of age. The results of the experiment by Wimmer and Perner (cited in Astington, 1991) also indicated that children were unable to take other's perspective at three years of age. Children tend to have difficulty to appreciate that two people could make different

representations of the same object (Hogrefe, Wimmer and Perner cited in Astington, 1991).

However in another study Parikh (2000) found that children of Hindu Gujarati middle class families could empathize pain of another person at 18 – 20 months of age. The feeling of empathy is an indicator of perspective taking to a certain extent. The teasing behaviours of children too indicate a deliberate attempt. Thus the familiarity of situation, person and indigenous tasks with familiar objects from child's daily life experiences need to be designed to examine the perspective taking abilities of children. (Patel, 2001).

Further it is also relevant to note that sharing and conflict resolution behaviours evident in the study are also the indicators of children's ability to perceive the need to respond to peer's requests or demands. The outcome of conflict of focus children revealed that younger and older children ignored the ongoing conflict quite frequently or they changed the theme of play a few times. This finding was consistent across the age of children, gender, ordinality, family typology, occupation of fathers and education of parents for focus children and peers.

The findings of the present study regarding the outcome of sharing revealed that irrespective of age, gender and ordinal position of children, they frequently responded positively to the request or demand for sharing. Thus interpreting this finding in relation to the results of the perspective taking abilities of children reiterates the need for indigenous tasks for assessing the perspective taking competence of younger children. Since children were able to understand peer's need for certain play materials, their response was positive for sharing. This finding therefore indicates the developmental trend. Another finding about the perspective taking ability of children indicates that 6 girls and 3 boys were able to take others perspective based on the experiment. However the observational data reveals that boys shared maximum in comparison with girls. This variation further reiterates the need for developing indigenous measures for examining the perspective abilities of children with greater rigour.

The literature on perspective taking also points out the role of environment, relationship with peers, adults, the quality of interaction, family typology and the role of adults in influencing the process and facilitating perspective taking. In this regard, those children who were able to take perspective had parents

who were well educated, systematic in their orientation and thinking, well placed in terms of occupation, representing joint and nuclear family background. The background information of children, interviews of parents and home visits were the basis for drawing this link in the findings.

Conflict Resolution

The analysis regarding conflict resolution mainly focused on the pattern of conflicts indicating the interpersonal issues, disagreements and the specific nature of problems children experienced in the free play and art sessions. The data was analyzed in relation to both children and peers with reference to the conflict episodes observed in different situations. Further, the sources of conflicts, the resolution strategies employed by children, the reactions of focal children and peers during the conflict episodes, and the outcome of conflicts were examined with the aim of finding out the aspects concerning socio-moral and personal consideration of children for achieving their goal in conflict resolution.

The findings about the conflict resolution behaviour of children in the preschool context are computed based on the number of responses obtained for each category separately in terms of

age, gender, ordinal position, family background regarding the type of family, occupation and education of parents and family income. These responses are presented in terms of percentages of the occurrence of behaviour, because of the multiple responses obtained during observations. The total of net 3720 minutes observations of 31 children were done within the time frame of 60 minutes for indoor free play, 30 minutes each for outdoor free play and art sessions, amounting to 120 minutes per child (Figure 3)

The responses of teachers regarding conflict resolution behaviour were analyzed qualitatively while the perceptions of parents were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively

The findings from the observational data revealed that the total number of conflicts children indulged in was a mean of 10.13 and 5.81 sd. The maximum occurrence of conflict during 120 minutes of observations across indoor, outdoor free play and art sessions was 23 times for a boy and minimum was nil in case of a girl. Thus there was a large range indicating individual differences in the occurrence of conflicts per child (Appendix K). Due to several factors these differences are likely to be evident ranging from biological reasons in terms of temperamental and personality make up to other external

factors like type of objects or play resources, peer involved in using it, role of adults and other peers

Overall Pattern of Conflict

The overall pattern of conflicts indicated that in comparison with younger children, the older children indulged in conflicts less frequently although the difference in terms of age was moderate as younger children indicated 59.3% and older children indulged 40.7% times (Figure 10). This finding indicates developmental trend that with increase in age, children's indulgence in conflict tapered down to some extent in the free play context.

The overall findings in relation to gender revealed that boys indulged in conflicts very frequently as compared to girls indicating vast difference in terms of percentages, with boys showing 70.3% and girls indulging in 29.7% times respectively (Figure 10).

In terms of ordinal position the second borns indulged in conflicts most frequently about 65.3% times, followed by first borns upto 31.2% times. The third born indulged in conflict the least revealing 3.5% times. Interestingly third born also

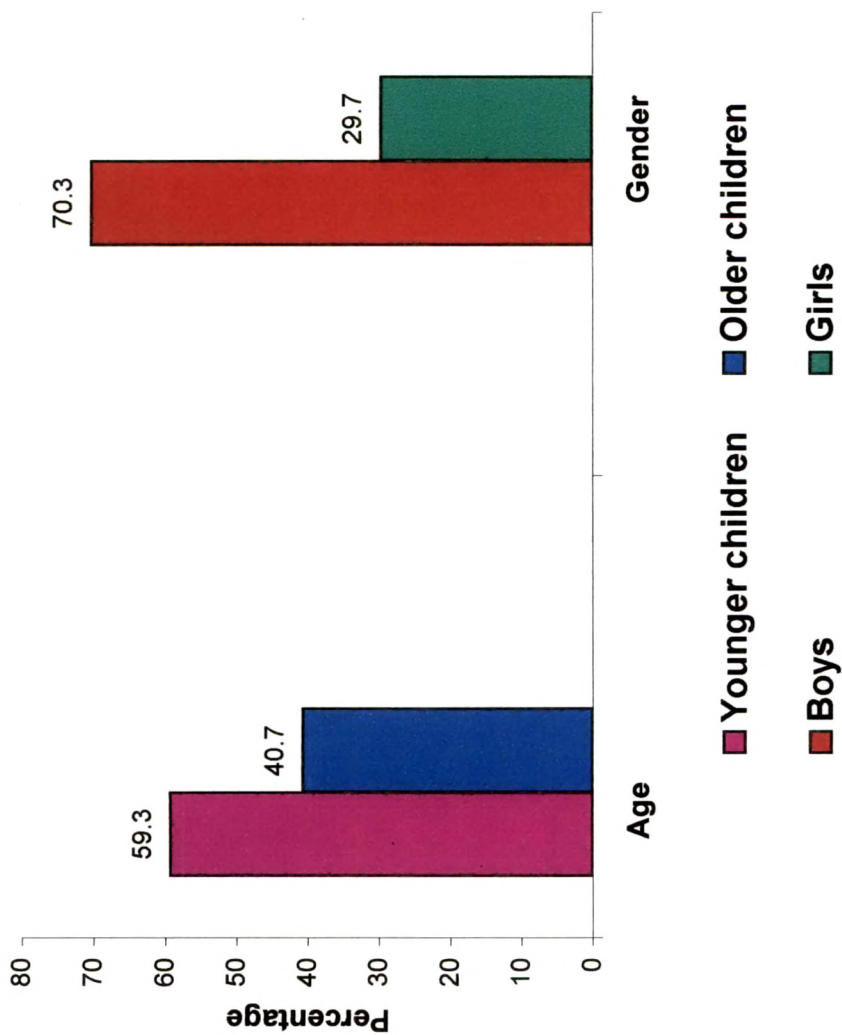


Figure 10 Overall pattern of Conflict occurrence by Age and Gender

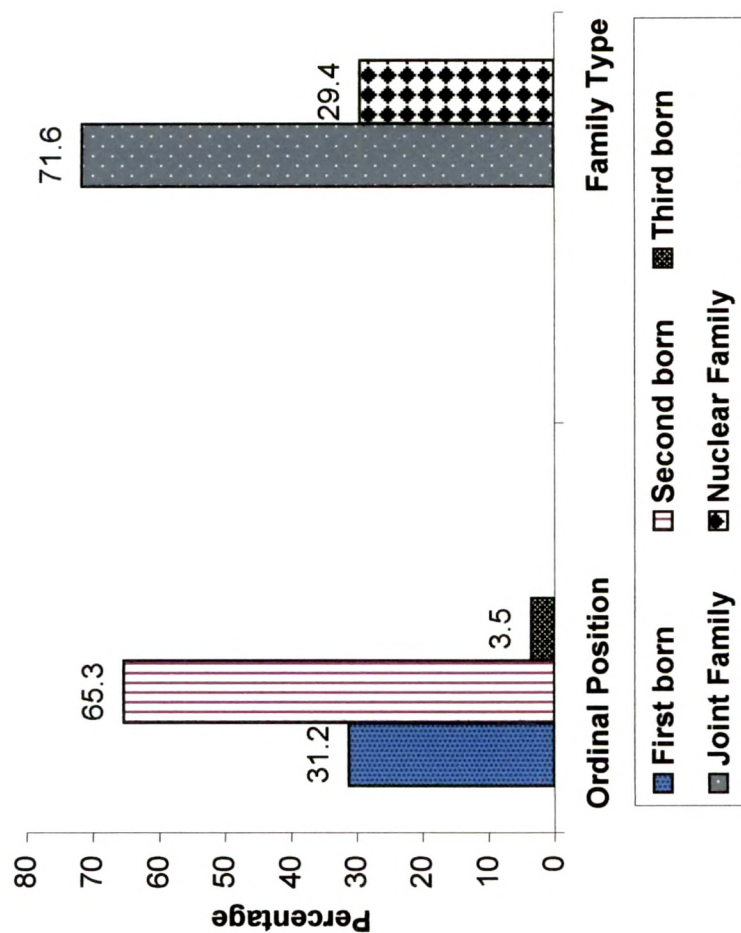


Figure 11 Overall pattern of conflicts in terms of Ordinal position and Family type

indicated least sharing upto 3% times, thus indicating lower frequency of sharing and indulgence in conflicts (*Figure 11*).

The overall trend regarding children's indulgence in conflicts with regard to family type revealed major difference as children from joint families indulged 71.6% times while those from nuclear families indicated 29.4% times of conflicts in the free play and art sessions in the preschool. One of the reasons could be scarcity of resources at home in view of the number of children and on the other hand expectations from adults to share everything with siblings and cousins as they were living under the same roof.

The pattern of conflict in terms of family income revealed that children from middle income families showed maximum conflicts in their interactions upto 52.1% times followed by children from lower income families while those from highest income families indicated only 6.6% indulgence in conflicts.

The overall pattern regarding the conflict indulgence of children in relation to parent's education, 12th standard pass and Diploma holder parents indicated 61.05% followed by children of graduate parents with 29%. The children of post graduate parents indulged in conflicts 6.45% while children from non

literate background of parents indulged least in conflicts showing 3.5%. However children of employed fathers indulged in considerably high percentage of conflicts showing 74.8% while children from business families indulged in conflicts 25.2% times evidencing remarkable difference in terms of occupation of fathers.

To sum up the overall pattern of children's indulgence in conflicts younger children, specifically boys and second born children had experienced conflicts greater percentage of times in comparison with older children, girls and first and third borns. In terms of family background children from joint families, with employed fathers and parents with middle income bracket and 12th standard pass and Diploma holder parents indulged in maximum conflicts as compared to children from nuclear and business families.

Sources of conflicts in relation to age, gender and ordinal position

An important aspect of the process of conflict resolution is to understand the sources of conflicts. The observations were analyzed along various dimensions to know the sources of disagreements and conflicts among young children. Table 6

indicates that there was moderate difference in the occurrence of conflict in terms of age for most of the sources

The sources of conflict as evident from observations and reiterated through literature were categorized as physical and verbal reactions, unfair distribution of resources in the naturally occurring situation of free play in the preschool setting, social order and rights. These categories of sources of conflict were adapted from Killen and Turiel (1991) (Appendix C)

The physical reaction was expressed by focus children through hitting and kicking, pushing, pulling, snatching objects, stamping on feet and throwing sand. It was found that the older children reacted physically 70.54% times while younger children reacted 62.76% times. The maximum reaction was pushing, pulling and snatching material 38.8% times by older children and 30.9% times by younger children, indicating that nearly half the percent times this behaviour was evident amongst focus children. Therefore the physical source was most frequently occurring, leading to conflicts

In comparison with the physical reaction which evidenced considerably high percentage irrespective of age, the verbal reactions in terms of teasing, calling names, disagreeing,

refusing, denying was comparatively lesser. The younger children reacted verbally 14.36% times and older children reacted only 9.30% times. This is an interesting finding because although the older children tend to have greater energy and would be full of action, developmentally they would also have greater verbal facility. However, the verbal reaction in this study was lesser on the whole. Teasing was done maximum irrespective of age followed by verbal disagreements and calling names (Figure 12).

Another source of conflict was regarding sharing resources, taking turns and helping peers as per their demand. When focus children disagreed to share or take turns, it led to conflict eventually. The younger children indulged in conflict 6.91% times while older children indulged 3.87% times (Table 6).

The conflict oriented situations occurred in relation to following rules and regulations of school, conventional rules or rules pertaining to culturally appropriate behaviours. This was categorized under social order. It was found that younger children had greater conflicts pertaining to maintaining social order upto 19.68% times and older children indulged 11.62% times indicating moderate difference in terms of age (Table 6).

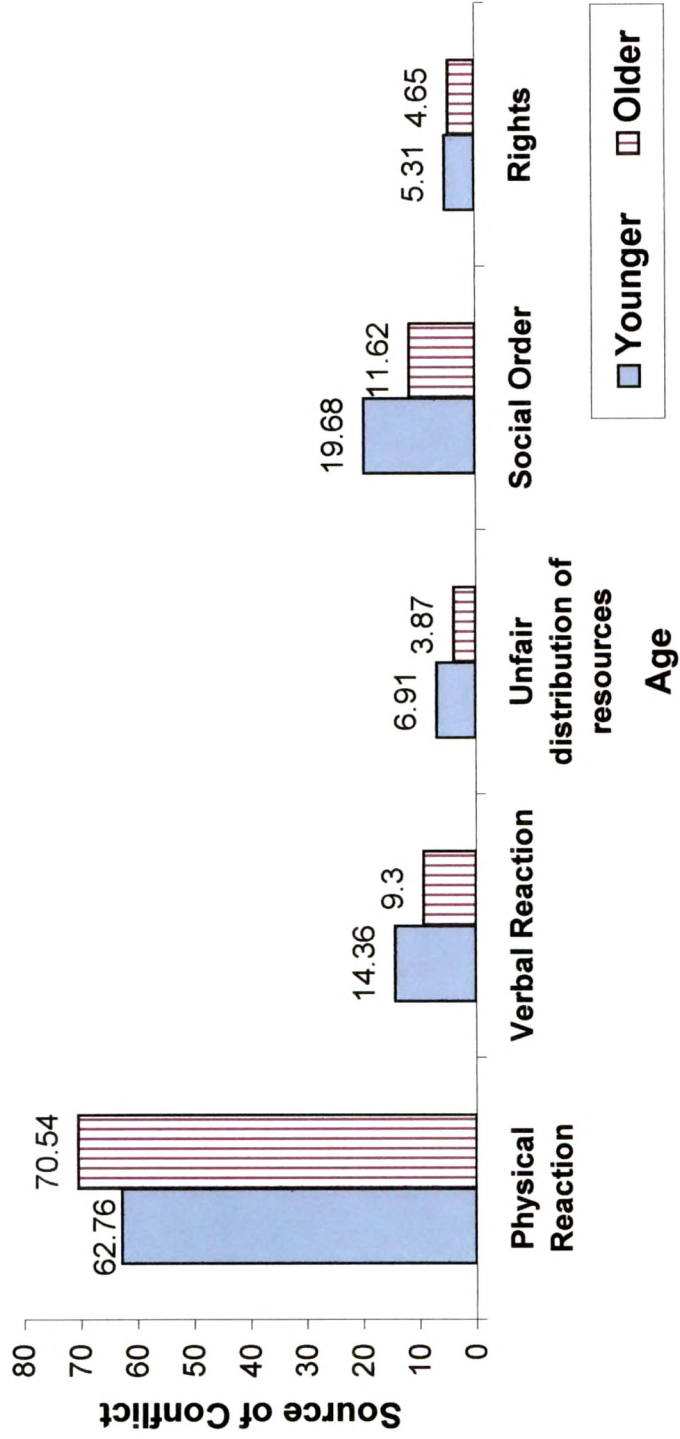


Figure 12 Sources of Conflict by Age

The conflicts arising as a result of maintaining one's rights indicated marginal difference in terms of age. The overall occurrence of conflict in terms of right to having space, finding chair or using particular toy or material was quite less compared to physical actions leading to conflict and social order (Table 6)

Table 6
Sources of Conflict by Age and Gender (N=31)

Sources of Conflict	Age (%)		Gender (%)	
	Younger	Older	Boys	Girls
Physical Reaction	62.76	70.54	65.02	68.09
Verbal Reaction	14.36	09.30	12.55	10.63
Unfair distribution of resources	06.91	03.87	03.59	10.63
Social Order	19.68	11.62	13.45	04.26
Rights	05.31	04.65	05.38	4.26

Note . Multiple responses

Also table 6, reveals that the source of conflict in terms of gender indicated little difference for physical reaction as a source. Maximum conflict had physical reactions of both focus child and peers who demanded the play material. It was evident that 68.09% times girls and 65.02% times boys indulged in conflict due to physical reactions as a major cause of conflict.

