

## CHAPTER VII.

### IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

Theoretical implications for parents.

Implications for future research.

### THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The theoretical presentation in the present research and findings of the present study bring up one basic question; that is, 'Is a child's sex-role development more likely to be influenced by his immediate culture group than the cultural patterns of the whole society at large? The subculture is the second group to have the most direct contact with the child, the first one being the family.

Some research studies (Rabban 1950, Hall and Keith 1964, Hartley 1959) have indicated differences between social classes in terms of sex role learning. But Lefkowitz (1962) and Joshi (1969) report results show no differences among social classes in terms of sex-role behavior and thus contradict the results of the studies quoted earlier.

The present investigation also has derived results supporting Lefkowitz' and Joshi's findings. In the present investigation, there are no differences among the socio-economic groups.

It is quite possible that sex-role behavior differs in children from "traditional" and "Modern" homes and school environments (Minuchin 1965) rather than between lower and middle class subcultures. The results obtained by Minuchin (1965) indicate that there are differences between children of these two groups as far as sex-role behavior is concerned, "Traditional" environment, foster earlier and clear adoption of appropriate behavior

while the "modern" environments allow for flexibility and deviation from convention. It may well be that the subjects of the other research studies (Rabban 1950, Hall and Keith 1964), when they were divided according to social class, also had the bias of being divided by "traditional" and "modern" backgrounds. It is possible that such a bias was absent in the group of subjects (that Lefkowitz and Joshi [ ] studied) belonging to different social classes and social cultures and hence the differences between the sex-role behaviors of children from different social classes were not supported. This may have been the case with the subjects of the present study. However, in the context of Indian culture, with the social classes as the only basis for differentiation, it is hard to say if the lower class families, are in fact more "traditional" than the middle class families. It is certain that the results of the present study indicate no significant differences [ ] between either girls or the boys of the three socio-economic levels.

Another argument for no differences between the sex-role identification of the three socio-economic classes in the present research could be that these socio-economic classes are representative enough of the total societal classes, in whatever cultural rules, conventions, mores, customs <sup>and</sup> standards they provide for the family and hence there are no differences among the performances of children from the three socio-economic classes.

Linton (1936) has stressed that it is important to study an individual as a member of the smaller group (as opposed to just being a member of the total society) as his status and role in the

smaller group is likely to influence his behavior more directly. It seems that in the present study, the smaller subcultural groups (as derived from the socio-economic class division) do not make any difference in the sex-role preference of the subject. It is possible that the three socio-economic classes are congruent with total culture as far as the sex-role learning is concerned. When children from different, socio-economic classes do not appear to differ in terms of sex-role development, this supports the conclusion that the differences existent between the socio-economic classes are not responsible for influencing sex-role behavior. In other words, the characteristics over which the socio-economic classes differ are not components of the optimum environment.

A review of the literature in the field suggests the possibility of five major factors, having a direct bearing on the sex-role development in children. These factors are -

- (1) Degree of parental masculinity or femininity.
- (2) Parents availability as models for children.
- (3) Parents availability for interactions with children.
- (4) Reinforcement methods parents use with the child and
- (5) Nurturance level of the parents.

It is possible that the above five factors do not differ over the subcultures as represented in socio-economic classes, but instead, they differ only from family to family and they may contribute to building the optimum environment for appropriate and healthy sex-role development of the children.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS:

The ~~Parenting~~<sup>of</sup> of the present study and some previous research suggests that preschool children do not seem to be very certain and stable in their sex-role behavior. (Hartley 1959, Hartup Moore and Sagar 1963, Kabasigava, Arkaki and Awaguni 1960, Kobasigava 1966, Joshi [ ] 1969). This is particularly true of boys. In the present study, boys from all three socio-economic classes, while consistent in the responses to the subparts, were quite varied in their responses to individual cards. It is quite possible that factors in the family environment rather than the socio-economic environment make a direct contribution to sex-role learning. Some researchers support this possibility (Kagan 1964, Lynn 1962, Johnson 1963, Lefkowitz 1962, Mussen and Distler 1959, Mussen and Distler 1960, Mussen and Rutherford 1963, Payne and Mussen 1956, Joshi [ ] 1969). There has been an attempt to see how societal factors influence the roles of the parents and hence have an indirect effect on the sex-role learning of young children. Nash (1965) states that the relative neglect of the father may have distorted the understanding of dynamics of development of children, and adversely affected the rearing of the males (Heatherington 1960, Lynn and Sawrey 1959). The possible causes may be (a) that the father is the sole wage earner and thus he leaves all of the child rearing responsibility to the mother (b) the cultural philosophy of child rearing has been accepted rather uncritically by the individuals in the culture as the only and the most desirable pattern of child rearing. This becomes further evident from a study conducted by Parikh [ ] (1971) on the sex-role identification, where her

