

Technology as a Tool to Parenting: It's Effect on the Behaviour of the Children

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ABSTRACT

Parents are the stepping stones for all children and they are nourished in a proper way through good parenting. As Covid-19 has brought the world to a standstill and it has pushed every aspect of our work over technology. Uses of technology due to extended lockdown has increased. It has both positive and negative impacts on the development of the children. **Aim:** To study what led Millennial parents' resort to technology as a means to parenting style and its impact on the development of their children. **Methodology:** 80 children's data were collected using Child Behaviour Checklist for age 1 ½ - 5. 9 couples were randomly selected to interview them. **Results:** Many children's behaviour falls under the clinical and borderline range under many domains of the Child Behaviour Checklist. Interviewing the millennial parents, it was found that technology is the easiest means to handle kids. **Conclusions:** There are negative impacts on children's behaviour due to frequent technology usage.

Keywords: Millennial parents, technology, development

Parents are a child's first teacher. The role of a parents is to nurture the children's learning and give him various experiences to face this challenging world. Parents play a very important role in the encouraging and motivating their kids to learn. Children acquire their skills at a very young age of their life if the parents are responsible, sensitive, and understanding. Setting limits and being consistent are the keys to good parenting.

The world is so advanced and competitive nowadays and therefore the parents are too. Father and mother both equally play an important role in child development. Parents are the first imitator for their child.

Parenting style is a standard plan that parents use in uplifting their children. Child raising is the process of actively encouraging and promoting the child's overall (physical, emotional, social and intellectual) development from infancy to adulthood. Therefore, Baumrind (1996) has identified different parenting styles as follows:

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Received: December 25, 2022; Revision Received: February 27, 2023; Accepted: March 03, 2023

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- **Authoritarian parenting styles:** This parenting styles emphasizes blind obedience, stern discipline and controlling children through punishments which may include the withdrawal of parental affection. Authoritative parents have a strong sense of justice and take a dim view of being challenged. Thus, they are very demanding but not very responsive. Researchers believe that the children of such parents tend to be timid, have lower self-esteem, lack spontaneity and rely to an unusual degree in the voice of authority. They may do well in school and not engage in problematic behavior, but tend to have poorer social skills and higher levels of depression (Rosenthal, 2004).
- **Permissive parenting styles:** This parenting style is characterized by emotional warmth and a reluctant to enforce rules. Permissive parents, while often warm and accepting, make few demands on their children. They're lenient, avoid confrontation and allow considerable self-regulation. They're much more responsive than they are demanding. Children of permissive parents are more likely to be involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school, though they have a higher self-esteem, better social skills and lowered levels of depression than authoritarian (Rosenthal, 2004).
- **Authoritative parenting styles:** This is a more balanced approach in which parents expect kids to meet certain behavioral standards, but also encourage their children to think for themselves and to develop a sense of autonomy. These parents are warmer and more communicative. They're assertive but not intrusive or restrictive.

The new generation parents are termed as **Millennial Generation**, that is, the **Generation Y**. They are called Millennial because they are more into technology, results in them being socially inward. They are the generation comfortable with technology and with interacting on social media. Their day starts posting on social media and ends with social media. Like for example, when people with millennial generation go for an outing with friends in a restaurant, they will spend the maximum of their time posting their own photos, pictures of food, etc. on social media and spent less time talking and hanging out with friends. They spent less time communicating with each other and more on the internet. They are the parents who want to be financially wiser and believe their offspring to be independent. Also, this excessive addiction to internet lead the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) come up with criteria of Internet Gaming Disorder.

Their parenting styles are different from others of the older generation. They are so socially active that they, in fact, document their kids' lives on social media. They dole out too much praise and they don't place a high value on playtime. Their kids are spending more and more time with digital technology. They are the ardent believer of technology.

Technology and Digital Devices

Technology can refer to methods ranging from as simple as language and stone tools to the complex genetic engineering and information technology that has emerged since the 1980s. It described the advancements and changes which affect the environment around us. Technology has completely changed virtually every aspect our society over the past few decades, from the way we work to the way we socialize and everything in between. One of the differences that have been most noticeable is the change in the way that children play and interact with others from previous generations. Although technology does provide many positive benefits for learning, it also can have several negative effects on child development and quality of life.