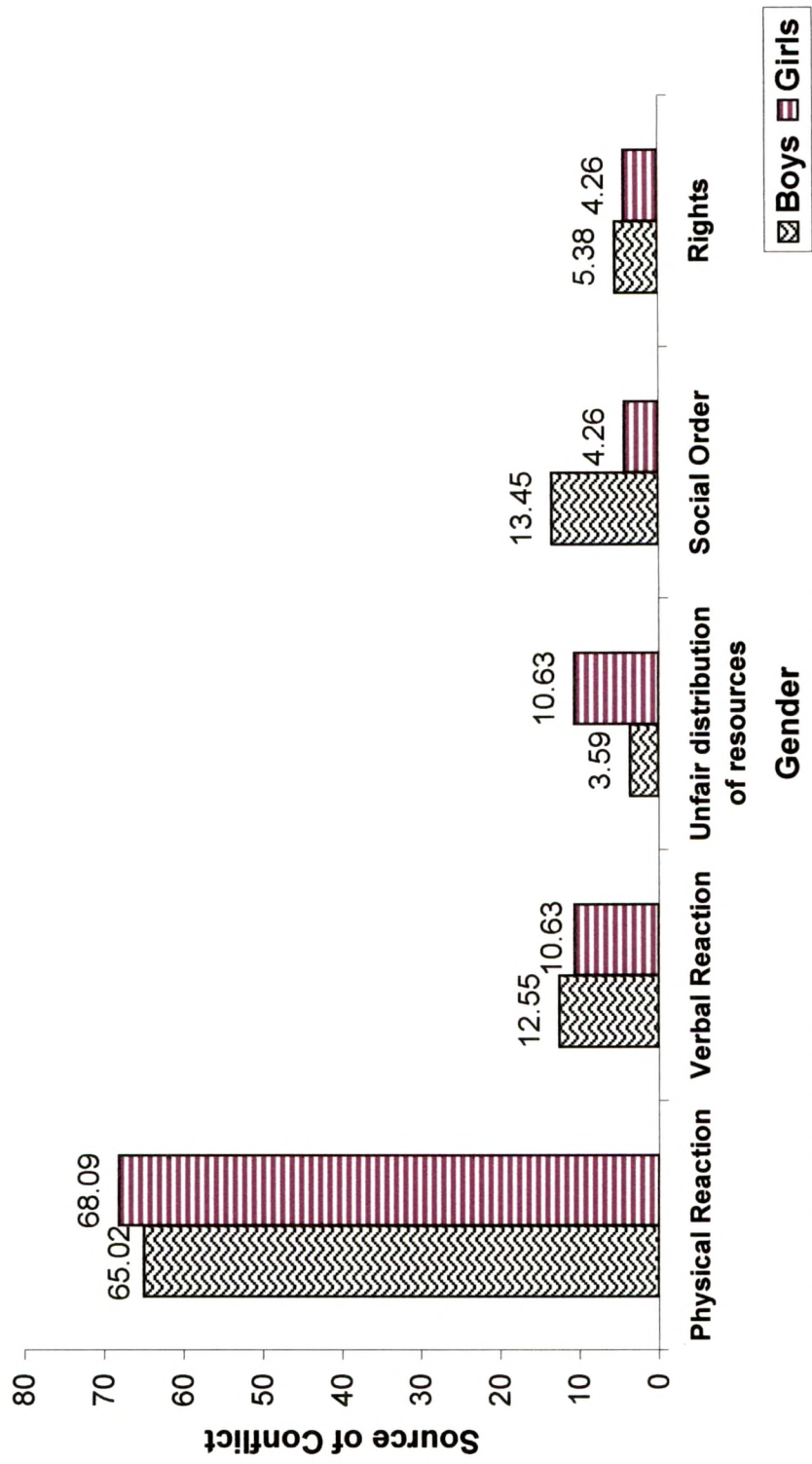


Figure 13 Source of Conflict by Gender

helping a peer to procure certain toys or play accessories. The observations revealed that physical reaction of focus children occurred most of the time across ordinal position. It was found that the first borns used the physical reaction, changes in body positions, pushing and hitting, kicking or throwing peers' play material or sand the most upto 72.7% times. The second borns indicated 63.2% while third born indulged 54.6% times in conflicts due to physical reactions of peers.

The verbal strategy was however used maximum by third born upto 36.4% times, followed by second born with 12.5% and first born the least with 9.1% times.

Another source of conflict was in terms of distribution of resources, turn taking and helping wherein there were disagreements, leading to momentary conflict, though it occurred only few times. This finding throws light on the developmental trend since the children were younger in age they were not as assertive to seek justice for fair distribution of resources. Similarly a few times first and second borns had conflicts on the issue of exercising their rights. It was especially for having space and selecting location of sitting for play and art activities.

It is thus evident that the second borns faced conflict 65.3% times in a span of 120 minutes. The first borns indulged 31.2% times and the third born indulged 3.5% times in conflicts.

Thus on the whole the trend is consistent in terms of source of conflict in relation to age and gender of children, family income and parent's education.

Source of conflict in relation to Family Background

The pattern of cause for conflict occurrence was examined in relation to the family income, parent's education, type of family and occupation of fathers.

The source of conflict in terms of family income revealed that the children from the middle income family indulged in maximum conflict upto 52.1% times followed by children from the lowest family income 41.3% times of which majority of times the source was physical reaction. The children from the highest income families had least conflict. But the interesting observation is that irrespective of family income, the maximum conflict was in terms of physical reaction indicating the main cause with a range of 70.99% to 57.14%. It is also evident that with increase in the family income, the percentage of physical reaction reduced to quite an extent.

The children from the higher income groups indicated verbal reaction as a greater cause with 19.04% as the highest. But the children from the lowest family income bracket showed verbal reaction as relatively a lesser cause upto 9.92%. Another observation was that children from the lowest family income bracket indicated unfair distribution of resources as the least cause with 1.53%, being negligible. The children from middle income group surprisingly indicated 16.18% of conflict due to unfair distribution of resources while for the same category children from higher income families indicated 9.52%. It is an atypical trend that children from lower income families inspite of resource crunch didnot show unfair distribution as cause of conflict.

While examining the source of conflict, social order emerged as a cause 12.98% times for the lowest family income group while it was 7.79% for the middle income bracket. The observations indicated that children from the lowest income bracket faced greater difficulty in maintaining the social order and thus resulting into conflict compared to other families. While maintaining one's right to space, play material indicated marginal difference in terms of income though children in the middle income families faced comparatively greater conflict.

7.79% in comparison with other groups, although the percentage was small

Thus the overall finding indicates that physical reaction continued to be the major source of conflict for young children. The verbal reactions were the next highest with non literate parent's children indicating 36.36%. The children of Diploma holder mothers too indicated high occurrence of conflict due to verbal reaction. It was found that comparatively children of H.S.C.E parents, graduate mothers and post graduate fathers had lower percentages of conflict due to verbal reactions of children.

Interestingly, children of non literate parents did not indicate unfair distribution of resources as a cause of conflict showing a similar trend as the family income. While children of post graduate parents showed 11.11% and 9.38% times of conflict for the same category

Surprisingly children of graduate parents indicated highest conflict for social order revealing 13.18% times for mothers and 12.90% times for fathers. However children of post graduate mothers did not indicate social order and rights as the source of

conflicts during free play and art sessions. Thus education or income per se did not result into any specific type of conflict.

In relation to the sources of conflicts, it was also relevant to examine the situations in which conflicts occurred in the preschool. The observations revealed that maximum conflicts occurred during indoor free play in the doll house, followed by the manipulative area. It was also evident that younger children indulged in conflicts most frequently in the doll house while older children had conflicts in the manipulative area. One of the reasons could be the developmental trend indicating younger children's need for affective play and older children's preference for concept kits, puzzles and construction oriented play materials. Older children were also observed to have greater conflicts in the block area, indicating considerable difference in terms of age. The second location for frequent occurrence of conflict was outdoor free play area, specifically swings and sandpit. The older children showed 58.9% times the occurrence of conflict while younger children indicated 41.1% times.

In terms of gender, boys had 70.7% conflicts while the girls indicated 29.3% times. However both boys and girls had maximum conflicts in the dollhouse, with girls indicating 34.8%

times and boys 23.9% times, thus revealing moderate difference. This trend was also observed in the outdoor free play situation wherein girls had more frequent conflicts in comparison with boys.

The art session and science area showed negligible conflict occurrence. The block area revealed 13.1% times conflict occurrence in case of only boys. Thus the overall conflicts occurred in case of boys indicating vast gender difference but within the specific categories the gender difference was moderate.

In order to understand the conflict resolution behaviour of children, the reactions of children were observed to get greater insight about the processes involved. The reactions of children were mainly physical, verbal, manipulation of objects and non verbal gestures. It was found that most children reacted physically most of the times with older children indicating 48.19% and younger children reacting 42.41% times. This indicates that there is moderate difference in terms of age. However in terms of gender it was found that boys reacted physically 50.90% times which was the highest across age and gender. While the girls reacted physically 29.73% times which

was comparatively much lesser occurrence than boys. (Figure 13).

The manipulation of objects was the second form of reaction by focus children indicating maximum occurrence in case of girls 27.92% times and 25.30% times in case of older children. The pattern of reaction was similar for younger children and particularly boys regarding reactions to objects.

The verbal reaction in terms of age was moderate in comparison with other forms of reaction. Also the difference between younger and older children was of about 10%. The non verbal reactions in terms of facial expression, oblique eyebrow, pressing teeth, staring were 10.71% times by younger children and 7.23% times by older children. It was also evident that 7.6% times children told "yes" "no" or "wait" to peer, 4% times focus children younger in age ordered or instructed in case of conflict and younger children were screaming and had expression of anger 3.6% and 3.1% times. The reaction like teasing and threatening was 2.2 and 1.3% only by younger children. However, teasing was absent in case of older children but they threatened peers slightly more than the younger children. The older children refused, answered back peers 4.2% times which was slightly higher than in case of younger

children. These findings also indicate the developmental trend with older children being more confident in asserting their needs inspite of realizing peer's needs in many cases.

The observations in relation to gender reveal that 71.5% times male focus children were observed reacting to peers during conflict while 28.5% times girls indicated reactions. It was clearly indicated that both boys and girls used physical reaction most frequently. The verbal reactions were next highest for both boys and girls, though the difference was double. Further it was found that the non verbal reactions indicated minor difference between boys and girls and the common reaction was oblique eyebrows, staring, looking heavily and at times only silently looking at peer. In very rare case, boys proposed alternatives like "will give later" or "wait for a while".

Reaction of Focus children and peers in terms of Gender : A Comparision

The reactions of both focus children and peers to the ongoing conflict were analyzed in terms of gender. The focus children and peers used physical reaction more frequently than other types of reaction. But there was striking gender difference in the use of physical reactions between focus children and peers. (Figure 13)

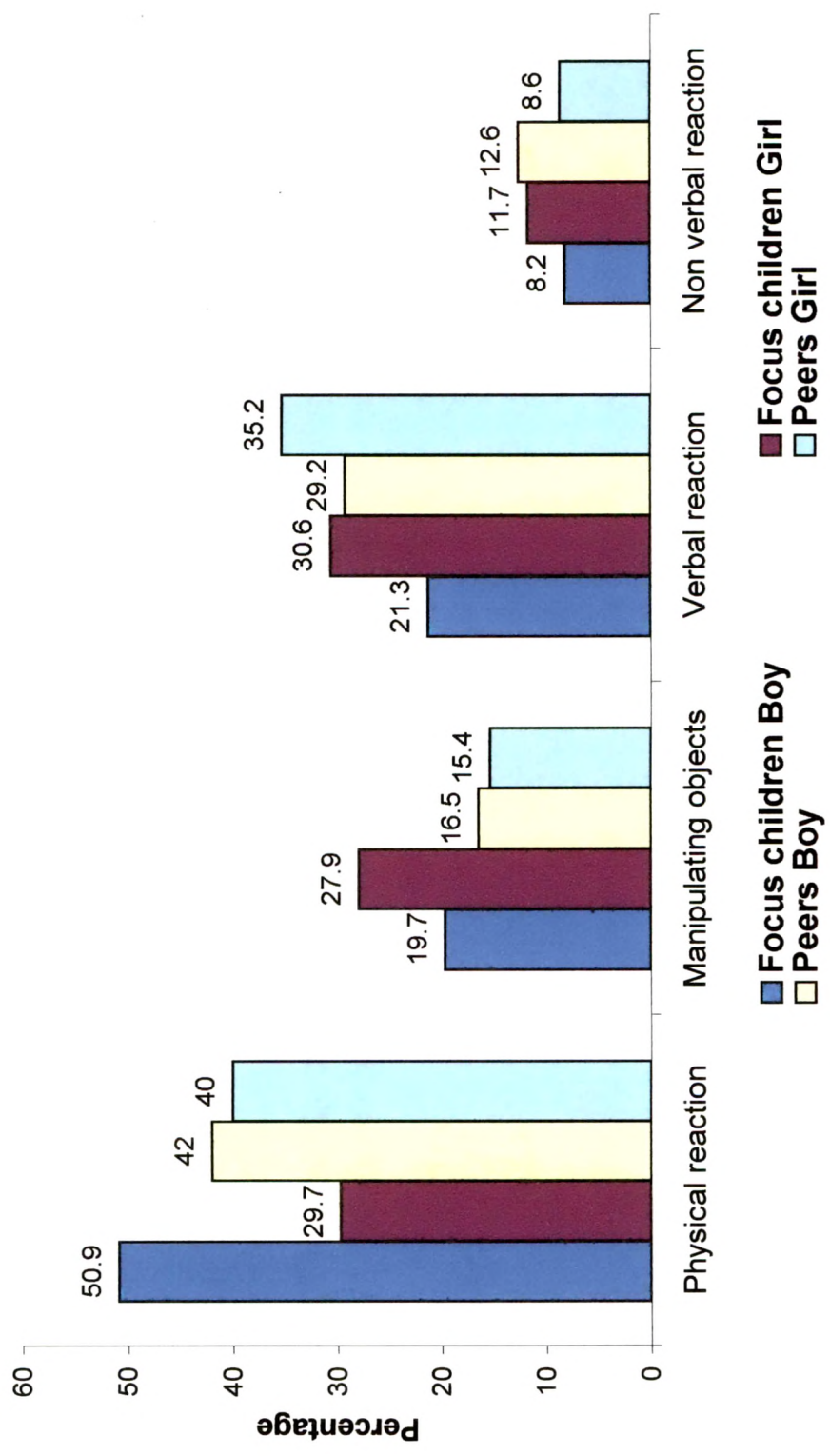


Figure 14 Reaction of Focus Children and Peers in terms of Gender

An interesting finding was that girls in the focus group used verbal reactions maximum times evidencing 30.6%. The boys reacted verbally 21.3% times. Also girls in the focus group used bodily gestures, expressions and other nonverbal reactions including manipulation of objects more frequently than boys

The reactions of peers indicated a similar trend as focus group revealing greater percentage of girls reacting verbally as compared to boys. However boys used non verbal reaction more than girls thus indicating gender differences in peer's reaction to conflict with focus children

The overall percentages indicate considerable difference in terms of gender with boys indulging 71.5% and girls 28.5% times in various types of conflicts in the preschool context for focus children. (Figure 14)

In relation to the ordinal position, the overall findings revealed that second borns reacted to conflict maximum upto 62.1% times followed by first borns upto 34.6% times while the third born reacted 3.3% times. These findings thus indicate considerable difference in terms of ordinal position, especially the reaction to conflicts

Reaction of Focus Child and peers in terms of Type of Family

The pattern of children's reactions were analyzed in relation to Family typology. The observations reveal that physical reaction to conflict for focus children and their peers irrespective of family type was highest. It was however found that in comparison with children from joint families, those from nuclear families, showed physical reaction more frequently.

Further it was found that peers from joint families and focus children from nuclear families demonstrated verbal reactions in terms of instructing, discussing and at times threatening peer or placing verbal demands. It is also evident that there was moderate difference in terms of family type with regard to verbal reaction. (Figure 15).

The main purpose of analyzing children's reactions from focus children and peer's perspective was to understand the process of conflict resolution and gain insight about children's behaviour from moral and social conventional perspectives.

Conflict Resolution strategies of Children

The occurrence of conflict and the emerging pattern in terms of age, gender, ordinal position, family background was

