

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ayurveda and Indian Philosophy affirms Triguna – Sattva, Rajas and Tamasas integral components of human constitution. Its combination derives individual's thought-emotions and actions. There has been significant amount of studies done in western psychology that focus on relation between parents' personality and child behavior. However, Empirical studies to assert correlation between *Manasa Prakriti* of Parents and well-being of children are meager. Current research studies wellbeing of children in light of combination of *Manasa Prakriti* of parents. It measures prakriti along with 19 Satvika Traits, 17 Rajasika traits and 16 Tamasika traits. **Instruments and Method:** Current study used 50 item Manasa Prakriti inventory by Kumar and Manjunath and Sterling children 15 item wellbeing Scale. It was survey method research including 47 mothers and 34 fathers (81 parents) and 81 children. Results indicated that there exists a positive correlation between Sattvic prakriti of parents and overall wellbeing of children along with all subscales in the same. Also, Tamasik prakriti of parents was found to be negatively correlated to the well-being of their children. **Results and Implications:** Result indicated positive correlation between Sattvik prakriti of parents and child wellbeing whereas negative correlation between Tamasik parent prakriti child wellbeing. Findings from the study would be instrumental in family therapy practices and behavioral modification strategies for parents using a similar model of understanding of Prakriti.

Keywords: *Satvika, Rajasika, Tamasika, child wellbeing*

*Children learn to smile from their parents
Learn the need to win, journey of failure too
Children learn to fight the battle of crisis from their parents
Learn virtue of patience, Hope and Trust
Children will learn to love the world, if their parents make them believe it's worth!*

Various branches of Psychology have explored the relation of personality of parents and its impact on children. Multiple theories in developmental psychology discuss the relation of personality of parents with parenting styles, discipline issues, need

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Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

for achievement in children, emotional competence of children and ultimately child well-being. However, meager studies have been conducted that would explore personality or behavioral patterns on parents using frameworks provided in Indian psychology and try to understand its relation to the well-being of children. Additionally, behavioral modification strategies for parents and family therapy techniques should be developed with due consideration to the Indian framework of Prakriti (Personality). Current research attempts to study correlation of Parents' personality using the framework of Trigunas and well-being of children.

Previous theoretical framework and research work:

In order to study Prakriti of parents from an Indian psychology perspective, it's vital to understand current western perspectives along with its application. Following researchers attempt to do so,

Parent behaviors and child wellbeing

A core dimension of parenting is the effect expressed by parents toward the child (Baumrind, 1971), including both warmth and hostility. In theory, parental warmth/ is hypothesized to promote children's prosocial behavior because it gives children feelings of security, control, and trust in the environment.

Consistent with this reasoning, research shows that support, warmth in parenting is a positive indicators of child well being. (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Parenting Styles is a set of parenting practices determined by the personality of the parent himself. Parenting style. Examining parent-child interactions also brings into consideration the issue of parenting style and its role in predicting important outcomes for children. Parenting style can be defined as a "constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviours are expressed". There are four parenting styles: Autocratic, Authoritative, Permissive and Uninvolved. Research indicates that Authoritative parenting has been linked to a number of positive outcomes in children, for example: secure parent-child attachment, fewer behavior problems, more prosocial behaviors, and more positive peer relationships (De wolf,et all 1997. Smith et all.2004).

Further research indicated that children of Autocratic parenting are correlated to poor decision- making and low self-esteem, low social skills and academic competence, low creativity level, and mental problems such as depression and behavioral issues fear of failure, emotional suppression, and, difficulty in managing negative emotions (King Ka 2016, Thompson A,et al. 2003)

One of the consequences of permissive parenting for children is a lack of self-control and the development of egocentric behavior whereas uninvolved parenting often leads to more antisocial behavior in children. (Knuton JF, 2005). Above theories assert the extent to which parent personality has an impact on becoming of a child.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) makes direct and explicit statements about the link between parental factors and students' academic motivation and engagement. According to SDT, there are three key needs to be met in order for an individual to behave in adaptive and efficacious ways. These are the need for competence, autonomy, and connectedness (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletetier & Ryan, 1991).