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Mostly technology and digital devices were formed to bridge the gap between long distance people but now as we can see social media are dividing the people staying near us. We hardly have time to talk to persons sitting just beside us because of high usage or engaged on technology. Uses of technology are mostly more hyped during the time of millennial generation. This had led to their changes in parenting style. Technology has replaced all these and digital devices put an important part in children's life. Parents themselves are so busy with the usage of technology for which they served as a role model for their toddlers and kids regarding the uses of digital devices. One of the biggest differences in the way that children live today is that they don't get as much exercise as they used to. This is because technology such as computers, smartphones, and TV encourages them to be settled when they get home from school, in contrast to going out and play with other kids. Millennial parents have made parenting a little bit of their own with an impressive array of sub-identities that reflect not just their status as child raising adults but also their personal and social ideologies. Make way for the crunchy moms, free-range parents, baby-wearing dads, baby bump photo-shoot, are just a name some few.

Children's Development and Behavior Patterns

Children development stages are the theoretical milestones. Skills such as taking the first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move (crawling, walking, etc.). Many children reach some of these milestones at different times in accordance the norm. The most widely accepted developmental stages are: cognitive, physical, moral, social, emotional, etc. Infants and toddlers cannot cross all these stages by its own. Therefore, parents played an important role in properly crossing these stages.

Parents need to be very careful in uplifting these sensitive periods of their children so that it does not hinder the child's later life. Psychodynamic and social learning theorists both agreed that the instrumental and interpersonal goals toward which parents socialize their children and parent's beliefs about parenting and the nature of children were critical factors of parent's practices.

Millennial generation parents provide so many advanced necessities to their kids. It's good to give a simulated environment but over-stimulated environment can break the flow of a child's behavior and development. As infants and toddlers do not know the content which is appropriate or inappropriate or to filter out so improper content might lead to hamper in the child's emotional development and ultimately lead to development error. This is why nowadays, we could see cases of early masturbation, eyes problem and frequent headache have become so common among young children.

The impact of rapidly advancing on technology on the child's development has seen an increase of behavioral, physical and psychological disorders that the education and health is beginning to detect. Diagnoses of autism, ADHD, developmental delays, speech problem, and difficulty in sensory processing, anxiety, depression, learning and sleep disorder are utmost increasing at an alarming rate due to technology overuse.

Cases have shown that young children are having higher rates of obesity because of this factor. They, in fact, don't like to go out of their bedroom and instead spent the whole day watching television or using mobile phones and tabs. During the time of language development of a child, the parent's duty is to talk with them but since we can see parents engage their kids with digital devices, there are higher rates of kids with expressive speech

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delay. Even new parents educate their kids with the educational app, they made them learn rhymes and alphabets with the videos available in digital media. Time changed were parents put an effort for their kids to read them aloud along with them, spend time with them by storytelling. Now parents use digital eBook for story and videos for educational purposes. This led negative impact not only the linguistic outcome but also on parent-child interaction. Nowadays children are less attached to their parent. The more time they spent on-screen viewing, the less time they spend on with their parents.

Cases showed that using handheld devices were more likely to have delays in expressive speech. Six months and two years old children if spend 30 times of screen time, there are 49% risk of having an expressive speech delay. It also affects the way how children need to think and process information, moreover, there is also no proper timetable for the kids. Children are attracted too much on the digital devices since parent also rely so much on them. It also became conditioning for the kid that when they cry their parents give away phone so whenever they want such devices, they cry out loud to get the devices. **American Academy of Pediatrics** recently gave the guideline that no screen viewing for children below 2 years and many researchers indicate that many children nowadays are falling below the guidelines. Reports and complaints from many kinder-garden teachers that today's kids' find it difficult in holding pencils which is due to having problems in their finger's tip muscles because of excessive digital screen uses.

So far, we discussed the millennial generation parent's way of handling the technology and their habits of giveaway phones to the kids and the development outcome of the children for having excessive screen time. But do we put interest on what makes them give away digital devices to their kids at a very young age, and the shift between older generation parents (generation X) and the millennial generation parents (generation Y) and its impact on their child's behavior due to excessive use of technology. Hence this study aims at discovering the role of technology usage in Millennial Generation Parenting and its impact on the behavior pattern of the children.

Rationale of the Study

The last decade has seen increasing dependence among children on technology for the majority of their play, grossly limiting challenges to their creativity and imaginations, as well as limiting necessary challenges to their bodies to achieve optimal sensory and motor development. Sedentary bodies bombarded with chaotic sensory stimulation are resulting in delays in child attaining their developmental milestones, with maximum negative impacts on their foundation skills.