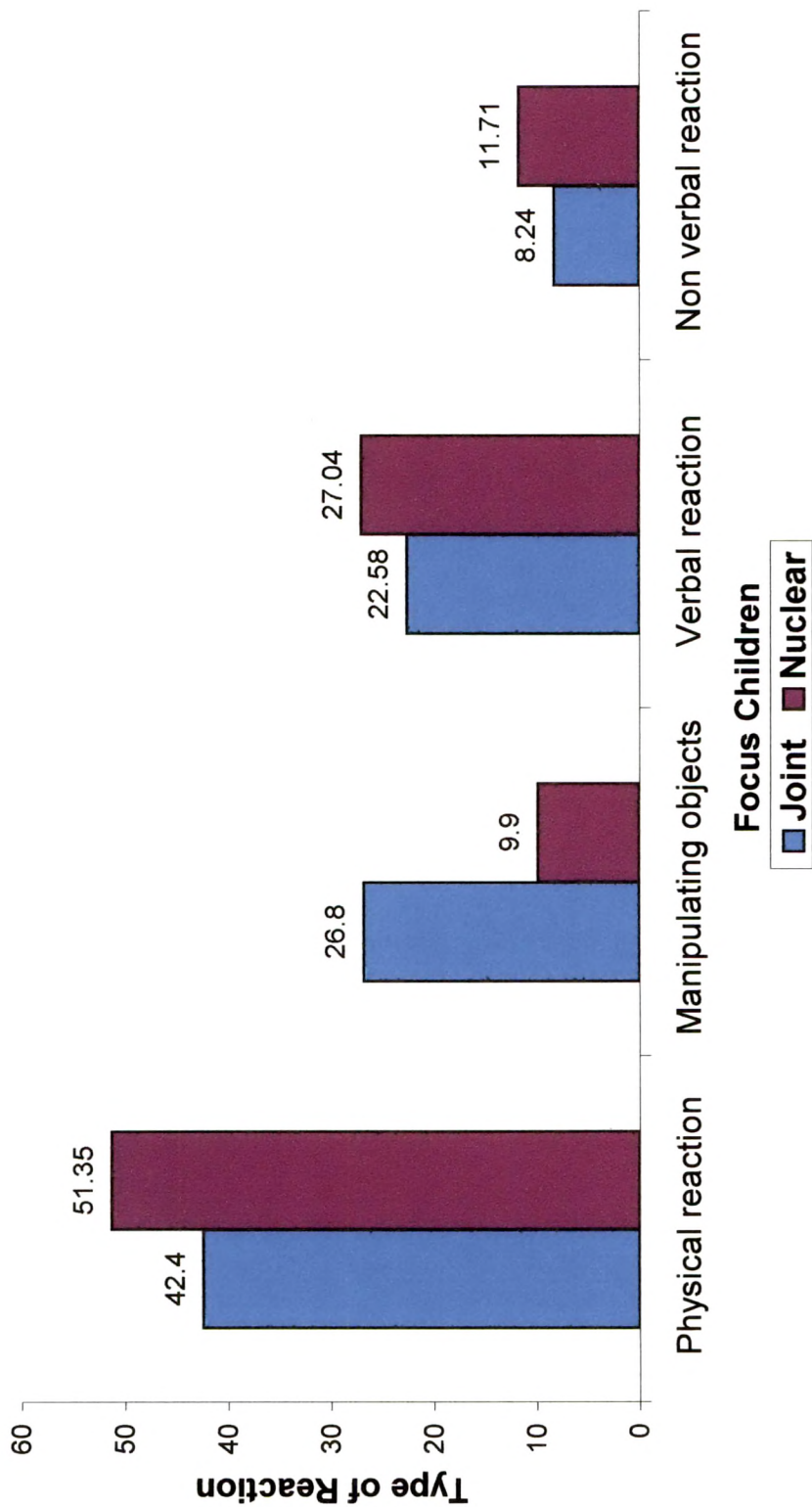


Figure 15 Reaction of focus children in relation to Family Type

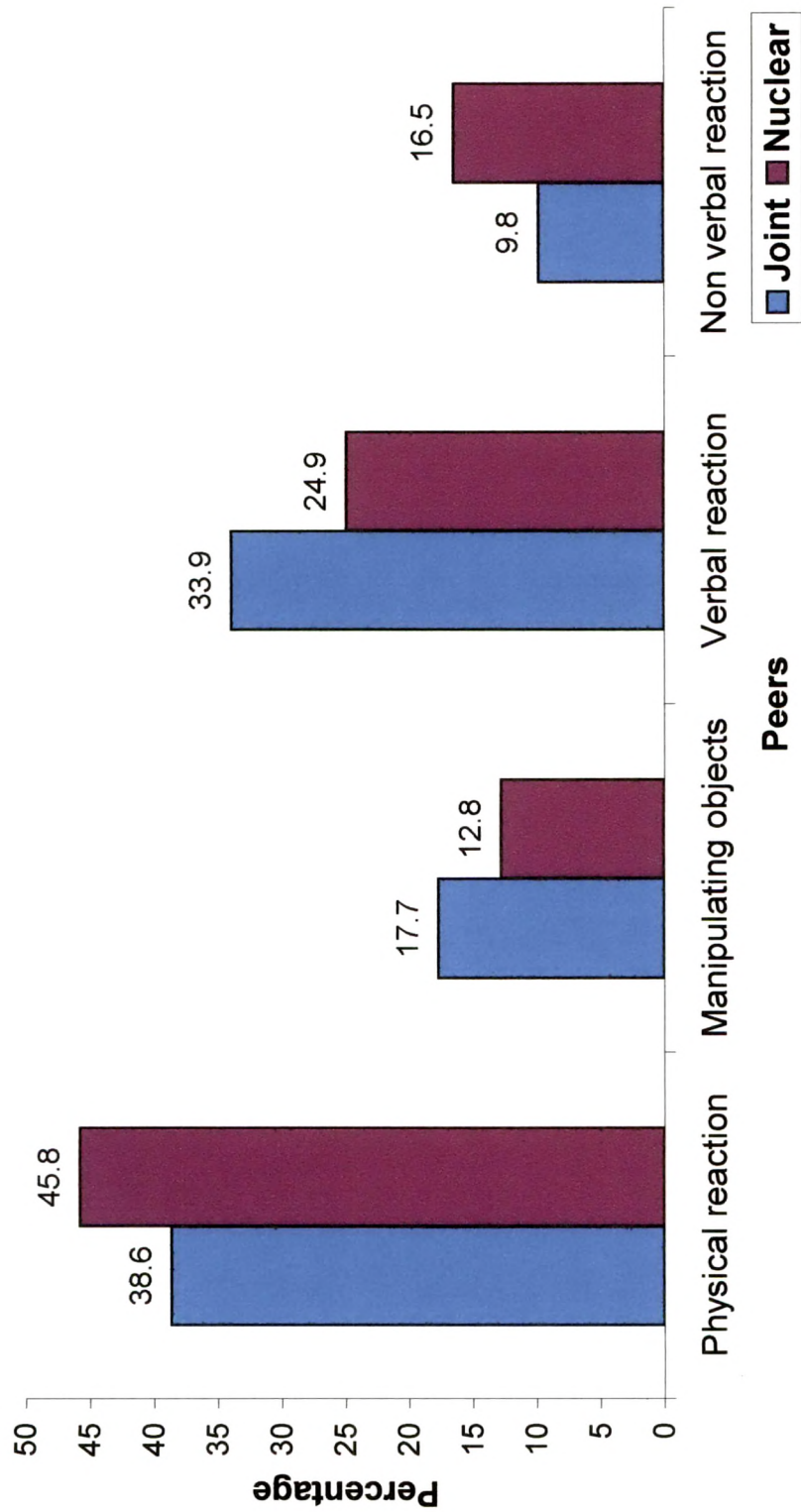


Figure 16 Reaction of Peers in relation to Family Type

studied. It was important to examine the various resolution strategies used by children across different variables of the study. Table 7 indicates the resolution strategies of children in terms of age and gender. The role of adult was also documented to know the extent to which adults were involved in resolving conflict and the nature of adult's involvement.

The table clearly indicates that majority of times children resolved conflicts of their own initiative irrespective of age and gender. It was found that children used various strategies in the free play situation in the preschool context. Specifically in terms of percentage children generated conflict resolution was highest in terms of both age and gender (Table 7).

The physical strategies were used most frequently by younger children indicating 38.62% and boys indicating 35.6%. There was moderate difference in the use of physical strategies between younger and older children.

It was also found that the girls sought attention of peers more frequently 20% times and rarely cried in order to resolve conflict. The boys sought attention 10.2% times and crying was not observed throughout the period of observation. There was marginal difference in showing attention seeking behaviour and

crying in terms of age. In very rare instance younger children cried.

Table 7
Conflict Resolution strategies in terms of Age and Gender
(N=31)

Child Generated	Age (%)		Gender (%)	
	Younger	Older	Boys	Girls
Bargaining				
Negotiating	5.8	5.8	6.0	5.4
Compromising				
Transforming	3.2	5.7	4.6	3.2
Reconciliation	6.3	8.2	5.2	11.6
Verbal Strategies	11.11	17.21	16.6	06.4
Physical strategies	38.62	29.51	35.6	33.7
Seeks attention	13.25	12.30	10.2	20.0
Sub Total	78.28	78.72	78.2	80.3
Adult Generated				
Adult intervention	10.6	11.5	12.5	7.4
Adult interference	2.1	2.5	1.4	4.2
Sub Total	12.70	14.0	13.9	11.6
Topic Dropped				
Focus child	1.6	0.8	00.9	2.1
Peer third child	4.2	6.6	5.1	5.3
Adult	2.6	00	1.9	1.1
Sub Total	8.4	7.4	7.9	8.5

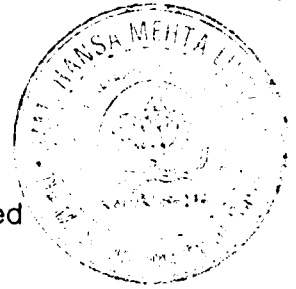
Note . Multiple responses.

The table further reveals that there was moderate difference in the use of verbal strategies of resolution in terms of age and gender. The boys and older children used verbal strategies more frequently than younger children or girls. The difference in terms of gender was comparatively more than that of age

It is interesting to note that focus children and peers reacted maximum through physical form, followed by verbal mode. This pattern was consistent even in the resolution strategies used by focus children in relation to both age and gender

Also table 7 reveals that older children used the strategy of transforming the most indicating 5.7% and boys too used the strategy of transforming 4.6% times. Thus indicating that older children and boys converted the conflict into a game during both outdoor and indoor free play situations, thereby resolving the conflict on their own

Another strategy of conflict resolution was reconciliation which was used maximum by girls 11.6% times and also older children 8.2% times. In terms of age there was little difference and in terms of gender there was some difference, thus indicating that the conflict initiator either apologized or returned



the play material. While younger children and boys reconciled less frequently to resolve any conflict.

It is also evident that compromising, negotiating and bargaining were used as conflict resolution strategies though with little difference in terms of age and gender. Also these strategies were used less frequently by children.

Table 7 further revealed that 11.6% to 14% times the adults were involved in the preschool context, to resolve conflicts. The observations revealed that adults intervened during children's conflict indicating gender difference to an extent. It was found that 7.4% times adults intervened in conflicts wherein girls were in focus for observation while 12.5% was for boys thus indicating lesser scope for adult intervention in terms of conflicts of girls. The difference between younger and older children was nominal thus indicating that the extent of adult intervention was similar for younger and older children.

However the interference of adults was maximum in case of girls upto 4.2% and 1.4% for boys. In the lab school situation it is likely to happen more due to the participation of student trainees.

The third major category was that of topic dropped during conflict. The finding indicated that 8.4 and 7.4% times the younger and older children used this strategy themselves or it was also used by peers and adults. While in case of boys and girls, the percentage of topic dropped was 7.9% and 8.5% times. The highlight of this category was that during conflicts peer or the third child took greater initiative in dropping the topic across age and gender, although the percentage was less than 7%. The role of peer indicates that characteristically children initiated group play and also peers took active part in resolving conflicts and asserting for peer's right. The observations thus revealed that in these situations children used socio moral rather than social conventional strategies.

Further, the findings regarding the conflict resolution strategies in relation to ordinal position of children are evident (table 8). It is clearly found that 86.5% times second born children generated their own strategies for resolving conflicts. The first borns were the next highest in resolving conflict followed by third born indicating 83.1% and 49.9% respectively.

The physical strategies were used maximum by all the children with second borns indulging in physical action maximum, followed by third born and the first borns. It should be noted

Table 8

Conflict Resolution strategies in relation to Ordinal Position (N=31)

Categories	Ordinal Position		
	First born (%)	Second born (%)	Later born (%)
Child Generated			
Bargaining			
Negotiating	6.4	5.9	00
Compromising			
Transforming	3.2	4.4	8.3
Reconciliation	8.5	6.4	8.3
Verbal strategies	7.5	15.2	00
Physical strategies	29.8	37.5	33.3
Seeking attention	18.1	11.7	00
Sub Total	73.5	81.1	49.9
Adults			
Adult intervention	13.8	9.3	16.7
Adult interference	3.2	2.0	00
Sub Total	17.0	11.3	16.7
Topic dropped			
Children	9.6	5.4	00
Adult	00	2.4	00
Sub Total	9.6	7.8	00

Note . Multiple responses

that there was only one later born but there was maximum intervention of adults perhaps due to the frequent use of

physical strategies. The adult interference occurred a few times perhaps due to the presence of student trainees in the laboratory nursery school.

The first borns also used attention seeking behaviour like irritating peers, crying or dropping the topic of play. The first borns and later borns also used reconciliation as a strategy to resolve conflicts. The second borns used physical and verbal strategies more frequently than first or later born.

Thus the findings regarding conflict resolution strategies indicate that young children often indicate their awareness of right and wrong action, especially in terms of adult approval and social desirability.

Conflict Resolution strategy in terms of Family Type

The observations indicated that most frequently children used different resolution strategies to conclude their conflict in the free play situations with children from both joint and nuclear family background. It was found that there was greater need for resolving conflicts in case of children belonging to joint families as high as 72% times and 28% times conflicts needed to be resolved for children belonging to nuclear families.

Amongst various categories of conflict resolution, reconciliation was used maximum in joint families rather than nuclear families. One of the major reasons could be the ethos of joint family which would encourage cohesive interaction through cooperation and appreciation of other's feelings. Transforming was another strategy used 3.2% times in joint families and 1% times in nuclear families

Children used physical strategies maximum upto 25.7% times in case of joint families and 9.4% by children from nuclear families. Thus there was a combination of using strategies like changing place and position and also negative strategies like hitting, kicking, pushing and pulling peer as well as play material. However, the developmental trend was evident as children used other resolution strategies more than hitting and kicking or crying.

The strategies like seeking attention of adults and peers were used more by children from joint families than those from nuclear families evidencing 10.9% and 2.3% times respectively. The adult generated strategies were very few because children took initiative and resolved issues, disagreements. The intervention of adults was 7.4% and 3.5% times and it was mainly in terms of drawing children's attention, guiding them to

share, exchange resources and enabling children to reason out and understand peer's needs.

Also 2.3% times adults interfered during conflict. One reason was that the student teacher would supervise and guide children by moving about in different corners in free play situations. Thus at times she would not have the background and might suggest strategies rather than observing the ongoing situation. Also being a lab school, student teachers too would be participating actively and hence in rare cases may interfere.

The tendency to drop topic by focus children and adults was negligible. However peers' intervention was 4.2% times in case of joint families and 1% times in case of nuclear families.

The overall pattern of conflict occurrence too indicates maximum occurrence in joint families than nuclear families. Thus it explains that the resolution strategies also needed to be in higher proportion for children belonging to joint families.

Outcome of conflict by focus children

The conflict resolution strategies were further examined in terms of the nature and type of outcome in case of focus children both in relation to age and gender. Table 9 reveals the detailed aspects.

Table 9
Outcome of conflict by Focus Child in terms of Age and Gender (N=31)

Outcome of Conflict	Age (%)		Gender (%)	
	Younger	Older	Boys	Girls
Positive verbal Response	02.9	01.3	02.2	02.9
Ignores	35.3	33.6	35.6	31.7
Starts playing again	44.5	47.0	42.7	52.9
Stops playing	03.8	08.0	06.8	01.9
Changes theme of play	12.7	10.1	12.1	10.6
Becomes upset	00.8	00	00.7	00

Note Multiple responses

It is clearly evident from table 9 that majority of times children resumed play thus indicating the outcome of conflict. In terms of age the difference was small as older children started playing again 47% times and younger children resumed play 44.5% times. In terms of gender, there was comparatively more difference as girls resumed play more frequently with 52.9% times while boys indicated 42.7%.

Although the percentage of stopping play was quite low it was found that older children and boys stopped playing in totality, while younger children and girls indicated this outcome to a very less extent.

Table 9 further reveals that although the age and gender difference was quite small, children used the strategy of ignoring quite frequently, with younger children and boys ignoring more often. The range was 31.7% and 35.6% across age and gender.

It was also found that conflicts resulted in changing the theme of play 12.7 and 12.1% times for younger children and boys more frequently than older children and girls indicating 10.1 and 10.6% times of occurrence, though there was little difference in terms of age and gender.

Further it was found that very rarely children got upset. This finding therefore indicates that developmentally children around 3 to 4 years of age are able to deal with conflicts by using physical strategies and verbal strategies.

Conflict Resolution Outcome of Focus Child in terms of Family Income

The family income was relevant to consider the pattern of conflict resolution and the nature of outcome. It was evident that irrespective of the family income children started playing again in spite of the conflict occurrence. This behaviour was indicated maximum number of times being 49.4% by children

from the lowest family income bracket and least was 37.5 by children from the middle income bracket. Also children from this income bracket demonstrated the strategy of ignoring maximum that is 41.7% times. The children from lowest family income indicated ignoring as an outcome 35.3% times while those from the highest income families indicated 27.6% times. These comparisons further indicate that income per se is not indicative of the pattern of conflict resolution.

Few children changed themes of play by shifting to other play areas indoors and outdoors when conflict occurred. At times children also stopped playing although the percentage was low irrespective of the middle and highest family income. But children from the lowest family income rarely stopped playing.

One of the outcomes of conflicts during free play situation was positive verbal response like agreeing to give play material later or allowing peer to finally join the ongoing play or explaining about giving or sharing toys after sometime. Finally it was also evident that children from the higher income brackets did not become upset and rarely they cried.

Outcome of Conflict Resolution for Focus Child :

Parental Education

The children of graduate parents resumed play most frequently. The least percentage for resuming play was 23.5% for children of non literate parents. The children of post graduate fathers started playing again 38.9% times while those of post graduate mothers resumed play 25% times, indicating a difference of 12% between father and mother. Also children from non literate families ended the conflict episode by ignoring 41.2% times to be the highest occurrence in comparison with other educational levels. This finding mainly intends to present that conflicts concluded by resuming play for children with higher levels of education of parents

Further changing the theme of the play occurred 35.3% times for non literate parents. It was also found that more number of times children changed the theme of the play in case of mothers with different educational background than fathers.

The positive verbal response was observed very few times with maximum 3% times for H.S.C.E pass fathers and 2.6% times that of graduate mothers and Diploma holder fathers. It was also found that children were rarely upset and this was consistent with family income, age and gender.

***Outcome of Focus Child in relation to occupation of
Father and Family Type***

The pattern of conflict resolution of focus children revealed that majority of the times the outcome was that focus children resumed their play. It was found that children from business families resumed play 52.6% times and those from joint families too resumed play 52% times. While children whose fathers were in service resumed play 43.1% times but those from nuclear families resumed their play 30.2% times indicating considerable difference in comparison with children from joint families and children of employed fathers.

Interestingly children from nuclear families ignored the conflict episode 41.4% and children of employed fathers indicated 37.1% times of concluding the conflict by ignoring the incident. In comparison with business families and joint families the difference was moderate. (Table 10)

It was also evident that children from nuclear families changed the theme of their play by shifting to other play areas 18.1 per times, which was lower than outcomes like resuming play or ignoring. But it was moderately higher than that of joint family indicating 8.9% times. The difference was very less for

Table 10

Outcome of Conflict for Focus Child in relation to Father's occupation and Family Type (N=31)

Outcome of Focus Child	Father's Occupation (%)		Family Type (%)	
	Service	Business	Joint	Nuclear
Positive Verbal Response	1.7	4.2	2.6	1.7
Ignoring	37.1	26.8	31.6	41.4
Starts playing again	43.1	52.6	52.0	30.2
Stops playing	6.3	3.1	4.1	8.6
Changes theme of play	11.1	13.4	8.9	18.1
Child become	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.0

Note : Multiple responses.

changing the theme of play in relation to children with father's occupation being business or service

At times children from nuclear families stopped playing 8.6% times while those from business families stopped playing 3.1% times which was the lowest as per table 10.

Another observation was that 4.2% times children from business families used positive verbal response indicating outcomes in the form of agreements, explanations or allowing peers to join their play. Rarely children from joint families and those from service families became upset

Outcome of Conflict Resolution of Focus Child in terms of Ordinal Position

The observations of children in the preschool context clearly reveal that in most categories there was little difference between the first and second borns while the pattern of outcome indicated some difference between first and second borns and the third born

The main outcome of conflict was resuming play by first borns upto 48.2% times and second borns 45.7% times indicating negligible difference in relation to birth order. The third born indicated that 23.5% times the play was resumed but 41.2% times they indicated ignoring of conflict occurrence. The difference in terms of ordinal position was small however for the category of ignoring. It was also interesting to note that third born changed the theme of play 35.3% times while the first borns revealed this outcome only 7.1% times. The second borns changed the theme of play 12.1% times.