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

Competence refers to how individuals accomplish both external and internal outcomes and their success in implementing the appropriate action required to attain a desired end point (Deci et al., 1991). Autonomy is the extent to which individuals have or perceive a sense of control (or internal locus) in implementing thought-behaviour repertoires to attain a desired end point. Individuals with a high sense of autonomy tend to behave in self-regulated and self-instigated ways (Deci et al., 1991). Connectedness refers to individuals' sense of security and positive attachment to significant others (Deci et al., 1991).

In-Home Parental Assistance

Practical parental assistance can also be a factor shaping achievement motivation. The ways in which parents can assist their children at home include help with homework, discussing subject selection and choices, discussing academic aspirations and postschool pathways, and broader communication regarding their child's education (Pomerantz & Moorman, 2007). Research indicates that parental assistance within the home leads to positive academic outcomes for students (Gonzalez, 2002; Pomerantz & Moorman, 2007). Indeed, even school students themselves associate in-home parental assistance with school grades (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994).

Personality – through framework of Triguna

Personality of an individual in the context of Indian Psychology is often understood through the paradigm of Trigunas. The concept of Triguna traces from Sankhya's dualistic philosophy of existence of the universe revolving around the dual concept of *Purusha* (consciousness) and *Prakriti* (matter). *Purusha* is the core of everything and being, whereas everything in the universe- may it be physical or psychological is considered to have originated from *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* which is constituted of three gunas viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These gunas act together and never exist in isolation. They interact and compete with each other resulting in the preponderance of one over the others. The degree of predominance of one guna determines the individual's personality type. Based on the above understanding, personalities are categorized into three viz. *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* types (Rao, 1966).

Chintaharan Betal (2015) in his explorative study investigated whether the Tri-Gunas have a role in framing a variant personality pattern. He found after analysis of the theoretical data, that a particular Guna offers a specific type of behavioral pattern within the individual and thereby develops an individual's personality characteristics. Specifically, when *Sattva* Gunas becomes predominant, one's intellect works steadily and one becomes fearless, pure at heart, truthful, calm, peaceful and compassionate towards other beings. When *Rajas* Gunas is dominant one acts with great efforts to satisfy his desires. He becomes more passionate, more anxious, more industrious, more sensuous, more jealous and not interested in any spiritual persuasion. *Tamas* Gunas makes an individual's psyche; his personality displays the characteristics of ignorance, torpid and delusive. They are destructive, drowsy, aggressive, fearful and sloth by nature. (Rajpurohit, 2014).

सत्त्वं लघु प्रकाशकमिष्टमुपष्टम्भकं चलं च रजः ।

गुरु वरणकमेव तमः प्रदीपवच्चार्थतो वृत्तिः ॥ (सांख्यकारिका १३)

Amongst the three, *sattva* is responsible for the lightness in things, the upward movement of the burning fire or the blowing across of the wind (*Rajas*) . *tamas* weighs down things and renders them inactive. Neither of these would have the energy to fulfill its proper function but for the stimulating activity of *rajas*.

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

A peripheral glance at the concept can lead to defining triguṇa as – ‘a collection of traits that which are trifurcated’. ‘Trifurcation’ is an act of splitting one particular aspect into three branches or sub-aspects (Lewis, 2010). In this context trifurcation is splitting of the tools of growth into three components.

In the beginning of 19th century, however, triguṇa got its psychological framework through Pathak (1932). Bhagwan Das (1955) formulated Interaction theory of Gunas to study influence and effectiveness of the Triguna on human cognition. It asserts that an individual with Sattvik predisposition has perception based on realism and has a deficit way of thinking. An individual with high Rajas disposition, has perceptions that are quite egocentric and thinking based on the same. People with Tamasic influence have distorted and misrepresented perception.