In India, most of the millennial parent's resort to technology in parenting style or use technology as a shortcut method of parenting which is having negative impact on their children's overall development and behavior pattern at an alarming rate. Also, technology changes the way children interact and socialize with others. Due to frequent technology usage, there are hue percentage of today's kids falling under as specialized children. And of such cases are not diagnosed due to lack of awareness. Thus, research of this study hope to throw light upon every millennial parents, teachers and educators to convey negative effects of frequent technology usage and a proper of parenting.

There are many researches held upon children's developmental impact due to technology usage, parent's attitudes towards technology but there is not much researches upon the millennial generation parenting using technology as a shortcut method and its negative

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impact on child's behavior pattern. Therefore more researches in this area need to be done to influence millennial generation parents towards proper way of parenting in this era.

It is important to come together as parents, teachers and therapists to help society "wake up" and see the devastating and dangerous effects of technology on today's children not only on their physical, behavior and psychological aspects but also on their ability to learn and sustain personal and family relationships.

The researcher hopes, that this study provides a base to address the importance of parenting towards the overall development of their children. The study would help in taking decisions about instructional methodologies and support-based programs. Thus, reintroduce the "best practices" followed in India. This will result in a positive collaborative relationship with child's parents, teachers, and everyone involved in children's development which is paramount for the development of the children. Hence, the proper usage of technology as part of parenting is very important.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection took place in two phases in the present study and purposive sampling was employed to obtain the sample.

For the initial phase, the data was collected of 80 children from their parents using Child Behavior Checklist for ages 1 ½ - 5 to study the behavior patterns of children of millennial generation parents who met the inclusive criteria for the research were and requested to fill the form, alongside a socio-demographic details. They were briefed about the commitments regarding the study and the requirement of them to be ready for the interview. After collecting data, the scores and percentage of all the twelve domains in the CBCL was calculated. Then the tables and graphs of the scores and percentage of CBCL of every particular domain was done.

After that 8 couples were interviewed according to their convenience to study the frequency of technology usage in millennial generation parenting. The interview taken from couples was transcribed, then tables were made for coding where extracted points and its reasons were noted and along with it every couple's child range in all domains of CBCL was mentioned along with it. Themes of the codes across the different interviews were taken out and then a table to define and name themes was made in accordance with the range (normal, borderline and clinical) of their children's behavior.

RESULTS

The study examines the behavior patterns of children of millennial generation parents, frequency of technology usage in millennial generation parenting and the effects of technology usage in millennial generation parents and its impact on their child's behavior patterns. The aim of the research is to study the role of technology usage in Millennial Generation Parenting and its impact on the behavior pattern of their child. It aims to find the relation between the frequent technology usage among millennial generation parents and the behavioral outcome on their children. The study is a qualitative study. The researcher has used Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) for ages 1 ½ - 5 as a tool to measure the behavior pattern of millennial generation children. The data was analyzed by using graphs and pie chart along with the interview taken from the eight couples as per convenience and then themes of the codes across the different interviews were taken out and then a table to define

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and name themes was made in accordance with the range (normal, borderline and clinical) of their children's behavior.

As per the result collected from the CBCL, first domain "Affective Problem" among the total 80 respondents, 48 children fall in the normal range, 12 falls in the borderline range and 20 falls in the clinical range. This shows 60% students are under normal range, 15% students are under borderline range and 25% of students are under clinical range.

In the second domain "Anxiety Problems" among the total 80 respondents, 43 children fall in the normal range, 13 falls in the borderline range and 24 falls in the clinical range. This shows 53.75% students are under normal range, 16.25% are under borderline range and 30% are under clinical range.

In the third domain "Pervasive developmental problems" among the total 80 respondents, 42 children fall in the normal range, 20 falls in the borderline range and 18 falls in the clinical range. This shows 52.5% are under normal range, 25% are under borderline range and 22.5% are under clinical range.

In the fourth domain "Attention deficit/hyperactivity problems" among the total 80 respondents, 71 children fall in the normal range, 7 children fall in the borderline range and 2 children falls in the clinical range. This shows 88.75% are under normal range, 8.75% are under borderline range and 2.5% are under clinical range. The result has inclined with the study of Hosakawa & Katsura (2018) which shows excessive mobile uses leads to attention problems.

In the fifth domain "Oppositional defiant problems" among the total 80 respondents, 72 children falls in the normal range, 6 children falls in the borderline range and 2 children falls in the clinical range. This shows 90% are under normal range, 7.5% are under borderline range and 2.5% are under clinical range.