The pattern of third born thus indicates that ignoring the conflict was highest, changing the theme of play was next highest while resuming the play was moderately high. The third born was not observed to use any kind of positive verbal response, stopping play totally or becoming upset. It needs to be also noted that

the first and second borns too used verbal responses only 2.7% and 2.4% times and second borns became rarely upset.

Thus on the whole in terms of gender, age, family background the pattern of outcome of conflict was similar and consistent indicating comparatively lesser difference in relation to variables, across different categories. However the pattern of third born revealed shift in trend. The possible reason could be that the third born being a later born was perhaps receiving greater attention from family members and had greater opportunities to interact with older siblings. Thus the pattern of conflict resolution was presented with reference to focus children.

The outcome of conflict was also examined in terms of ordinal position from peer's perspective. It was found that on the whole the pattern of outcome was similar for first and second borns with a difference of few percentages and for the third born the pattern was different.

It is evident that maximum number of times the second borns resumed play after indulging in conflict 50% times. The first borns resumed play 47.6% times. While third born resumed play and changed the theme of play indicating 35.7% for both these outcomes. Another common form of outcome of conflict

was ignoring the episode with 32% and 25.7% occurrence. The third born however showed ignoring and stopping play as outcome 14.3% times each.

The outcome in terms of positive verbal response and agreements was observed only in second borns though the percentage was 2%. It was also interesting to observe that the first borns became upset, stopped talking with other peers and focus children 4.8% times while second borns indicated 1.5% times. The third born did not show that he was upset.

Thus on the whole the pattern of conflict resolution and outcome was similar for first and second borns while for the third born the pattern was quite different in most categories.

Conflict Resolution outcome of Peers in terms of Age and Gender

The observations of children were analyzed in terms of conflict resolution and specific outcomes for both focus children and the peers with whom there were any kind of disagreements.

The analysis in terms of age and gender indicated little difference in the outcome of conflict in case of peers. Both younger and older children started playing again about 48.7%

and 48.5% indicating that the pattern of outcome was similar to that of focus children. It was also found that both boys and girls too resumed their play with little difference in percentages. Children ignored peer's demands, requests or even physical or verbal reactions and continued to ignore the entire episode just like focus children.

The older children changed the theme of play 13.6% times while younger children changed less frequently. There was no gender difference in changing the type of location of play though the percentage was quite low. It was also found that few times children totally stopped their ongoing play due to conflict indicating no age difference. There was greater tendency to stop playing by girls as compared to boys. This observation raises a point for discussion whether boys are more compliant or girls are more justice oriented, especially from peer's perspective.

In case of peers there was negligible occurrence of positive verbal response in terms of age and gender. It was also evident that girls indicated nil verbal response in terms of agreements and explanations. Also in comparison with focus children peers became upset a few times more than focus children. It was interesting to note that older children and boys become upset

more often than younger children and girls, though there was little difference in terms of percentages

To conclude the major source of conflict was physical reactions especially when demand for sharing play material or equipment was not entertained by children. This pattern was consistent across all the variables of age, gender, ordinal position and family background of children. Regarding conflict resolution, older children and girls, first and later born and children from joint families used reconciliation as a strategy more frequently. Children from joint families experienced greater conflict and also they intervened in conflicts more than children from nuclear families. Finally the pattern of outcome of conflict showed consistency of conflict showed consistency in terms of age, gender and the variables concerning the family background. In terms of ordinal position, the third born revealed a different pattern as they ignored the conflict as high as 41.2% times, changed the theme of play 35.3% times while the first and second borns revealed this outcome only 7.1% and 12.1% times respectively.

Thus the findings about conflict resolution reveal that children are often aware of others needs and therefore inspite of conflicts they resumed their play all over again. It is clearly

evident that maximum number of times children resolved conflicts on their own.

Major Findings of conflict resolution

- The older children indulged in conflict less frequently than younger children, indicating developmental trend of lesser conflict with increase in age.
- Boys indulged in conflicts 70.7% times and girls indulged 29.3% times revealing vast gender difference. Girls showed maximum conflict in the outdoors while the dollhouse depicted moderate difference in terms of gender.
- The second borns showed maximum indulgence in conflict while third born showed the least percentage.
- Children from joint families showed a very high percentage of conflict indulgence as compared to children from nuclear families
- The children from the highest family income showed conflicts 67% times and children from lowest family income indicated 41.7% times in a span of 120 minutes. However children from middle income families showed maximum conflict in their interactions upto 52.1% times.

- The children with non literate parents' background showed least indulgence in conflict during free play sessions and children of post graduate parents too indicated low indulgence in conflict.
- The children of employed fathers revealed a high percentage of conflict occurrence about 74.8% times while those of businessmen indicated 25.2% times.
- Children indicated physical reaction to be the maximum, followed by verbal reactions, though there was difference in terms of gender for the percentage of conflict occurrence. The younger children however evidenced greater verbal reaction as compared to older children. Teasing was maximum irrespective of age, followed by verbal disagreements and calling names.
- The younger children had greater difficulty following the social order indicating moderate difference in terms of age. The conflicts arising as a result of maintaining one's rights indicated marginal difference and lower occurrence.
- The older children and boys had minimum conflicts due to unfair distribution of resources, children of non literate parents did not indicate unfair distribution of resources

as a cause of conflict. Children of post graduate fathers indulged in conflicts for issues concerning rights while it was absent in case of non literate parents.

- The children resolved conflicts majority of times with their own initiative, irrespective of age and gender. The physical strategies of conflict resolution showed highest percentage as compared to other categories, indicating considerable difference across categories.
- There was moderate difference in the use of verbal strategies of resolution in terms of age and gender. The boys and older children used verbal strategies than girls and younger children.
- Reconciliation was used as a conflict resolution strategy by girls 11.6% times and also by older children 8.2% times.
- The outcome of conflict by focus child reveals that majority of times children ultimately resumed play and ignored the conflict totally. The intervention of adults was low in resolving conflicts. The peers intervened few times.
- The conflict occurred least in the art room irrespective of age, gender, family background of focus children and

peers. The maximum percentage of sharing and conflicts too occurred in the indoor free play.

Perception of Teachers about Sharing and Conflict Resolution Behaviours of Children

The teacher revealed in the interview that sharing is important for children and it should be encouraged. She also mentioned that it occurs at different points of time implying individual differences in children. She expressed that there was wide range in the occurrence of conflict in children during free play sessions.

According to the teacher, some children rarely indulged in conflicts. She encouraged conflict resolution by children with their own initiative, however, she intervened need based. During the day-to-day participation, she was aware about how each child reacted during sharing and conflict episodes, in the free play situations.

The qualitative analysis of teacher's perceptions about sharing and conflict resolution behaviours of children are presented. (Table 11)

According to the teacher, few boys and girls shared easily with close friends. While more boys shared with everybody but only

one girl showed readiness to share with anybody. It is also evident from the table that equal number of boys and girls did not like to share play material with anyone. Also more boys shared on teacher's request as compared to girls. Thus the teacher's feedback indicated that children were clear about their preferences for sharing play material. But the overall picture on sharing as perceived by the teacher revealed that 19 responses indicated that boys shared in different proportions in comparison with girls, as 9 girls were perceived to share in varying proportions while 4 boys from a total of 18 and 4 girls from a total of 13 did not like to share with anyone according to the teacher.

The findings regarding the perception of sharing by the class teacher thus reveal that boys shared more than girls. The perception of teacher matches with the observational data which too revealed that boys shared more than girls, although many a times with close peers.

The perception of teacher regarding conflict resolution revealed that physical strategies such as hitting peers, pushing, pulling and snatching objects were the most frequent strategies. The frequency for boys indulging in physical reactions was 13 and for girls it was 9. The teacher expressed that few boys and girls

Table 11
Perception of Teacher about Sharing and Conflict
Resolution of Children (N=31)

Behaviour	Boys (Frequencies) (n=18)	Girls (Frequencies) (n=13)
Sharing Behaviour	Shares easily with close friends (5) Shares with everybody (4) Shares Sometimes (2) Shares rarely (3) Doesnot like to share play material with anyone (4) Shares on teacher's request (5)	Shares easily with close peers (3) Share with everybody (1) Moody in sharing and possessive (1) Shares sometimes (2) Does not share easily (1) Does not like to share with any one (4) Share on teacher's request (2)
Conflict Resolution	Resolves through hitting but won't complain (1) Hits, snatches material and pushes others (13) Cries immediately (5) Complains to the teacher (3) Resolves on his own with any strategies (2) Seeks peer's help in resolving conflicts (1) Does not comply (2) withdraws totally on adult intervention (1)	Hits/pushes/pulls object and resolves conflict (9) Cries immediately (3) Complains to the teacher about peer's act (4) Changes activity (1) Seeks peer's help in resolving conflict (2)

Note Multiple responses.

cried immediately during the conflict. But the observations of children revealed that they became upset a few times but in totality children cried very less. Examining the response of crying revealed that few boys and girls had a tendency to cry a little to seek teacher's intervention and at times attention for resolving conflict. However the frequency was lesser in terms of occurrence of crying in the total span of observation.

The children were perceived to complain to the teacher indicating negligible gender difference. Surprisingly according to the teacher only two boys resolved conflicts on their own. But the observations revealed that maximum number of times children resolved conflicts with their own initiative irrespective of gender. The observations also revealed that children used variety of strategies for resolving conflicts. However the teacher perceived fewer strategies like seeking adult or peer's intervention crying, not complying, in rare cases, withdrawing totally or changing the activity. This finding also draws attention to the sensitivity of the teacher in her day to day interaction with children, her experience as a teacher of young children being limited inspite of being a Post Graduate Diploma holder in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodologically the variation in teacher's perception and children's observations points out the need for administering a checklist or a rating scale about sharing and conflict resolution behaviour for each child to examine the extent of clarity of teacher's observations about individual children. In the present study a set of open ended questions were asked to the teacher about children's sharing and conflict resolution behaviours. Interestingly being the laboratory nursery school teacher, she was aware about the present study and inspite of interviewing her at the end of the year, leaving adequate scope for her to observe and interact with children, the responses were limited in content. Another factor one needs to consider at this juncture is the personality traits of the teacher and her temperament, indicating individual differences in orientation, observation and expression. The observer was trained and the running observations were recorded based on few guidelines. Hence there was scope to record naturalistic observations in the free play and art sessions, thus reiterating that the observation data was not based on any predetermined categories.

To conclude the findings from the observations of children in the preschool context revealed that children willingly shared especially play material to a major extent and resolved conflicts with maximum initiative with minimum intervention from adults.

Section II

The perception of parents regarding morality in young children are presented in this section. The findings are presented under following specific aspects.

- Parental perceptions about morality.
- Views on “Sanskars” and role of family
- Conduct of child’s behaviour/standards of correct behaviour
- Sharing behaviour of children
- Conflict resolution behaviour.
- Moral dilemmas
- Expectations about ideal adult.

The perceptions of parents examined through interviews were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of frequencies and percentages

Parental perceptions about morality

The parents expressed that this was a reflective exercise and they seemed to consider morality as an integral aspect of the “sanskars” which transcend from generation to generation. During the interviews parents needed warming up pause before they started responding. It was also found that mentioning different moral values was more concrete than articulating the

meaning of morality per ce. Table 12 depicts the perception of parents regarding morality.

Table 12
Parent's perceptions of Morality (N=62)

Responses	Father (Percentage)	Mother (Percentage)
Moral Values		
Honesty, justice, truthfulness	28.89	21.64
Good Sanskars	4.44	5.97
Knowledge of right and wrong	8.15	5.97
Not using abusive language	8.15	5.97
Sharing, caring, co operating	5.19	10.45
Sub total	56.3	53.73
Social Conventional Values		
Maintaining good relationship	11.85	11.94
Respecting elders	11.11	14.18
Spirituality	12.59	16.42
Serving community and nation	8.15	3.73
Sub total	43.7	46.27

Note : Multiple responses.

The meaning of morality was described by parents in moral and social conventional ways. The analysis revealed that 56.3% fathers and 53.73% mothers mentioned moral values such as

honesty, justice, truthfulness, good sanskars knowledge of right and wrong as important. They also included sharing, caring and co operating and use of non abusive language as appropriate moral behaviours. While 43.7% responses of fathers and 46.27 per cent of mothers revealed that morality was following social conventional practices, as they stressed on aspects such as maintaining good relationship, respecting elders, serving the community and nation and adopting spirituality including the religious rituals and routines. The table 1 clearly reveals that within categories the responses are distributed with honesty, justice and truthfulness indicating highest percentages 28.89% and 21.64% respectively. While sharing caring and co operation evidenced least percentage in the moral category, although mothers gave greater weightage to these aspects in comparison with fathers.

Thus the overall responses of parents reveal that both fathers and mothers gave greater emphasis to the moral values and behaviours indicating 55%. While they described morality in social conventional ways upto 45% as presented in figure 17. There was little difference in the perception of fathers and mothers, though fathers perceived morality in greater percentages as compared to mothers. However mothers

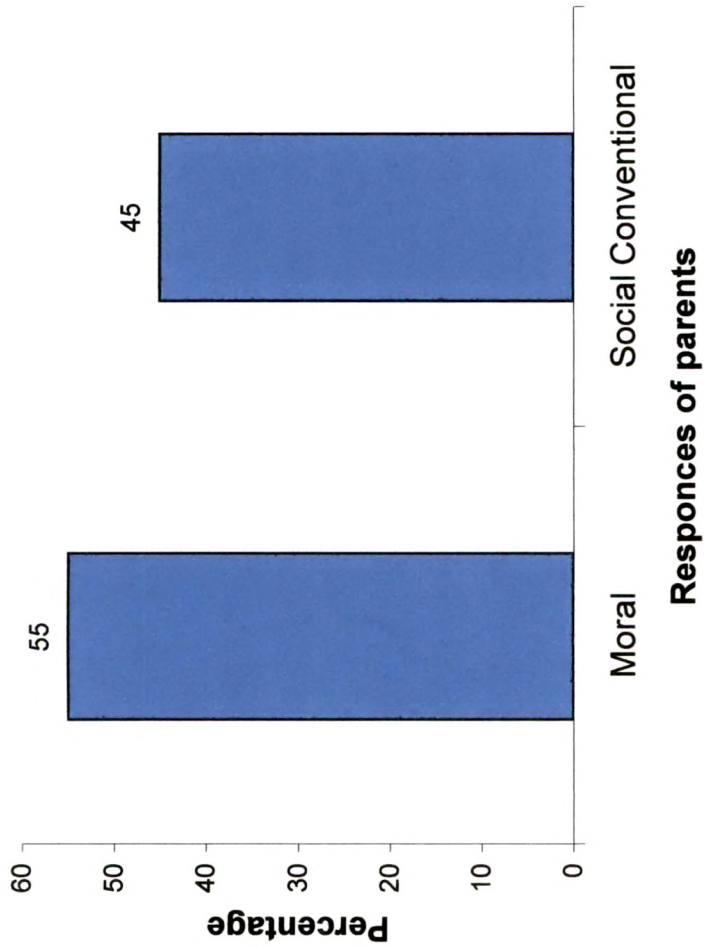


Figure 17 Overall perception of parents on morality

considered social conventional values as moral greater number of times than fathers.

Parental views on Sanskars

The views of parents were obtained regarding the most important sanskars they intended to inculcate in their children. Both fathers and mothers gave interesting responses. The major sanskars were categorized as moral social conventional, personal qualities valued by parents, educational and developmental aspects. The overall picture revealed that the majority of responses were in the category of social conventional indicating negligible difference between the responses of fathers and mothers with 46.99% and 45.5% respectively. The findings reveal that maximum mothers expressed respecting elders while greater number of fathers emphasized on good behaviour in the cultural context. Few fathers also considered serving the parents and the community as an important sanskar while only one mother shared this response. Few fathers and mothers also considered being religious as an important indicator of a 'sanskari' individual.

Another category which was considered valuable was with regard to moral aspects. About 32.53% mothers and 28.92% fathers emphasized on the moral aspects. It was found that

being honest, truthful and god fearing was an important indication of sanskar with fathers emphasizing these qualities more than mothers. Mothers gave greater emphasis on having good friends as compared to fathers. It was interesting to note that both fathers and mothers considered using good language “સારી વાણી ” as a sign of good sanskar. Few parents also considered that good sanskars also ensure not being quarrel some or hurting others On the whole greater number of response of fathers emphasized on good virtues in comparison with mother’s responses

The parents also valued certain personal qualities in relation to sanskars Although the responses were only 9.64% and 6.61% respectively for mothers and fathers. It was evident that being broad minded, active, independent and being warm were the attributes of good sanskars (Figure 18).