Singh (1971) thoroughly and diligently has delved into the essence and the features of the guṇas as per the scriptural insights. Thus, he presents the characteristics of guṇas under broader categories as these – ‘attitudes’, ‘beliefs’, ‘cognitions’ ‘temperamental condition’ and ‘values’. sāttvik peoples’ cognition showcased highly evolved and developed awareness. They also had acquired very lucid perceptions, abstract thinking and high intuitive abilities. rājasic peoples’ awareness was developed and fit to be considered as above average. They possessed sharp perceptions, clear cognitions, factual cum tangible thinking and they accentuated upon direct knowledge. tāmasic people put on show feeble or defective memory and mediocre attention spans and levels. (Rao, et al. 2008).

There has been significant research done in the field of understanding personalities of children using framework of Trigunas too. Kapur, Hirisave, Reddy, Barnabas and Singhal (1997) inquired into the temperamental differences based on triguṇas. High levels of rajas in small children can be sometimes due to the presence of traits like exuberant enthusiasm and animated energy levels that shows high disposition to find causes of amusement. Children who were socially well adjusted, emotionally even-tempered belonged to high Satvik Disposition.

Mohan and Kataria (1998) studied the delinquency proneness in adolescents in relation to adjustment and triguṇa as personality component. Results indicated that high delinquency prone males and females showed poorer home, health, social, emotional and total adjustment. While in the case of triguṇa personality scale, male and female showed significantly higher sattva type of personality scores in low delinquency prone group. In tamas dominant personality types, both male and female of high delinquency prone subjects showed significantly higher scores. In rajas dominant personality type only male delinquency prone subjects showed significantly higher scores.

Rastogi (2004) has made an attempt to seek gender and age differences in triguṇa in relation to seven constructs of Psychological Well Being (PWB) of Carol Ryff. The seven constructs are viz., Purpose, Autonomy, Personal growth, Positive relationship, Subjective wellbeing; Psychological well-being and Quality of Life. Results indicated that tamas is negatively correlated with all the seven constructs of mental wellbeing. Further, sattva positively correlated with all the seven constructs of the PWB. The connection of rajas with the seven constructs oscillates between the two ends of negativity and positivity.

The early stages of life are a crucial phase of development; it is the time when a child learns the basics of his/her life which act as foundation of his/her future life. The role of parents

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

and surroundings play an important role in shaping the physical and psychological status of a child's well being. Further it is explained how personalities of parents such as aggression, introducing concepts like 'Bua', 'police' to threaten a child, Ignorance and neglect at early stages can lead to adverse effects in building of child's self esteem. (Doke, Vyas, et al. 2006)

METHOD

Participants: Current study consisted of 81 parents (47 mothers and 34 Fathers) and 81 children as a sample.

Inclusion for sample of parents

- Individuals were either mother or fathers of at least a child
- Ager group was limited to 30 to 45 years, having a child of age 6 to 12
- Parents in the study were either working or homemakers from urban areas of Maharashtra, prominently from Pune- PCMC.

Inclusion for sample of children

Any child studying in any medium of education, living with a nuclear or joint family and has age between 6 to 12 was included in sample.

Materials

Following tools were used for the current Study.

1. **Manasa Prakriti Inventory** by Kumar and Manjunath is a 50 item tool that measures presence of an individual or Sattvik, Rajasic or Tamasic prakriti tendencies.
2. Along with that **Personal data sheet** was filled by sample, that included demographic details such as Name, Gender, Age, working status, Qualification levels, Family type, etc.
3. **Sterling's Child well-being scale** is a 15 item standardized tool with fair psychometric properties, that assess a child on 3 domains- Positive emotions, Positive Outlook and Overall Well-Being.

Procedure

After literature review was being done, tools were finalized. Data from parents and children were collected in paper pencil or google form format. Parents were requested to accompany children while children filled their checklists. For younger age groups, like 6 or 7, researchers asked them questions verbally and marked the answers. Then the data was collected and put to analysis in SPSS 21. Current research was a correlational study and pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated as the sample indicated normal distribution.