In the sixth domain "Emotionally reactive" among the total 80 respondents, 49 children falls in the normal range, 24 children falls in the borderline range and 7 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 61.25% are under normal range, 30% are under borderline range and 8.75% are under clinical range.

In the seventh domain "Anxious/depressed" among the total 80 respondents, 54 children falls in the normal range, 18 children falls in the borderline range and 8 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 67.5% are under normal range, 22.5% are under borderline range and 10% are under clinical range.

In the eighth domain "Somatic complaints" among the total 80 respondents, 49 children falls in the normal range, 18 children falls in the borderline range and 13 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 61.25% are under normal range, 22.5% are under borderline range and 16.25% are under clinical range.

In the ninth domain "Withdrawn" among the total 80 respondents, 47 children falls in the normal range, 12 children falls in the borderline range and 21 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 58.75% are under normal range, 15% are under borderline range and 26.25% are under clinical range.

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In the tenth domain "Sleep problems" among the total 80 respondents, 67 children falls in the normal range, 6 children falls in the borderline range and 7 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 83.5% are under normal range, 7.5% are under borderline range and 8.75% are under clinical range.

In the eleventh domain "Attention problems" among the total 80 respondents, 61 children falls in the normal range, 10 children falls in the borderline range and 9 children falls in the clinical range. This shows that 76.25% are under normal range, 12.5% are under borderline range and 11.25% are under clinical range.

In the twelfth domain "Aggressive behavior" among the total 80 respondents 75 children falls in the normal range, 3 children falls in the borderline range and 1 falls in the clinical range. This shows that 93.75% are under normal range, 3.75% are under borderline range and 1.25% are under clinical range.

Taking borderline line range which is inclining towards clinical range and the clinical range all together, the children mostly **falling highest in the following domains:**

- 1st is the pervasive developmental problems which is 47.50% children falls under it
- 2nd is the anxiety problems which is 46.25% falls under
- 3rd is the withdrawn which is 41.25% falls under
- 4th is the affective problems which is 40% falls under
- 5th is the somatic problems which is 38.80% falls under
- 6th is the emotionally reactive which is 38.75% falls under
- 7th is the anxious/depressed which is 32.50% falls under
- 8th is the attention problems which is 23.75% falls under and
- 9th is the sleep problems which is 16.25% falls under.

The above data shows quite risk behavior in children of today's generation. This also shows how casual parenting affects in their behavior.

The eight couples of the students of normal, borderline and clinical range were selected according to their convenience and it was found out that both mother and father way of parenting has its impact on their child's behavior pattern.

After interviewed, themes of the codes across different interviews was taken out and themes were given accordingly.

It was seen that **parents whose child falls in the normal range** found that mother spent their daily routine in systematic manner and there are personal involvement with their child and fathers although job oriented still manages time for their child. These mothers herself look after their child and there is no such care taker to look after. The parents and their child spent qualitative time together. Proper communication is present among parents and child. As it can be inferred from the interview "we together play, talk watch TV during my recreational time" which means proper interaction is present between parents and their child and not much involved their child alone with technology.

Mother although sometimes uses technology when alone and father for their work purposes but making sure of their children doesn't get along with it. They have access social media account but not much active on it. Parents mostly believe that their life mostly resolves

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around their child and not much on technology usage. Their self-involvement with technology is minimum and also uses for useful purpose. They are not a heavy techno-savvy person. The couple relation is very understanding, husband could manages time and have a constant support in raising up their child along with wife. Their child's involvement with technology is also very less, they mostly prefer to play outdoor games and uses technology only for useful purposes. The handling style of the parents are both hand-held and techno-held but it is in an effective way. There is also a balance between natural exposure and technology exposure since they take out their child during vacations, child also play outdoor games and visit their relatives during holidays. This shows that they equally outdoor activities. They use technology for education but not for playing purposes, educational purposes like watching rhymes, alphabets, stories etc. They not an ardent believer of technology instead they have negative beliefs about technology impact on their child's behavior. Technology have helped parents to take out time for themselves since they can engage their child and also they couldn't be around them all the time. They also prefer social interaction in social functions. They also doesn't use technology as means of bribe for making their child work. Emotional detachment believed to be present when more technology been used and no effects in speech and intellectual level due to technology since good contents been watched and proper notice is been taken.

These shows how a proper way of parenting have a betterment and development in their child's behavior.