The education was accorded very high place by 9.66% mothers and 9.92% fathers indicating negligible difference in the views of both parents. They mainly emphasized on ‘studying well’ while one Muslim mother also specified about attending religious schools, regularly locally known as

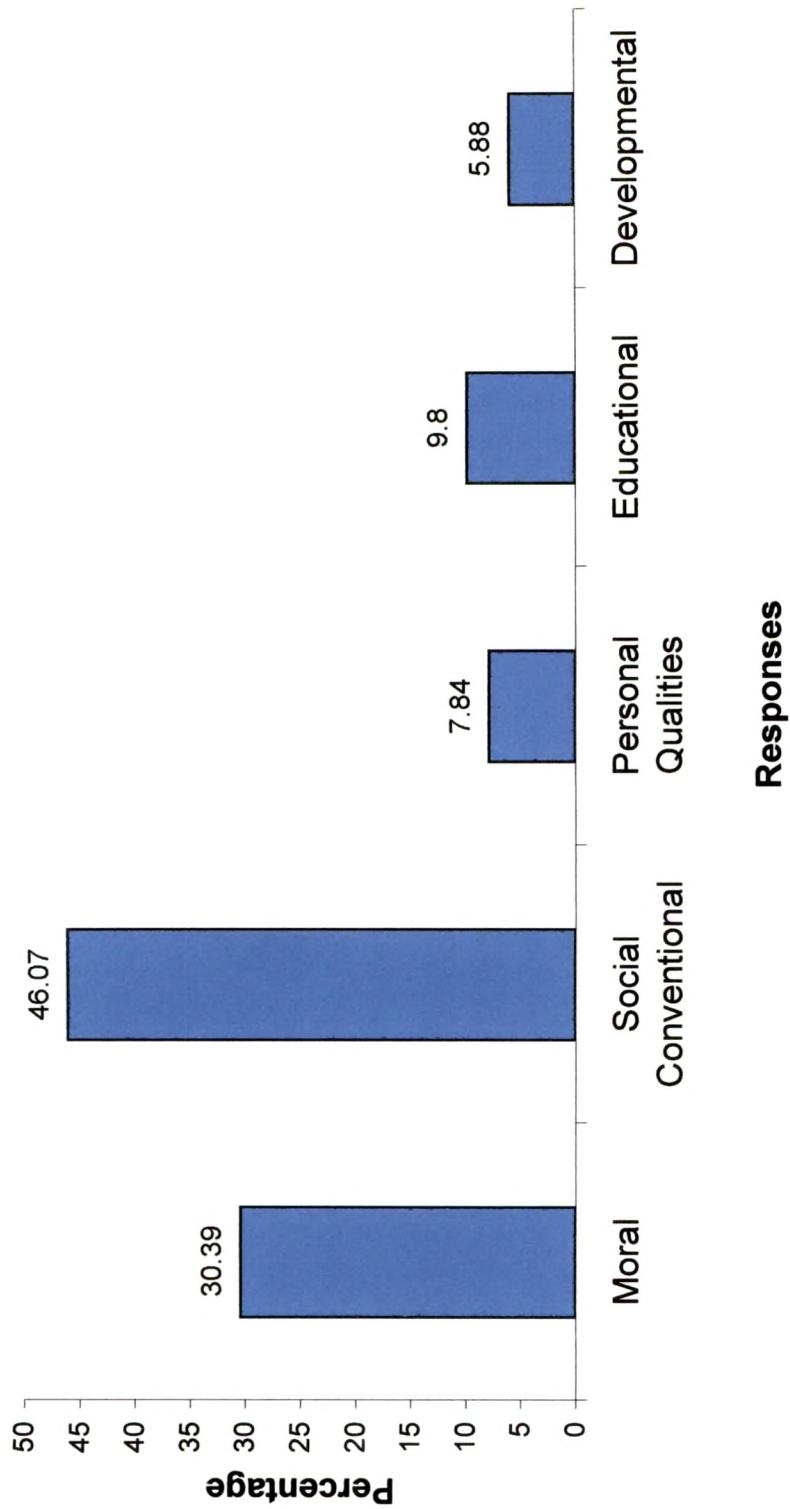


Figure 18 Overall percentage of parental views on sanskars

The parents also indicated merged responses in terms of various categories. It was found that 9.09% fathers and only 1.20% mothers indicated good around development and balanced personality as a good indicator of sanskars.

The responses of parents clearly revealed that the sanskars acquired by themselves were further passed on to their offsprings evidencing inter generational exchanges. Some parents also expressed that the deeds, thoughts and feelings of the previous birth have implications on the type of family, body, health and happiness people possess in the present birth. These responses are common in Hindus because of this religious ideology.

The overall responses of parents revealed that 46.07% parents emphasized the social conventional aspects of sanskars. The moral emphasis was evident in 30.39% responses of parents. The educational value was highlighted by 9.80% parents. While the personal qualities were considered important by 7.84% parents. The developmental aspects were considered as least responses of parents with 5.88%. One of the reasons for this response pattern could be that from early years parents are clear about their child rearing practices. Also they often believe

that if children follow certain social conventional rules and basic moral rules it would influence overall development

Thus the cultural values and practices accorded higher frequencies of responses and the moral values were next highest in view of parents.

In response to the question on appropriate age for inculcating sanskars to children 29.73% mothers and 9.68% fathers considered 2 – 2½ years while 24.30% mothers and 35.48% fathers found 2½ – 3 years as the ideal age. About 12.90% fathers considered 7 – 8 years for giving sanskars to children. It was interesting to note that parents also considered developmental milestones rather than chronological age for indicating appropriate timing for sanskars. It was evident that 5.41% mothers and 12.90% fathers mentioned that when infants begin to walk and talk the process of giving sanskars should be initiated. Also 32.26% fathers and 24.32% mothers mentioned that when children begin to understand and expressed their day to day comprehension through body language, sanskars should have their inception. Two fathers also emphasized that one need not put pressure on children for learning sanskars because according to developmental stage, child learns in the natural course. These fathers were familiar with the lab school

philosophy and approach in guiding children as their older children too were the alumni of Chetan Balwadi.

Another father expressed the need to give sanskar in early years as there is lot of competition in the present times and therefore it was considered important to enable the child to understand. It was also felt necessary to create a conducive atmosphere for giving sanskars to children as parents mentioned that a tender plant will mould the way one moulds. The verbatim was that "છોકરો વાળીયે તેમ વળે." Some parents insisted on speaking truth and stressed the need to give freedom and yet have discipline. They pointed out that children should be obedient and therefore parents should focus and guide children for being ideal adults.

Strategies for giving sanskar

In the Hindu philosophy of life sanskars are considered central to one's self. The ways of thinking, behaviour, action and decisions of an individual tend to depend on one's sanskar, family and the general orientation of people. Hence it was relevant to know parent's perceptions and the practice of giving sanskars to children in the early years.

It is clearly evident from the results that both fathers and mothers considered various strategies for giving sanskars to

children such as explaining, encouraging, telling stories, serving as role models and education. It was found that 68.25% fathers and 70.02% mothers preferred explaining and encouraging positive behaviours in children during day to day interactions. While there were greater responses indicating that mothers preferred to use stories, pictures and other ways like television for inculcating sanskar to young children. Also few responses revealed that role models were appropriate, especially adults and older siblings, indicating equal responses of parents. About 6.35% fathers indicated giving threats to children and 6.34% fathers also restricted behaviours of children which were not acceptable. Few parents also scolded children but the percentage of responses was very small

Regarding the role of education, 5% mothers responses indicated its influence on children while fathers did not make reference to education. About 6.67% mothers also considered temptation as a useful strategy for giving sanskars

The overall responses of parents indicate positive strategies for inculcating sanskars with relatively moderate difference in the responses of fathers and mothers. About 84.12% fathers and 90.02% responses of mothers evidence the use of positive ways thus indicating an interesting trend. One of the reasons could be

that mothers tend to interact more with the preschool personnel, attend meetings more frequently while fathers are at times busy with the demands of work. However the percentages are encouraging for irrespective of their gender.

Standards of behaviour

The study also aimed to examine the perception of parents regarding the standard of behaviour that they intended their children to achieve. Hence few questions were addressed to parents regarding the rules which children were expected to

Table 13
Rules for children at Home (n=62)

Responses	Father (Percentage)	Mother (Percentage)
Type of rules		
Religious rituals	20.00	28.57
Self discipline and good sanskars	36.67	19.48
Personal hygiene and cleanliness	6.67	31.17
Play related	13.33	-
Eating related	21.67	15.58
Interaction with neighbours	1.67	5.19

Note : Multiple responses.

follow, children's reactions to fulfil this need at home and the role of adults. Table 13 projects the trend of perception of fathers and mothers.

The parents had clear idea about their expectations from young children. All the mothers mentioned that there were certain rules for children even in the early years. While except one father, all the fathers too confirmed that they had basic framework of rules. One father who refused having any rules had adopted the daughter of his own brother and they were all residing as a large extended family. This child was quite pampered by the biological parents and the adoptive parents.

Regarding the type of rules, the difference between the responses of fathers and mothers was moderate, for religious rituals and eating related rules. It was found that 28.57% mother's responses in comparison with 20% of father's responses focused on following rituals like prayers and visiting temple while more fathers were concerned about eating related issues as compared to mothers evident in table 13. One of the reasons could be the increased participation of fathers in day to day activities concerning children, in the recent times.

Also self discipline and good sanskars were expected by 36.67% of father's responses but the difference was large as

In response to a question on whether their children follow these rules all the mothers answered in affirmative while 28 fathers out of 31 also agreed. Few mothers mentioned that their children followed the religious rituals always mainly because it was mandatory for every family member to follow. Many mothers and very few fathers said that most of the time their child followed these rules. Also few parents expressed that sometimes children followed rules but subject to their mood. However on the whole many fathers and some mothers mentioned that they did not believe in pressurizing children at this young age. Hence they were quite flexible when the child was irritable, tired, upset, lazy or unwell.

The parents further expressed that sometimes when children were involved in play or any interesting activity like watching television, they did not follow these rules. Greater number of fathers' responses in comparison with mother's responses revealed that certain personality traits like being stubborn, obstinate also came in way of following rules. This especially happened when other children were not clear, or wanted to go out with parents but could not, when parent expressed anger or did not maintain their promise, children reacted and avoided following any rituals expected in the family set up.

Role of adult when Child breaks rules

The data was obtained in details regarding the nature of rules and reaction of adults and children in order to get deeper insights and understanding about the role of adults. The pattern of adult intervention included maximum positive strategies and some negative reinforcement as well. Table 14 reveals the strategies used by parents in case the child broke cer

Table 14
Strategies used by adults on breaking rules (N=62)

Strategies	Father (Percentage)	Mother (Percentage)
Explaining	14.89	32.84
Motivating	10.64	26.87
Negotiating	4.26	-
Threatening	23.40	11.94
Punishing	2.13	2.99
Scolding	25.53	16.42
Hitting and stepping	14.89	7.46
Ignoring	4.26	1.49

Note : Multiple responses

The data reveals interesting gender difference in the parents' responses. It was found that greater percentage of mothers explained to children the good and bad behaviour and reasons for following rules. Thus the moral and social conventional

categories of responses often merged in the parent's data. This finding matches with the observational data too about conflict resolution strategies and various reactions of focus children and their peers. The literature too indicates that in the non western and particularly Indian studies, the moral and social conventional categories tend to get merged.

Another interesting finding was that greater percentage of mothers motivated their children to adhere to family rules by coxing, cajoling, verbally showing affection like "ଭ଼ାଲ, ଥାଲ" patting children's back and at times leading them to follow basic rules. While father used these strategies less often, but they at times negotiated with children by tempting children with chocolates or buying a favourite toy.

Further it is evident from table 14 that greater number of fathers responses revealed strategies like threatening children by asking them to be injected, locking up in the bathroom or showing slap in the air. The use of punishment was in rare instances indicating negligible gender difference in parents. Finally few parents also ignored the fact that their children broke the rules or missed following certain routine. According to these parents such strategies are useful in the practical aspects of children's lives.

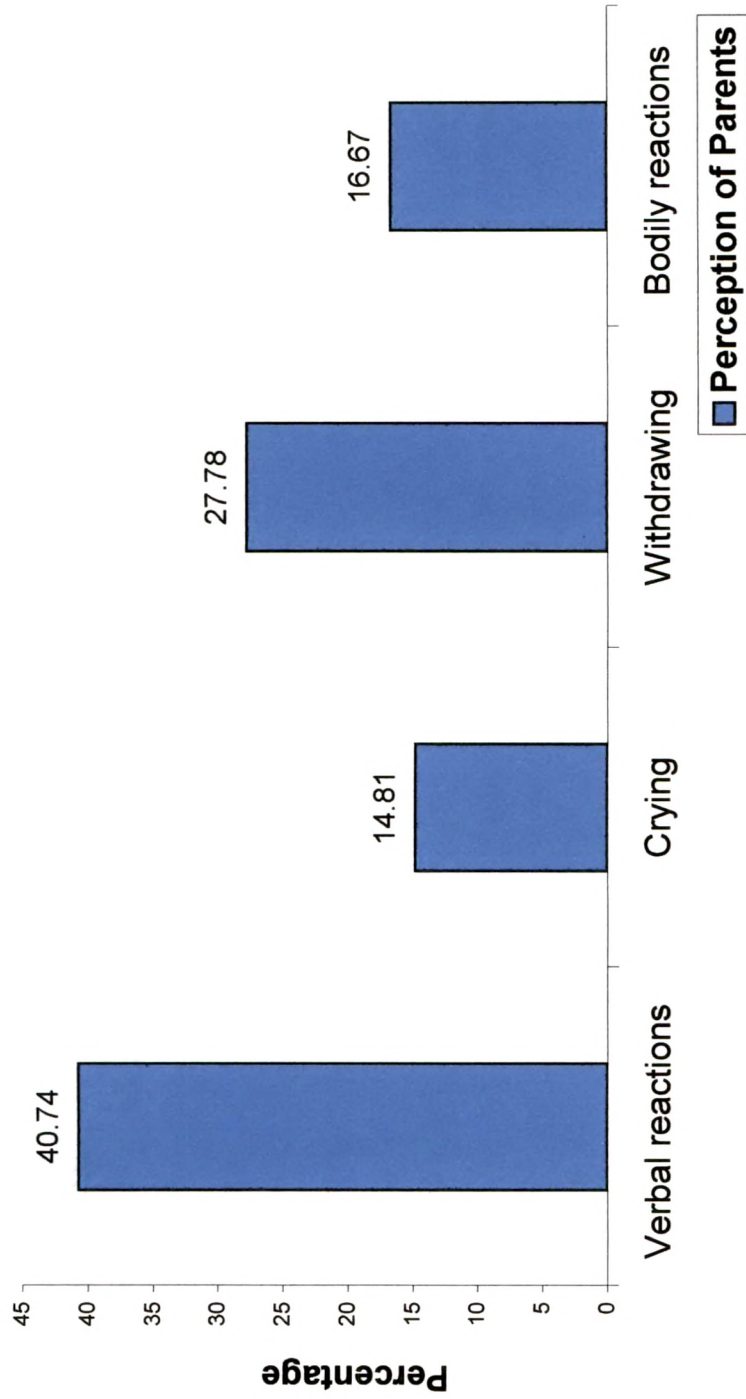


Figure 19 Parental perception on Reactions of children on breaking rules (n=62)

Reactions of children on breaking rules

The analysis of parent's responses regarding the conduct of children's behaviour at home indicated detailed observation of parents. In relation to the rules, a question was asked to parents regarding their role as adults and the reaction of children on breaking rules. (Figure 19)

The detailed examination of parent's responses revealed that there was little difference in the perception of fathers and mothers regarding children's reactions especially when they did not maintain the everyday rules of the family. However the overall perception of parents indicate that children showed verbal reactions maximum upto 40.74%. These reactions were in the form of shouting, screaming, threatening parents like "પપ્પાને કહી દઈશ" implying will complain to pappa or "God will scold you", mainly to the mother being the constant caregiver. The second highest reaction in terms of percentages was 27.78% indicating withdrawal from situation, or avoiding any communication and eye contact with the caregiver. About 16.67% times children expressed physical reactions as mentioned by parents. The observational data however indicated that the physical reaction of children was maximum. One of the reasons could be that in the preschool environment children perhaps had greater scope and need to react to peers physically

while playing. But in the home atmosphere the least they could react to would be an older or younger sibling. Hence reactions to parents perhaps accrued more also in order to perhaps seek greater attention from other family members like grand parents and uncle or aunt in the joint family. Also 14.81% children reacted by crying as perceived by parents

In order to gain greater insight about parents' views regarding the socio moral aspects concerning child rearing practices, a hypothetical situation which occurs quite often in the preschool context was given to parents. The main question was that in case child brought a favourite play material like any toy or crayon at home, what would parents do. The reaction of father and mother was quite similar, indicating little difference across various categories.

The overall responses of parents however revealed that as high as 48.18% parents expressed that they would ask the child as to what led him or her to get the crayon home. And immediately they would explain to their child that the balwadi material be used in that setting while toys and resources at home be utilized at home. They further explained by saying that it was alright to commit mistake once, however it should not be repeated. Most of the parents preferred to give reasons to children for not getting any toy or play

material home. Some parents also told children that it was wrong and some people might call it theft. Also two parents intended to explain to children by using religious threats like God would hit when such errors occur. One parent also said that child is 'ભગવાનનું સ્વરૂપ' symbolizing God and therefore would speak truth only.

Further, about 31.82% parents mentioned that they would either ask the child to return or they would return the material themselves. Few parents also mentioned that they would scold and if need be threaten their child, though the percentage was 8.18. An equal percentage of parents said that they would promise to purchase a similar toy or crayon for their child. Only 3.64% parents felt that their child should apologize. These findings are encouraging as 80% responses of fathers and mothers indicated positive strategies like explaining, giving reasons and involving children in returning the play material to the teacher.

Perception about standards of behaviour in everyday context

In response to a question on the parent's perception about truth and lie in the everyday context, majority of the parents expressed that maintaining discipline, behaving well at other's

place and speaking truth is important even at young age. They also mentioned that accepting one's mistakes honestly should also be encouraged in early years. Few parents further clarified by saying that obeying rules and respecting elders is the correct behaviour. Regarding good eating habits and personal hygiene too very few responses were evident.

Regarding the responses about the incorrect behaviour of children, majority of fathers and few mothers mentioned that quarreling, hitting especially older sibling, playing mischief and not maintaining order was not appropriate for young children. Also majority of fathers and few mothers responses were concerning certain personality traits of children like being stubborn, obstinate, possessive and disrespecting elders are the indications of incorrect behaviour by children.

Few fathers and mothers were also concerned about using bad words and telling lies. This concern was especially from those parents who were staying in the heart of the city in the densely populated areas called pole 'ህገህ'. A parent also articulated that wishing ill of others is unacceptable as also playing all the time as mentioned by many fathers.

Thus the overall responses of parents indicated clear and firm views about the correct and incorrect behaviour of young children.

In order to know parents' awareness about their children's behaviour, a question was posed whether their child is able to differentiate between right and wrong, truth and lie. It was interesting to know that 79.13% fathers' and 60% of mothers' responses revealed that they were aware about their children's knowledge about right and wrong and truth and lie. Surprisingly greater percentage of mother's responses 23.83% revealed that they were not aware in comparison with father's responses indicating 10.54%. Other responses did not indicate clarity as parents mentioned that sometimes their children were aware about correct and incorrect behaviour as well as truth and lie.

Regarding the age at which children indicated this type of awareness majority of responses of both the parents indicated 3 to 4 years age while few parents mentioned 2 to 3 years and one parent mentioned that after children completed four years their awareness was evident about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and responses. Some parents also expressed, especially mothers that they realized about children's awareness by talking and generally interacting with

them. However the fathers expressed that due to their preoccupation with job or business related work they spent lesser time with their children. Hence they were not very clear about specific details, in terms of age and children's behaviour.

The parents' responses were also obtained in relation to their perceptions on sharing an import indicator of socio moral behaviour of children in the early years.