The Result Section

	Sattvik	Rajasik	Tamasik	Outlook	Emotional state	Child wellbeing
Sattvik	-					
Rajasik	-0.056	-				
Tamasik	-. 502***	-0.105	-			
Child Positive outlook	0.692***	0.153	-0.504***	-		
Child Positive Emotional state	0.668***	-0.008	-0.491***	0.834***	-	
Child wellbeing	0.710***	0.077	-0.520***	0.959***	0.956***	-

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

Following results can be derived from above table:

1. There exists significant positive correlation between Sattvik prakriti of parents and child wellbeing.
2. There exists significant negative correlation between Tamasik prakriti of parents and child wellbeing.
3. There exists a positive (insignificant) correlation between Rajasik prakriti of parents and child wellbeing.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Correlation between Sattvik prakriti of parents and positive wellbeing of child: Results indicated that there exists a positive correlation between Sattvik Prakriti of parents and wellbeing of children (Correlation coefficient in these results 0.710*** with Entire Child wellbeing along with its subfacets- Positive emotional state and outlook). Results pretty much are in accordance with the theoretical framework of characteristics of Sattvic guna. Literature and previous research work have indicated several positive characteristics of individuals with predominance of Sattvic Guna. Such Individuals are themselves are content, satisfied at their work. Their education, actions are driven by need for knowledge or a sense of dutifulness. Which implies that there is no compulsion of achievement nor the fear of failure. It is obvious that such a parent must be allowing his/her own child to also experience the same joy of action or knowledge without compulsion of victory nor threat after failure. This indeed must be helping nurturance in positive, growth and peace-oriented parenting, maximizing child wellbeing.
2. Negative correlation between Tamasik Prakriti of parents and positive wellbeing of children. The theoretical framework of Tamasik Guna indicates traits such as Neglect, Ignorance, Laziness and overt aggression. Children of Parents with predominance of these Guna, must be experiencing lack of wellbeing due to ignorance, lack of awareness in their parenting strategies too. There have been multiple theories and empirical findings that address Ignorance, lack of Intent, Aimless Actions in parenting on child's wellbeing and adjustment in peers. Frequent studies have also indicated that roots of expressed aggression in children are inherited from one of the parents. (Doke, Vyas, et al. 2006)
3. Insignificant correlation between Rajasik parent prakriti and child wellbeing. The current study indicated, positive correlation between Overall child wellbeing and Rajasik parent prakriti, however the correlation is insignificant. Rajasik Prakriti according to the state of art reviewed, explained how individuals with Rajasik tendencies are full of energy and life. It further explains how attached they are towards worldly pleasures and small joys. Parents with Rajasik tendencies, certainly must be allowing their children to enjoy and achieve these pleasures. However, it also accompanies the idea of achieving pleasures at any cost, even by competing or snatching it from others. Sometimes, Parents with Rajasik tendencies can be very competitive too, which explains wellbeing in children only to some extent, as compulsive need to win often leads to perceived stress, fear of failure and fear of rejection by the parent figure.

Application and Further way ahead:

1. Further research can be conducted using additional variables such as engagement in parenting, lifestyle of the family, Academic achievement of children, etc. along with Prakriti of parents and child wellbeing.
2. Characteristics mentioned in Sattvik Prakriti such as dedication to process, following rules and regulations, need for knowledge, *Nishkamakarma* tendencies can be

Study of Manasa Prakriti of Parents and its Relation to Child Well-being

purposely inculcated in behavioral modification techniques given to parents during family therapies. Activities inculcating that such as learning for the joy of it, playing games following rules and regulation, enjoying the process of play rather than winning factor, children accompanying adults in daily chores can be incorporated in day-today lives.

3. Characteristics mentioned in Tamasik prakriti such as Neglect, ignorance in day today life, destruction knowingly or unknowingly become a part of our daily lives at times. Children learn everything from their parents primarily. Parents' Tolerance to laziness, passivity, ignorance to knowledge- Principles of good and healthy living, casual approach, finding easy ways will be observed and readily adopted by children as shortcuts. Parents therefore, should be aware that to inculcate positive behavioral patterns they themselves should also be following the same. As it is rightly said, children behave more like what they see than what they hear.
4. Further, theory levels of consciousness (By Yogi Aravinda, Panchakosha- Tattariya Upanishad) that discusses more about behavioral preferences can also be incorporated by Triguna perspective to understand parent prakriti traits better.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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