Secondly interview was taken from **Parents whose children falls under borderline range and clinical range** and found out that they spent their daily routine in a very hectic manner. Mothers are mostly job holders and manages both work and home together. Fathers are job-oriented and have pretty much busy schedule. Both parents have much daily work load. The parents where both are working keeps care taker to handle their child with technology, or mother manages by own. These are the parents who believed to be independent and career focused. They are the digital natives. Parents have less interaction with their child due to work and spend very less quality time with their children. These are parents who want their offspring to be independent. As a parent they themselves spend their recreational time in indoor activities mostly with technology or sometimes manages to go out. These are the parents who are very active and involved in social media account. Self-involvement with technology is high. They believe in short hand method rather than hard work. They are the most techno-savvy parents. Couple relation is distorted as husband couldn't invest much time in raising their child. Their child are techno-addict and parent believe due to nuclear family there is no one to be with their children and they also couldn't be around them all the time and ultimately resort to technology in handling them. They are both hand-held and mostly techno-held parent and there seems to be no balance between natural exposure and technology exposure among their children. As a parent they believe that technology helped to take some time out for themselves since most of the time they are at work. They also believe society safety to be the reasons for not allowing their child to go out. They manage child with technology when cries and show temper tantrum.

Millennial couples whose children falls in the clinical also follow parenting much in a same way like the borderline children's parents but they are much more severely opt to technology in handling their children. Thus, many studies mentioned above are parallel with the result of the research.

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Thus, we can infer that parenting done through technology usage have much negative impact on their children's behavior which can be seen in the result of table no and maximum of our millennial parent's children who have ardent believe towards technology and use technology as a second parent, are inclining towards severe and negative zone in their behavior patterns. Therefore, parenting style parenting style and family type are associated with their children's media viewing.

Also from the research mother's role is the most influential role to have impact on their child's behavior. Technology have changed very aspects of our society, from the way we work to the way we are socializing. The most difference can be seen in the way children play and interact with the outer world. Although technology does provide many positive benefits for learning but it is in a same way have negative effects on child's overall development. Technology has profound impacts on the way child feel and think. Since it is full of stimuli and demands different things at once, like children who are playing more of video games or mobile phones have less ability of attention and focus than students who are technologically minimal. They are also less creative and be superficial due to frictional contents that are shown in technology.

Thus, there is a relationship between frequent usage of technology in millennial generation parenting and negative effects on their child's behavior patterns.

DISCUSSION

Realizing the importance of millennial children behavior and their overall development in the long-run and the negative impacts of frequent technology usage on their behavior patterns, parents, teachers, educationists, psychologists should co-ordinate in finalizing the strategy required for the intervention in teaching the importance of behavior patterns of children of Millennial Generation Parents and how technology is having impact on them and how parenting style need to be change. Schools should develop specific programs for millennial generation parents and for their children so that children behavior pattern and technology negative impact can be mainstreamed without much difficulty.

Future Implications

The results of this study suggest that the frequent usage of technology in raising children have negative impact on children's behavior pattern. Interventions in the form of workshop or role modelling enhance children and their parents regarding the awareness of negative impacts of technology and how one should set limits for how long children can use technology. If the child cries and fights to binge watch technology, parents should also try to explain in a proper way the negative effects of technology they can have. Psychologists could apply the group family based intervention and this helps the group enabled parents to identify the psychosocial problems generated in the child because of heavy technology uses. The emotional aspects in the parents can be effectively dealt with. Parents should make their children in eager participation of outdoor activities, spend time outdoor and social with friends in "real life". Sign up a schedule date for sports or any outdoor activities for their children. Set a good example as a parents. As if they see their parents engage in phone or any other technology, they will also want to use technology all the time. The results suggest the need of developing a specially designed millennial generation parenting program which would build positive relation with their child in handling and raising them. The study has major implications to enhance the psychologists' approaches to assess the behavior of children. These helps in better understanding of the purpose and effect of the behaviors in the children in long-term and provides information about the useful in the development of

effective interventions on behavior pattern. The focus of the study with and without technology usage parenting style gave the importance of parenting and its impact on children. The effectiveness of various interventions like workshop, group work, individual, group and family counseling or therapy; community organizations; crisis interventions; staff training can be studied in depth.

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Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Bharadwaj, P. & Sahu, S. (2023). Technology as a Tool to Parenting: It's Effect on the Behaviour of the Children. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 1205-1215. DIP:18.01.122.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.122