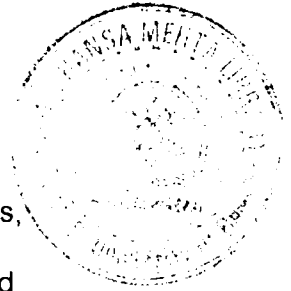
Parental perceptions on sharing

The parents had strong notions on sharing and all the parents very emphatically expressed that children should share. Majority of mothers' responses further spelt out that children should share everything with everyone. While very few responses of fathers shared the similar view as mothers. In terms of frequencies 25 mothers and 26 fathers mentioned that their children shared. While few parents mentioned honestly that their children did not share. Further some parents reported that their children shared only on adult intervention, since young children are moody. Few parents also expressed that their children shared what they did not like in terms of play material.

Regarding the type of sharing few mothers and many fathers reported that their children shared food more frequently,

followed by toys. But only after playing with the toy in question, children show willingness to share and at times on being asked to share. Also majority of parents mentioned that their children began to share with siblings or peers after they joined the balwadi, around three to four years of age. Few parents said that their children shared more with grand parents than parents. But the responses of children on specific simulated tasks revealed that they shared with parents comparatively more than grand parents, especially ice cream and chocolates. Also few parents were concerned that not sharing should not turn into a habit. But few parents also expressed that children shared only with family members and not any outsiders.

In spite of sharing being encouraged by families from the early years, it was pertinent to also document and analyze parental perceptions about what should children not share. In this regard, most parents' immediate 'reaction' was 'nothing', implying that children should share everything. During interviews on being sensitive to parents' body language including the facial expression, it was found that some parents were perhaps giving socially desirable responses. Thus it was probed further that at times one has an independent view about not sharing certain things. In this relation some fathers and few



mothers mentioned that very expensive materials, toys, precious things and ornaments should not be shared. Interestingly many fathers mentioned that certain personal belongings like clothes, soap, shoes should not be shared with others to maintain better hygiene.

Further it was evident from the responses of few mothers that left over food, very favourite item should not be shared and children need to be made aware about it. Few mothers and none of the fathers felt strongly that things that harm others should not be shared. However few fathers also felt that personal experiences, feelings and certain information that would harm others and create problems in their lives should not definitely be shared. One mother also mentioned that generally sharing most things with most people should be encouraged in children but sharing with enemy should be discouraged.

Thus on the whole the trend was that there was considerable consensus on the views on sharing between parents of 19 children, in terms of fathers' and mothers' responses. This finding reflects the family's view points and perhaps policy about social interactions within the family and outside the family, with sharing behaviour as a case in point within the domain of socio moral development.

Perception on gender differences in sharing

In the contemporary context it was relevant to examine parent's perception on sharing with special reference to gender. Thus the question on whether there was any difference in the pattern of sharing for boys and girls interesting observations and responses of parents were evident. About 9.68% mother's responses revealed that there was gender difference but surprisingly upto 40% of fathers' responses indicated in affirmative. However 90.32% mothers clearly found no gender difference in the pattern of sharing between boys and girls. In comparison with mother's responses, 60% of fathers' responses indicated that there was no gender difference in sharing.

Further, parents gave reasons for their responses. Although majority of the mothers and many fathers expressed that the girls and boys share equally, very few mothers and fathers expressed that boys share more. While quite a few fathers felt that girls share more but none of the mothers shared this view. Some of the reasons were that the times are changing so in early years gender difference doesnot usually occur as both girls and boys are reared in a similar manner. Secondly they also felt that when two children family is the current norm, such

differences are less subtle. Interestingly irrespective of education of parents, the response pattern was similar. Few parents also expressed that factors like children's mood, health, ordinal position of children would also come into play and hence it would not be appropriate to consider gender per se as a factor. A mother also expressed the concern that in the male dominated society, girls would have to take a stand and ask for their right

Few fathers felt that girls being more understanding with soft and caring nature tend to share more though after 18 years there is greater gender difference in comparison with the early childhood years. Finally some parents also expressed that they should have modern attitude and be more progressive in their thinking and also interaction with children from early years.

Perceptions of parents on occurrence of conflicts

The responses of parents clearly revealed that in the everyday routines conflicts occurred in their children's interactions. It was evident when 27 mothers and 25 fathers out of the total sample of 31 mothers and 31 fathers agreed that their children experienced interpersonal conflicts at home. Only 2 mothers disagreed about occurrence of any kind of conflict. Most of the mothers indicated that these conflicts mainly occurred with

siblings. They further mentioned that with older siblings conflicts occurred more frequently and ultimately older children are expected to either give in or let go, the younger children had a clear edge. Another finding was that in terms of gender, the conflicts occurred equally in case of older and younger brother and sister. In few cases, conflicts occurred with cousins, especially in joint families while more fathers mentioned that children had conflicts with peers, as compared to the responses of mothers.

It was also evident that some fathers and mother perceived that their children had conflicts with their parents irrespective of the gender of parents. Few mothers also expressed that their children had conflicts with grand mothers more often than grand fathers, although the frequency of response was quite low. In one instance mother reported that the child had conflict with the maid. Also one child's mother and another child's father reported that their children indulged in conflict with all.

Perceptions of parents about the type of conflict

The type of conflicts children indulged in, according to parents was analyzed to examine the emerging pattern of conflicts as observed by fathers and mothers.

Regarding the sources of conflicts the findings reveal moderate differences in the responses of fathers and mothers in most categories. It was evident that maximum conflicts occurred over sharing toys and play materials as observed by parents. According to mothers' responses 19.64% mothers expressed that when their children's wishes were not met in terms of purchasing certain play materials, they had conflicts with parents, although fewer percentages of fathers shared this view. While greater percentage of fathers felt that while playing when there was disagreement on deciding a particular type of play for example cricket versus another game, children experienced conflicts. Also 17.86% mothers considered incorrect and unacceptable behaviour to be the major source of conflict while 13.89% fathers held this view. These unacceptable behaviours included hitting others, quarreling, bullying older siblings, breaking siblings' materials. Other issues were related to eating snack items at meal times, playing while eating or attention seeking behaviours such as insisting mother to sit near him or her during dinner. Also playing with sharp objects like blade or bed wetting also became causes of conflicts with parents. Thus the sources of conflicts were greater for maintaining social conventional parameters, daily routines and personal safety rather than for socio moral issues.

in the family context as evident from parents' responses. Another interesting finding was that surprisingly greater percentage of fathers mentioned that maintaining daily routine including eating habits was the cause of conflict at home but very few percentage of mothers indicated this cause. It is also encouraging to note that television viewing was the least cause of conflict as reported by parents.

Thus the overall causes of conflicts were for sharing resources and behaving in socially acceptable ways by following correct code of conduct. This finding reiterates that social conventional and moral categories tend to get merged in the present study.

Role of adult during conflicts

The role of adults in the home setting would provide important insights in understanding parent's notions and also practice of guiding children. (Figure 20)

It is interesting to note that mothers used strategies like explaining and also mediating by intervening at appropriate times. They diverted children by telling stories, switching on television and some of them kept continually asking “શું ચાલે છે” implying as to what scene is going on. They also intended to convey that they were “with it”. Many mothers also mentioned

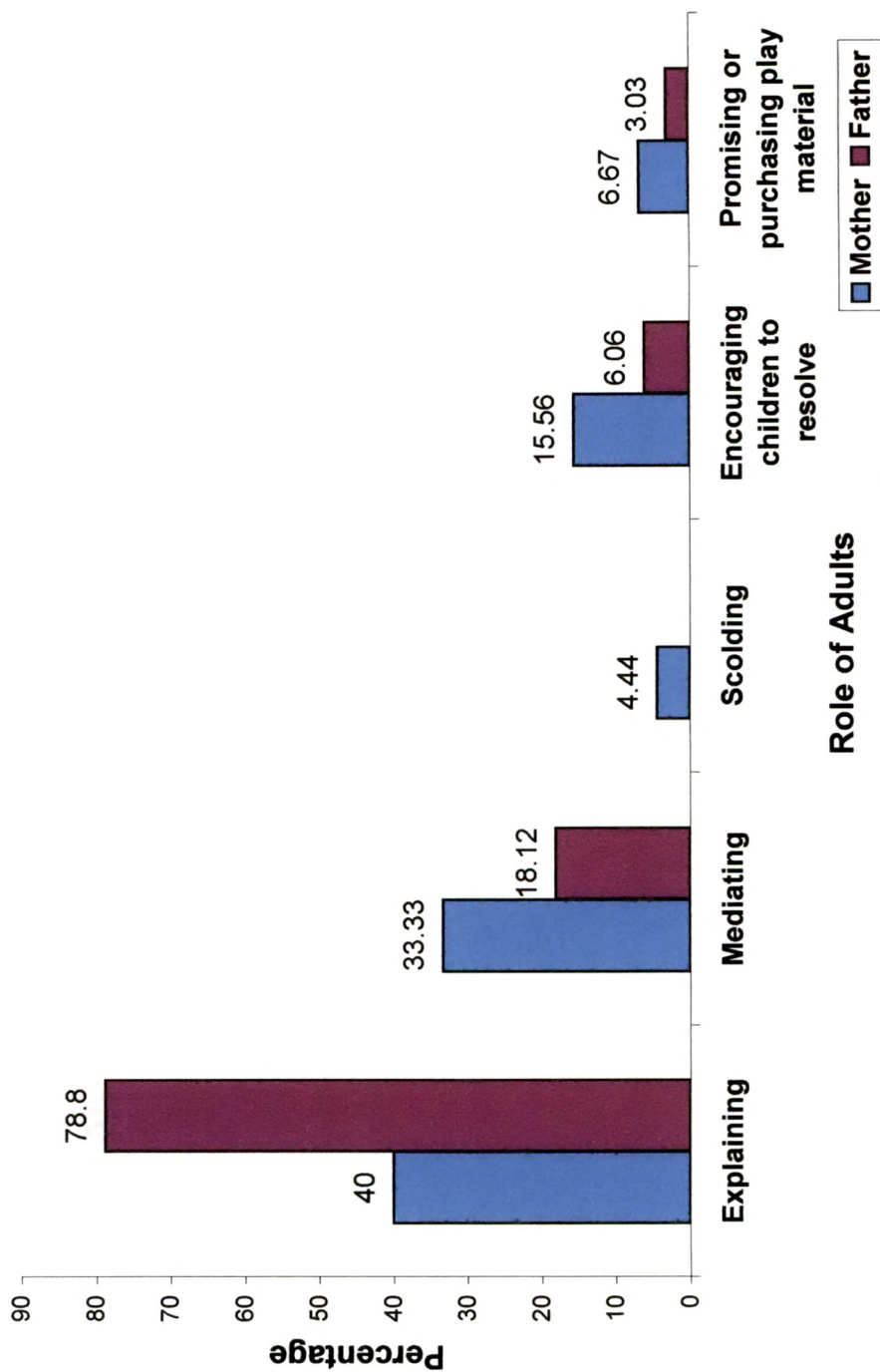


Figure 20 Role of adult during children's conflict

that they would try and explain the older children to understand and also comply since the focus children are younger in age. Some parents also observed greater difference between two siblings and hence preferred to mediate according to their temperament

One mother very clearly and honestly expressed that till evening she would use various strategies including explanation. But once the father returned home, she would leave it to father to take up an active role when child indulged in conflicts as she had two reasons for this comment. First being that she had enough of it and needed a break and secondly the child would fear father's presence and would therefore play safer.

However 78.80% fathers used explanation as a strategy and one father categorically said that he explained every behaviour and ingrained it in child's brain to minimize the frequency of conflicts, especially between siblings. Few fathers responses indicated that they would mediate and help the child realize that older brother is like father and so should not indulge in conflicts.

About 44% responses of mothers indicated scolding as a strategy while fathers did not mention it at all. Also, greater percentage of mother's responses revealed that they

encouraged their children to resolve conflicts but only 6.06 percentage of fathers' responses were evident. Surprisingly mothers also promised and purchased materials on child's demand more often than fathers, though the percentage is smaller. Few parents also insisted on knowing the truth by asking the child to own up, though the percentage was negligible.

Thus the overall trend in terms of parent's role during conflict was very encouraging as they used inductive reasoning majority of times.

The reactions of children during conflicts were known through parents' interviews. Many parents mentioned that children stopped talking for a while or running any errand. But after a while either parents coaxed and cajoled children or grand parents intervened and child was helped to understand that one cannot go out on scooter in the mid summer afternoon, or fight unnecessarily with siblings or peers.

Parents' perceptions about Conflict Resolution strategies of Children

The parents were clear about the various conflict resolution strategies of children. According to 56.67% of mother's

responses and 60.87% of father's responses, children resolved conflicts on their own. It was also evident that 20% of mothers and 21.74% fathers mentioned that most of the time children resolved conflicts on their own, indicating little difference in the perceptions of fathers and mothers. However 23.33% mothers and 17.39% fathers expressed that sometimes their children resolved conflicts on their own. This finding draws attention to two points. Firstly parents indicated clarity about the behaviour and action of their children irrespective of family typology, age gender and ordinal position of children. Secondly parents tend to encourage conflict resolution by children themselves, thus indicating positive role of children's competence in problem solving in the home setting. Thirdly, there seems to be a shift in parents' beliefs about child rearing wherein independence and interdependence is encouraged in Hindu Gujarati families. In this regard Kakkar's (1974) observations were that in India the period of childhood is a slow process and in late childhood there is an abrupt change in perception about children and strategies of guiding children.

The perception of parents regarding the variety of strategies of conflict resolution by children were in terms of sharing, withdrawing taking help of adults, apologizing and negotiating.

Other strategies being physical reaction, verbal outbursts crying and getting upset.

Reflecting on this finding on the basis of observations of children in the free play sessions in the preschool context, physical strategies were used to a major extent by children irrespective of age and ordinal position. Therefore perhaps in the home setting, due to the presence of family members, physical reactions are curbed and children use other strategies to resolve conflicts.

It was also expressed by many parents that in case of second borns, older siblings give in or compromise more often. Infact parents encouraged it in older sibling inspite of younger sibling being stubborn, demanding or the main initiator of conflict. Culturally too, older children are expected to ignore and comply especially if children are younger in age. On the other hand, parents had also mentioned that elder brother is like father figure and therefore younger siblings should respect and indulge in minimal fights or conflicts. These findings lead to the understanding that parents' education, the ways in which they were reared also plays a significant role in guiding children on socio moral or social conventional issues.

Parent's perception on socio moral dilemmas

In order to gain greater insight about parent's thinking and actual practice on socio moral issues concerning children, two dilemmas were included in the interview schedule. The first dilemma was about routine decision about ways of explaining or convincing children when they are not taken out along with parents for any social, health related or personal reasons. In the every day context, when parents need to attend any social meets due to death or any other reason, how do they convince their child and what arrangements do they usually make. Some other reasons being visiting doctor, inquiring about the health of hospitalized friend or relative or at other times going to see movie on the eve of wedding anniversary when parents would perhaps prefer to spend some moments exclusively. In the changing scenario with nuclear family arrangement becoming more common in the urban middle class, such dilemmas have greater scope of occurrence.

The parents were very promptly able to relate to these situations and were quite frank in responding giving their own reasons and logic.

It is evident that 29% mothers and father's responses were for telling truth to children, explain why they need to leave children

home. One parent also stressed on preparing the child in advance when the event is already planned. However on probing further, 29.79% fathers and 13.24% mothers honestly expressed that as a last step they end up telling lies or giving wrong excuses. Some fathers also indicated to be more practical in child's interest rather than a lie, while fewer percentage of mothers resorted to telling lies.

The parents also made false promises like "will take you out later" or gave bribes too like "will buy chocolate and ice cream for you or buy you a favourite toy which was long overdue". Also very little percentage of mothers either threatened or diverted the attention of children or let the child cry. Surprisingly none of the fathers mentioned such actions. It was also known that 16.18% mothers responses in comparison with 8.51% father's responses indicated that they would seek help of relatives, grand parents in particular, neighbours and in rare cases the services of maid. The current urban scenario in India being that even if the family is nuclear in terms of living arrangement, the extended family is psychologically and quite often physically near to one's residence. Therefore the overall childcare support continues to exist. Thus, it is considered as an ideal arrangement by the middle class families in Gujarat. It is a

blend of collectivistic and individualistic society wherein there is interdependence on the close family and also the daily life context provides scope for independent life style. The dilemma was thus formulated with this orientation

However in extreme circumstances one mother opted to stay back while none of the fathers offered to consider this option. Also in absence of any other alternative parents were of the view to take children along rather than telling lies or deciding on any other options.

The second dilemma was regarding avoiding the phone call or using excuses when the caller is disliked by parents. Most of the parents experienced this situation and often it turned out to be a dilemma. About 39.58% mothers and 36.69% fathers conveyed that if crucial, they would have to tell lies like "tell that I am not at home", preferably in child's absence. But 33.33% mothers' and 53.33% fathers' responses revealed that they would never tell lies as they strongly believed in saying truth irrespective of the consequences. Also 10% parents used the strategy of diverting the child by sending outside to run an errand or indicate through facial expressions to inform the caller about their non availability. Few fathers said that if they were expecting their boss's call or business call they would caution

their wife in advance to avoid telling lies in front of children. Another strategy was suggested by 2.08% mothers' responses in which they would use telegraphic sentences or 'રમ' or 'રૂ' slang as prefix to alter the complexity of communication in Gujarati. Finally 14.58% mothers and surprisingly none of the fathers considered to give excuses like will call back later to maintain neutral stand especially in front of children.

Interestingly rather than mere moral reasons, 5 parents said that it was risky to tell lies in front of children as they may disclose facts to the caller who may be known to them. Some parents said that children would anyway not understand. Few fathers mentioned that such situations tend to occur more in office rather than at home and one might drop the issue by saying that it was a wrong number. Many parents mentioned that for practical reasons even if they avoided talking on the telephone and used lame excuses, they would explain to children the reasons and avoid a feeling of guilt.

Thus this finding points out the fact that parents are more realistic and have firm views even on socio moral dilemmas and they have thought of various options to resolve the dilemma in the family context.

Parental expectations about ideal adult

The parents were also asked a final question about their notions of ideal adult. This question intended to find out how they visualized their child as an ideal adult in future and what kinds of expectations they had from their children.

The responses of fathers and mothers mainly indicated the qualities, values and aspirations about their children. Regarding the qualities of ideal adult, many parents emphasized on honesty, truthfulness. Some parents mentioned personality traits like being calm, patient, amicable, self confident, extrovert, independent, brave and active. Few parents also stressed on maintaining relationship, being self confident, empathetic and good at problem solving. One father emphatically expressed that his child should be hard working and aggressive to meet with the challenges of those times.