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data concerning with parental attitudes on sex role identification (as measured through parental interviews and questionnaire), revealed that the expectations for appropriate behaviors for boys and girls are different. Parents do not consider femininity as the opposition to masculinity, but they do consider masculinity as opposition to ~~male~~ <sup>hi</sup> femininity. The responses of mothers when compared to fathers showed more mixed pattern of sex-role concepts. The fathers seem to be happy and proud of being male, while more than 50% of mothers expressed their desire to be male.

As Parson (1955) has formulated, women have stronger identification with a female model, but show greater confusion regarding sex role preference and then have weaker identification with a male model, but express a strong preference for sex appropriate role.

The cultural pattern also makes a distinction in the amount of pressure for socialization exerted on the boy and on the girl. (Delucia 1960, Spencer 1963).

As evident in Indian culture were greater privileges are given to men as compared to those accorded to women, such is a situation found in several cultures other than the American culture, (Barry, Bacon and Child 1957) of course there is no way to know whether or not children perceive the total cultural situation as it is perceived by the adults. It is possible that if the cultural situation is not perceived by children, it will have less influence on their sex-role development than the situation in the child's own family. Brown (1958) states that the roles of the sexes are not

two separate and discrete entities. Masculinity and femininity, <sup>191</sup> ~~121~~ terms of psychosocial behavior and reactions are present in both men and women. The family has a mother and a father whose activities show less demarkeation of "masculine" and "feminine" traditional roles. Both father and mother at times do things together and at other times interchange their roles according to the demands of the circumstances in which the family is currently living.

Awareness on the part of the parents about the optimum environment for appropriate sex-role development would help the children in the expected direction. Appropriate sex-role development would help children further in their peer adjustment through acceptance from others and self acceptance. Since a young child at this age is so vulnerable, growing and learning, parents by showing the kind understanding, maturity and interest needed for developing the appropriate sex-role behavior, should feel that they have contributed well for the socialization of their child.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

For the present investigation, as revealed by the analysis of <sup>the</sup> data, the socio-economic classes do not differ in terms of the sex-role development of 3 to 6 years old children. More such research work is needed to either confirm or to refute these findings. There are many additional possibilities for future studies of sex-role development of pre-school children.

(1) A study of socio-economic class differences which are more clear cut in relation to joint and nuclear family system for the study of sex-role development can be explored.

(2) Sex role preferences of children from different cultures and subcultures can be studied, specially from different <sup>Groups</sup> status of India, among which language, clothing, food habits, customs, the pattern of family life is different.

(3) Children from rural and urban areas of residence could be compared in terms of their sex-role preferences.

(4) Children with same sex, and the opposite sex sibling and the ordinal position of these siblings be compared to study the sex-role preferences.

(5) In view of the parental orientations, the instrumental and expressive orientations of the parents of children with extreme scores could be studied. To see if these families bring about boys and girls with very in-appropriate sex role preferences.

(6) Parents' own behavior and attitudes in the area of sex role behavior can be studied and the parent child interaction effect be measured as influencing on the child's sex role behavior.

(7) "Modern" and "Traditional" Indian family set ups can be selected to see the impact of social change on these families as related to child parent understanding of sex-role behavior.

(8) From the present study children showing extreme scores on masculinity or femininity can be studied by giving them additional personality measures. This could give some relationship of child's personality and its influence on the sex role behavior of the child.

On the whole the term culture and socio-economic class needs a better explanation so as to give more insight from the data available in this field.