(Figure 21)

The parents also mentioned certain values which they expected an ideal person to possess. These are mentioned in the following table in terms of frequencies of the respondent's expressions

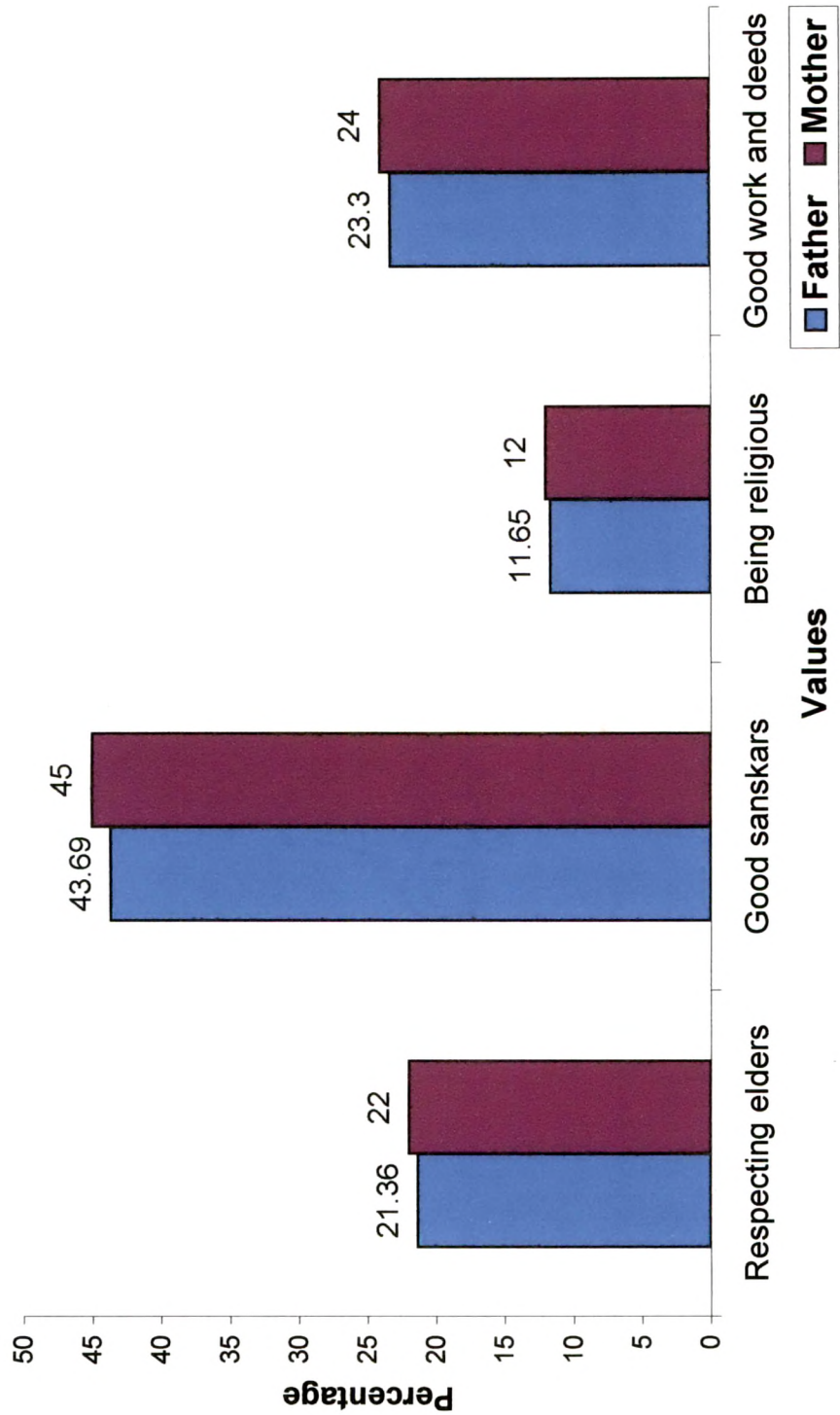


Figure 21 Parental perception on Values of an ideal person

The findings clearly reveals the overall responses of parents regarding the specific values they expected an ideal person to possess. The emphasis is on good sanskars by majority of parents. Another value reiterated was good deeds, showing care and concern and respecting elders, which is culturally also expected from mature adults. Also 11.65% parents expected being religious and following cultural practices and customs. (Figure 21).

One father highlighted the importance of positive attitude in life as an important value which would facilitate any kind of achievement of one's goals.

Thus from the early years parents have a broad framework of qualities and values that they aim to promote and mature in their children. Parenting is a challenging process in which various factors come into play. In the contemporary context in India, due to global exposure through media, parents are increasingly expanding their awareness. Also another implication is the concern and anxiety of enabling children to develop essential competencies to achieve their goals. Due to these dual reasons, it becomes vital for the parents and maturing children to strike a balance and maintain basic socio moral standards. Due to deep rooted cultural ethos it is

considered essential by parents to imbibe basic values in children from early years.

The third set of responses of parents regarding their perception of what kind of ideal adult they aimed their child to be, was in the form of aspirations. It was found that the majority of parents wanted their children to study well and progress well in life indicating no gender difference in terms of children and also parent's responses. Few parents spelt out emphatically that their children should do good work, business and enhance their own name, parents' and families name by saying “નામ રેશન કરે” They also gave reason for this expression that they tried their level best to progress and educate themselves more than their parents So their offsprings should achieve further and at greater heights. Few parents aspired their children to be doctors, engineers, nurse and collector.

In this regard, few parents mentioned that children should grow naturally but they should not do any wrong deeds, hurt others or have any conflicts for family property. Only two parents said that they had not thought about their child to be what kind of an ideal adult. However few parents generally mentioned that their children should do “better than us” and the role of parents was to provide good atmosphere at home.

The aspirations of parents perhaps have their basis in the middle class orientation of many parents who are either first generation graduates and post graduates or they are first generation business families. Hence few fathers expressed quite overtly that their fathers and paternal uncles had struggled a lot in the village, they lived simple lives and therefore they are content with their own life. However since they have had a head start they aspire their children to achieve on greater scale. Interestingly there was little difference in parent's perceptions and aspirations of ideal son or daughter on attaining adulthood. This is emerging as the new trend in the urban middle class families and particularly the parents of the lab school.

Finally the results of the study when viewed in totality reveal that sharing and conflict resolution behaviours of children through classroom observations and the views of parents indicate common trends. The early indicators of morality within the socio moral domain of development have provided deeper understanding the insights about the interactional patterns of children in the free play and art sessions in the laboratory nursery school. Children's ability to take perspectives of others indicates that majority of children were unable to take other's perspective as assessed through the experiment. The data of

classroom observation however indicates that there is scope, to systematically analyze children's interactions in the light of perspective taking abilities of children. The main reason being that children indicate considerable proportion of sharing and majority of children are also able. To resolve conflicts on their own most of the times The standards of behaviour were maintained by children at young age as reported by most of the parents in the home situation. The parents stressed on moral standards greater than the social conventional rules. However in the observational data these categories are merged as they coexist.

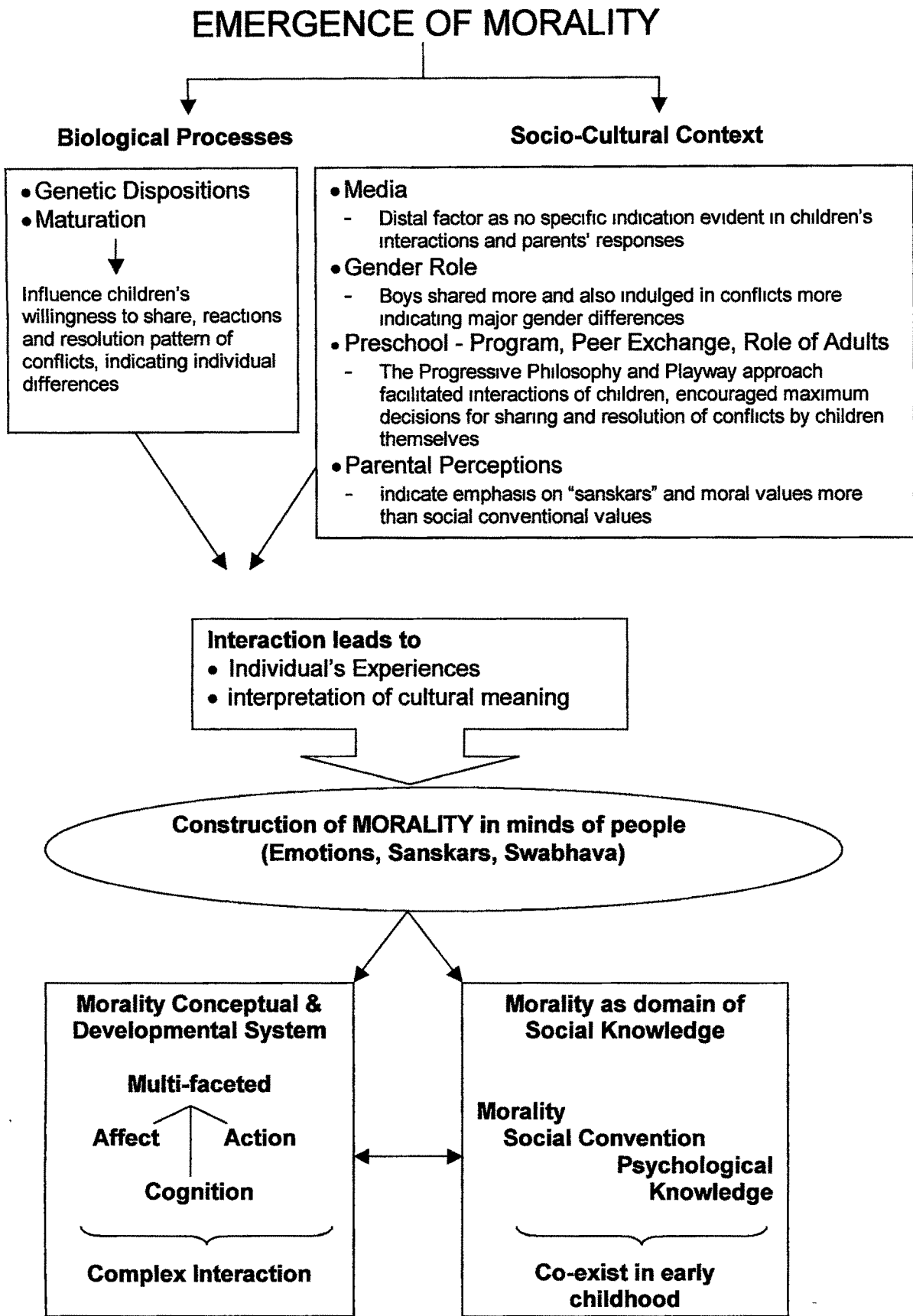


Figure 22 Conceptual Framework emerging from results

Note : Turiel (1983), Schweder (1987), Smetana (1995), Sri Aurbindo

DISCUSSION

In the present study the selected core indicators of morality in the early years such as sharing and conflict resolution behaviours, perspective taking abilities of children were examined in the preschool context. The teacher's and parents perceptions were obtained and analyzed to understand the observed behavioural patterns of children, their responses on specifically designed simulated tasks on sharing.

The interesting trends have emerged in terms of gender, age, ordinal position and the variables concerning the family background. The findings provide scope for reflection in the contemporary context. The structural changes in the family, leading to modifications in the roles of family members, the influence of media, the issues concerning gender, socio economic situation of parents may operate on the standards of thinking of adults and the focus of guiding children.

According to Kagatcibası (1996) socialization toward individualistic and collectivist societies and relevant attributes begins in early childhood. The present study examined the extent to which culturally valued behaviours like sharing are evident in young children. In the changing contexts in the urban

areas of Gujarat the nuclear and joint families exist and the relatively strong ties with the extended families are evident. But the parents tend to have their own perceptions and normative standards for guiding children. However they are often aspiring to have a transition towards modernism. This may create dilemma and when children are young they may experiment with various permutations and combinations in terms of ideas and strategies

Sharing Behaviour

The findings revealed that children were willing to share most of the times. One of the main reasons could be that culturally sharing is emphasized in the form of actually giving spontaneously, on request and also as charity. The literature clearly draws attention to the sociocultural factors influencing sharing. The distinct beliefs and values tend to influence the socio moral behaviour of children

The religious philosophy too operates upon families. For example Confucian and Hinduism endorse sharing but for different reasons perhaps Confucian philosophy endorses proper social conduct and sharing is right thing to do, so children share Hinduism emphasizes charitable behaviour, which would also lead to sharing. Thus the motives for sharing

may vary but there may not be differences in prosocial behaviour across cultures (Rao & Stewart, 1999)

In the light of the discussion on the collectivist orientation and sharing, Birch and Billman (1986) found that spontaneous sharing rarely occurred in American children. This may be because in individualistic cultures the emphasis is on personal goals and boundaries between self and others. The collectivist cultures emphasize group goals and connectedness. The members of collectivist societies behave in ways that promote harmony among in group members by helping each other and sharing scarce resources (Sinha & Verma, 1987). Thus the findings of the present study interpreted in view of these aspects, do provide meaning and greater understanding about children's sharing behaviour in the free play situation in the preschool context.

Another major finding was concerning sharing behaviour and family typology. The analysis evidences as high as 68.5% times of sharing by children from joint families and 31.5% in case of nuclear family background. Again harmony being highly valued in communal groups (Schwartz, 1992) it leads to more cooperative and sharing behaviours in joint families. In the present sample the income bracket of families was moderate for

many children, inspite of residing in joint families. So another explanation is that since the resources are shared in terms of economic, materialistic and also human resources, the children are encouraged to use common resources not only for playing but also clothes and other accessories are exchanged amongst cousins on a routine basis at times. Ofcourse in the interviews some parents clearly mentioned that for hygienic reasons, except clothes any resources should be shared. However sometimes relatively new clothes which do not fit the children are passed on to younger siblings if not cousins. This is a common practice in both nuclear and joint families.

In the free play situation in the lab school, the children from joint families were sharing play materials on peer's request. This behaviour is often a habit which is formulated from early years in most families. Interpreting these findings in relation to the socio economic variables namely income and education, lead to further reflection.

The findings revealed that the children from the lowest family income shared most frequently upto 47.9% times in comparision with children from the highest family income range evidencing 10.3% times sharing. The data points out vast differences in the pattern of sharing. One of the key reasons for proportionately

higher frequency of sharing behaviour for children from lowest income families could be the scare availability of play material. Since it would be scare at home, children enjoy playing with wide variety of play materials and tend to change play objects and toys immediately in response to the peer's request for sharing. They may find novelty and vividness in most play materials during free play sessions hence they may be considering peer's request and shifting to the next resource.

In another study in the Indian context, Srivastava (1990) reported that for the families in the lower socio economic group, the child is provided with clear definition, models consistently which matches with the adult pattern. The child in such a family is rewarded for appropriate behaviour and reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour. This study provides support to the finding that children from the lower socio economic groups shared maximum in the preschool situation.

The data also reveals that often these children interacted more as they were close peers. So sharing was occurring within that small group. The literature too indicates that children tend to share more with friends than acquaintance. The understanding in the minds of children that friends too have a right to play materials may encourage greater sharing. Also children from

the similar family background are likely to share more as they may play together. They are either staying in the nearby locality or are dropped and picked up by each other's parents alternately or they cotravel in the auto rickshaws too leading to closer peer relationship

Further the findings show that children of higher secondary certificate passed mothers shared maximum upto 63.5% times and also children of graduate fathers and higher secondary pass fathers shared maximum upto 34.5 and 33.9% times respectively. The background information of parents indicates that those mothers who had completed schooling also had married to graduate fathers and in some cases they shared the level of education. This compatibility may have had similar aspirations for both the parents and in turn their moral and normative standards. This may be one of the explanations for higher occurrence of sharing in children with specific educational background

There is also a newer trend emerging in these findings that the children of postgraduate mothers, Diploma holders and the less literate mothers shared the least. There was only one child with post graduate mother and one child of Diploma holder mother was from nuclear family who was second born while they had

elder sisters. This combination of mother's education, gender, ordinal position of the child and family typology may have led to lesser sharing. The children of less literate mothers were later borns except one child. Also of the later borns one child was a third born from joint family with lower family income and the educational background of parents with other siblings being an elder sister and brother. In many regions of India and also in Gujarat the preference for boy child is heavy and therefore in the early years they are likely to be pampered.

This leads to the variables concerning children. It was found that the second borns shared the most in comparison with the first borns while the third born shared the least. The analysis also indicates that the majority of high sharers were second borns. This is quite interesting because usually the second born has lesser scope for sharing in the family situation. But the observations revealed that these were high sharers who shared play materials the most with their close peers. Secondly at times they also complied to the request and in rare cases the threat of the other children led them to finally agree to share.

In line with the findings in terms of ordinal position the analysis in relation to gender clearly reveals that the boys shared in higher percentages than the responses of girls. This finding is

also indicative of newer trend emerging in relation to the existing literature. One of the possibilities could be that there is paucity of Indian literature and also the regional literature of Gujarat with reference to morality and young children. Secondly the sample of boys was larger than that of girls, hence the frequency of sharing episodes perhaps had a higher occurrence too though this needs micro analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. Stewart and Chang (2000) report that girls did not share more than boys. The Asian girls gave more than Asian boys when they were identified as donors but Western girls gave lesser than western boys.

The responses of children on the simulated tasks revealed that in comparison with boys girls showed greater willingness to share eatables although the difference was moderate. Also all the girls expressed that they would share icecream and chocolate with peers while 85.71% boys expressed to share with peers in the preschool context and 14.29% with adults. Interestingly even play materials indicated willingness to share more frequently by girls than boys. The data obtained from observation. Projects a different picture wherein girls shared less. Perhaps the girls gave socially desirable responses on simulated tasks while in practice the frequency of sharing

responses were lesser than those of boys. However understanding the findings on sharing pattern in terms of ordinal position of children and gender together, the trends are reiterated. The main reason being that more boys belonged to joint families. Thus these findings show clearly that those children who belonged to joint families, second borns and boys demonstrate a similar trend evidencing maximum responses for sharing. The common link being the family typology enabling greater sharing. According to Schwartz (1992) benevolence is an important value domain with high priority in collectivist hierarchical structures. This domain consists of values such as responsibility, helpfulness, loyalty and true friendship. In relation to friendship Shah (2003) also reported that sharing occurred more frequently amongst friends and also same sex friends in case of boys but the girls shared irrespective of gender.

Rao and Stewart (1999) found contrary results wherein Asian children did not make sharper distinctions between friends and non friends for reasons like social and cognitive maturity for 4 year olds. But in this study sharing of food was also observed in terms of sharer and recipient behaviours, while the proposed study only focused on free play sessions and art sessions. The

simulated tasks included sharing of favourite food or eatable.

Further the results on sharing pattern reveal that younger children shared 64.5% times while older children shared 35.5% times. This finding is contrary to Shah (2003) who reported that in the lab school older children shared more than younger children. This finding requires serious reflection. One reason could be that younger children were 64.5% while older children constituted 35.5% to the total sample. Hence the quantity of interactional episodes were greater in frequency for younger children. Secondly the data is analyzed in terms of responses of children and not respond netwise. The third important argument could be that the younger children had a wider peer network thus facilitating sharing as evident in the overall analysis. The fourth relevant argument in relation to the developmental trend could be that the younger children were more compliant and thus responded to the demand for sharing while older children asserted their right to complete their play before sharing eventually. Buhnmaster et al (1992) found that elementary and middle school children share more in public than through secret balloting. In relation to the present study, to an extent there is some support because older children also perhaps needed acknowledgement for sharing.

The individual profiles of children revealed that one boy and one girl did not indicate a single incident of sharing across different situations in the total span of observation. The boy was a quiet child indicating low indulgence in conflict while the girl was a Muslim child who too indulged in very low frequency of conflicts. Both these children were from considerably low income range with parents completing the school Education. The boy was a second born and perhaps did not have frequent opportunity to share because in the local context older children are expected to share to a very high extent especially with young children. The girl child was first born and was the only child while other cousins were older in age so they were expected to share with her.

The overall findings about the sharing behaviour of children give useful insight about the pattern and type of sharing in the free play situation in the preschool and the actual responses of children on simulated tasks from varied family backgrounds. The sharing behaviour of children is also influenced by different parenting styles (Stewart & Chang, 2000). In another study Buzzelli (1992) with reference to current research suggests that children accept parental standard and abide by them out of a desire to be like parents who have established strong and

loving relationship with them not out of fear of punishment. Also with emerging abilities in cognition, language, and affective expression it provides the maturational sensitivity to moral events as early as 17 to 18 months of age (Lamb, 1991)

In the present study most parents expressed that children should share "almost everything". They observed that in the home situation children shared eatables more frequently than toys. According to the cultural ethos, sharing food gets high priority in the Hindu religion and most of the children belonged to Hindu families. Also developmentally children are egocentric and so they may prefer to share toys only after they completed playing with those toys, as reported by few mothers.

However some parents and especially fathers were very clear that children should not share their personal belongings for hygienic reasons. This was also reported by Ladia (2004) who had examined the perceptions of parents on sharing. Also few fathers expressed that personal experiences, feelings and certain information that would harm others and creates problems in their lives should be definitely not shared.

The findings revealed gender difference in the perceptions of fathers and mothers with regard to the pattern of sharing of

boys and girls in the contemporary context. It was interesting to note that most of the mothers did not perceive gender differences in sharing. While 40% fathers agreed that there was gender difference, because many fathers perceived girls to share more, though most mothers did not share this view. The few parents with higher levels of education also mentioned that children's moods, health, ordinal position would also influence the pattern of sharing rather than their gender. This view indicates that parents view children as children rather than as a girl or a boy in the present scenario in the urban Gujarat, especially in the early years.

In summing up it is important to state that boys, second borns and younger children share more. Also children from nuclear higher income families with post graduate and non literate parents shared the least.

Conflict Resolution

The literature gives considerable emphasis to the process of conflict resolution from overall developmental perspective. In this study conflict resolution is considered as one of the early indicators of the emergence of morality.

The findings of the present study reveal an attempt towards understanding the processes of conflict occurrence and resolution in relation to focal children, and their peers. The parent's and teachers perceptions about children's indulgence in conflicts and the resolution strategies provided scope to get insight about individual children and also the overall group profile of young children

The major finding irrespective of age, gender, ordinal position, family typology, the educational and income levels of parents revealed that children indulged in conflicts both in the preschool and the family context. Interestingly those children who distinctly evidenced sharing in the free play and art situations also indulged maximum in conflicts

The gender difference in conflict indulgence was quite forthcoming with boys indicating 70.7% times while the girls indulged 29.3% times during 3720 minutes of observation in the preschool. In relation to sharing it needs to be noted that boys shared the maximum, often with their close peers while they also had maximum conflicts. Also another study done in the lab schools also evidenced a similar trend as reported by Shah (2003) wherein children who shared more also indulged in conflicts more frequently. One of the reasons could be

developmental because children are in the growing up process, they may be experiencing dilemma. The dilemma in terms of social conventional point of view as they know that they should follow the rules. On the other hand perhaps they have moral dilemma too as it is obligatory for them to respect others rights and share.

The studies concerning the development of early moral emotions reveal that these emotions also involve a sense of dilemma or conflict in children (Emde, Johnson, & Easterbrooks, 1987). Morality is the ability to distinguish what is right and wrong and to act accordingly. In the preschool context when children interact with peers in the free play situations they explore, experiment different strategies and actions. In turn they learn to decide whether a tempting behaviour is "good" or "bad". Sometimes through trial and error and other times through their own hypothesis they may inhibit inappropriate impulse and ultimately share spontaneously or on request. Also they are aware that the adult and peer approval will be greater when they engage in sharing behaviour. But during the pre-operational stage they are also more egocentric and so may soon be led to retrieving the play material which the peer would disagree unless negotiated, thus resulting in conflict.

In terms of age, the trend observed was that older children indulged in conflicts more frequently than younger children who surprisingly shared more than the older children. Interpreting the findings jointly in relation to age and gender, it was found that the older children and boys engaged greater percent times in conflicts. The analysis also revealed that in the high conflict category there were greater number of boys while there was only one girl who asserted her right a great deal and she also shared the least. Also more boys indicated moderate indulgence in conflict while out of 18 boys only 5 boys indicated lower indulgence in conflict.

In comparison with boys, maximum girls evidenced lower indulgence in conflict. Out of a total of 13 girls, 9 girls indicated low occurrence, 3 showed moderate and only one girl showed high indulgence in conflict. While more girls were moderate and low sharers but they also indulged less in conflicts.

The findings regarding the ordinality of children and pattern of conflict showed that second borns indulged maximum in conflict but they were also found to share most frequently than the first or the later borns. This finding when analyzed in relation to gender of children, it is evident that second borns and

particularly boys indulged maximum in sharing as well as conflicts.

There is however consistency in the pattern of sharing and conflict oriented behaviour of children. One is led to interpret in this fashion because interestingly children from joint families showed a very high percentage of conflict indulgence as compared to children from nuclear families. Shah (2003) reported contrary findings indicating that children from nuclear families shared more and children from joint families were found to seek attention of adults for resolving conflicts to a larger extent. One possible explanation about children indicating high levels of conflicts from joint family background also could be because in joint families the social conventional rules need to be adhered to regularly and strongly while there is likely to be more flexibility in the nuclear families. Another reason could be that children from joint families tend to have more scarce resources since their income levels too were moderate. Hence children would share more and yet might feel insecure to procure the shared play material back. The peer in turn might react, leading to conflict. The focus child might assert his or her right and at that point it may result into hedonistic act as described by Piaget (1965).

The analysis in relation to the socio economic levels indicated that children from the low socio economic groups indulged 41.7% times in conflict and 47.9% times evidencing sharing behaviour. This is the finding worth reflecting upon in the socio cultural context taking into consideration the economic realities of families. Majority of children from joint family were also from low income levels with girls indicating 61.53% and boys 50%. The variables of family typology and income viewed together perhaps provide some explanation about highest levels of sharing and conflict behaviours in children. The overall findings of Shah (2003) also reveal that children who shared maximum also indulged maximum in the conflicts.

However children resolved conflicts with their own initiative majority of times irrespective of age and gender. Also they used physical strategies most frequently, followed by verbal strategies. The girls used reconciliation as a strategy more than boys and older children too showed a similar trend. These findings perhaps pinpoint the approach of girls who ultimately reconciled to conclude the conflict more readily than boys. It is therefore indicative of the cultural practices which encourage girls to be more considerate in view of their future role and also they would marry and shift to the new home. In the early years

these gender differences in child rearing practices are likely to be less pronounced. But most of the children were from middle and lower socio economic groups in the laboratory school. Therefore the educational level of parents may have influenced the actual practices. The parents however expressed that now the times are changing and the girls too need to be educated and therefore there is no difference especially in the sharing pattern

In terms of the outcome of conflict, majority of times children resumed their play and ignored the conflict, thus resolving the conflict on their own. The peers intervened in resolving conflicts a few times but the intervention of adults was low. This finding highlights the lab school context wherein progressivism is followed. Therefore children learn through play and active participation in variety of activities and experiences, self expression, representation of thoughts and ideas occurs during free play, art, music and creative drama. Thus children have emotional catharsis and scope for democratic functioning in a dynamic preschool environment. The role of the teacher as facilitator and emphasis on children material and child interaction is also reflected in the outcome of sharing and conflict resolution of children.

Perspective Taking

The findings on perspective taking abilities of children indicate that 29.03% children were only able to succeed on the experiment devised by Wimmer and Perner (cited in Astington, 1991). The qualitative analysis during individual assessment of children confirmed the analysis of Patel (2001). The remark implied that the tasks from the everyday interaction with children would indicate the actual reality of children's operations rather than an experiment which is relatively more contrived in spite of enacting a story in an informal, warm, child friendly manner with dolls and other accessories.

Thus the methodological delimitation is reflected in the percentage of children showing the perspective taking abilities and the percentage of sharing behaviour of children. Because children responded to peer's requests for sharing and they resolved conflicts on their own most of the times. This requires the essential or basic ability to take other's perspective.

Another methodological explanation could be that when children actually engage in a task and respond as against observing the experiment while listening to the short story or narration, with visual aids, it may call for different competencies. It is assumed that actual participation may give a more realistic judgement

about perspective taking abilities of children rather than their verbal responses around four years of age. The researches have demonstrated that children are able to recall more information when they are asked to reenact an event that they directly experience than to verbally recall that event (Fivush, Kuebli, & Clubb, 1992; Price and Goodman 1990). Also Rudy and Goodman (1991) report that young children were more influenced by whether they were participants or observers in comparison to older children on certain questions concerning the representation and recall of events.

In another study children as young as 4 years of age were able to differentiate their own conceptual perspectives from those of others and to make non egocentric inferences about the limitations in those perspectives. It further suggested that discovering many developmental relationships between interaction within a group and the child's conception of that group would be a fruitful objective for future research. In terms of the findings on perspective taking in this study too it is relevant to note that children's interaction with peers provide for naturally occurring situations. Hence in natural play environment children's perspective taking abilities could be assessed. The socio contextual factors too would operate.

Taylor (1988) reported that by 4 years of age, children understand that another person may not know what they know with regard to level 1 conceptual perspective taking. In addition level 2 perspectives taking too can be elicited from 4 year olds. Further in relation to perspective taking and theory of mind, for preschool children, seeing would be essentially equivalent to knowing that is figuring out what the other person knows. It would primarily, involve assessment of the person's perceptual access to the relevant information (Taylor, 1988; Wimmer, Hogrefe & Sodlan, 1988). Also there is growing evidence that there are some domains in which younger children are able to appreciate differences in people's reactions to a single event. The literature therefore reveals that young children are able to imagine that people might have different emotional responses to the same event (Taylor, M., Cartwright, B. and Bowden, T., 1991). In relation to the findings about sharing and the outcome of conflict, one finds some explanation from this discussion. To articulate, it is pertinent to comment that since children are aware of the needs of others and are also aware of the fact that others can also play with the play material in question, finally they gave after playing, reconciled, at times. The older children also used transforming as a strategy 5.7% times and boys too used this strategy 4.6% times. This indicates that the older

children and boys converted the conflict into a game during free play situations, thus resolving conflict on their own. In other words they were able to take other's perspective and therefore made necessary changes in their strategies for resolving conflicts. The findings of the present study thus reiterate that the focused observation in the free play situation would provide developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant methodology for assessing the perspective taking abilities of young children.

Parental Perceptions regarding morality and young children

The overall perception of parents regarding morality was in terms of moral values like truthfulness, honesty, justice, good sanskars and the knowledge of right or wrong. The investigator also talked to about six persons from the middle and high middle income groups, representing age and gender. In order to obtain the lay person's perspective they were asked to explain about morality. The responses were quite interesting because the emphasis was on telling truth, being polite and helpful, respecting elders, being disciplined and "sanskari" living an ideal life.

The responses of parents revealed that they gave greater emphasis to the social conventional aspects while moral

aspects of sanskars was second highest in terms of percentages in the present study. The parents also gave emphasis to good deeds because they believed in the Hindu religion's ideology of the cycle of rebirth. They stressed on good 'karma' without expecting any reward as documented in the religions documented in the religious document Geetaji. Huebner and Garrod (1991) mentioned that in Hindu and Buddhist cultures morality is embedded in conceptions about the nature of human existence itself. The law of 'karma' explained as adding up of good and bad actions adding up of good and bad actions i.e., 'dharma' and 'adharma' committed perhaps in the earlier lives is regarded as crucial. Ecknesberger (1996) commented that such action according to authors, to types of moral reasoning totally different, from the ones defined in Kohlberg's stage theory and manual. The Indian principle of respect for all life, leads to the principle of nonviolence (Ahimsa) in Hinduism. This is the path laid by the Father of Nation Mahatma 'Gandhi in order to achieve independence. So these strong historical roots also influence the thinking of parents.

Although many parents expected their children to follow rules, they did not pressurize children and considered their moods, health and other needs. It was also evident that mothers used

inductive reasoning for explaining children to follow the family rules which were often social conventional in nature. But few fathers also used strategies like scolding, threatening and punishing children. In view of the socio economic and educational levels of parents, perhaps such practices existed at home. The fathers often considered themselves as the head of the family and asserted their role. The participation of both the parents in the meetings has been considerably high in the lab school but in most cases mothers kept in greater contact with the teacher in comparison with fathers which probably led to the use of more inductive strategies.

In this relation Miller (2004) mentioned that authoritative guidance, with specific focus on supportive communication, most effectively nurtures children's moral reasoning development. Further she stressed on parents use of induction, expression of nurturance and support, use of limit setting, modeling of socio moral behaviour, and reliance on democratic open discussion and conflict resolution style are each positively related to the fundamental "building block" of morality. This aspect is pertinent in the context of the results of the present study. The children's behaviour in the free play situation and parent's responses when analyzed in totality show connection

between higher levels of sharing behaviour, resolution of conflicts independently by children and the role of adult as also the aspirations of parents about their child being an ideal adult in future. Authoritative adults discuss the moral issues with children in a respectful and emotionally supportive way (Powers, 1982; Walder & Taylor, 1991). An important point drawing attention in relation to the findings of this study is that parents with moderate levels of education too use explanations and helped children resolve conflicts and encouraged sharing.

Considering the findings of the present study, the democratic processes in the home and preschool context creates opportunities for children to show the early indicators of morality. The use of democratic processes produces compliance, moral reasoning development, conscience, higher self esteem, and altruism in children (Lickona, 1983). In this way children develop "fairness approach" (Miller, 2004).

In the contemporary context in India in general and Gujarat in particular, a critical priority for parents, schools and communities is the development of morality in children from early years. It is important to realize that morally developed people are able to stop themselves from doing those things which they know are wrong. Miller (2004) further elaborates

through two specific child rearing practices which are known to internalize values and prosocial judgement. They are nurturing and affectionate adult guidance and consistency in explaining reasons for rules and commands. Thus the present study is a step in this direction as it attempted to systematically document and understand the emergence of precursors of morality through the selected components such as sharing, conflict resolution behaviours, perspective taking abilities of children in the free play and art sessions in the laboratory nursery school context. The home context in the form of parental perceptions also enabled in acquiring deeper insight into the environments in which children are developing in the families residing in the urban area of Gujarat.

Conclusion

The emergence of precursors of morality, namely sharing, conflict resolution behaviours, perspective taking abilities and standards of behaviour are evident based on the analysis of the data obtained from children, teacher and parent's. The home and the preschool context enable a comprehensive understanding of selected aspects of morality in early years in the context of families residing in urban Gujarat.

The pattern of sharing behaviour reveals that most of the children demonstrated willingness to share especially the play materials and toys irrespective of age, gender, ordinal position, family type, family income and parents' education. The resolution of conflicts revealed that maximum strategies were generated by children themselves most of the times while the intervention of adults was relatively less. The conflicts concluded by resuming play and ignoring the occurrence of conflicts.

In terms of gender boys shared maximum indicating a major difference in the percentage of sharing by girls. Also boys indulged in conflicts more than double the times in comparison with girls. However the girls resumed play more frequently than boys, indicating moderate difference in terms of gender.

It was also evident that few children were able to take perspective based on the experiment adapted to the local situation

The teacher's perception about sharing and conflict indulgence behaviour of children and the observational data showed similarity for most children in terms of their individual profiles. The teacher was aware about the major conflict resolution strategies of children



The parents' perception revealed that both fathers and mothers gave greater emphasis to the moral values and behaviours as compared to the social conventional aspects. The moral values such as honesty, justice, truthfulness, good sanskars, knowledge of right and wrong as well as sharing, caring, cooperating and use of good language were highlighted by parents.

Implications

The study attempts to provide a deeper understanding about the selected precursors of morality such as sharing, conflict resolution behaviours of children, perspective taking abilities and standards of behaviour. The comprehensive data from the naturalistic setting in the preschool, teacher's perception and the parental perceptions provide a systematic database for planning an organized program framework for teachers and parents of young children. This will offer concrete strategies to adults in the early child development setting including preschools, early primary school, day cares and any type of non formal educational program. In turn it will also enrich the day to day interactions of children and facilitate socio moral competencies in children.

Recommendations

- Longitudinal studies to understand the developmental pathways of children on selected aspects of morality within the socio moral domain.
- The study of empathy behaviour of children with a cross sectional design will provide valuable insights to understand the precursors of morality.
- To devise an appropriate methodology to measure the perspective taking abilities of children.
- A comparative study on the perception of parents on morality and young children in terms of socio economic status and religion will give a comprehensive understanding about the developing context of children.