

# From Cradle to Crown: Role of Child Psychology in Shaping of Great leaders Paper

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## Abstract

It is believed that growing a person into a leader is a journey that spans one's entire life. As such, different elements at different periods of a person's life contribute towards the individual becoming the leader they aspire to be or the leader that suits their dreams and goals in life. From those who have stood up to the empire, to those who built empires of the mind, those who were in the vanguard of the freedom struggle, to those who manage the freedom, a list of men and women who have made this world a place of perpetual astonishment, this is a journey that begins from a very young age. We believe that during childhood and adolescence, a few key building blocks should be put in place for this journey to be a fruitful one and these revolve around character, values, having the right role models, and having a secure base. In fact, the environmental and cultural background of parents and immediate society and place of living have an everlasting impact on child development. Mother plays the most important role in the rearing of a child.

It is indeed, in a manner of cultural refinement, and oriented to the vaunted values pertaining to higher aspirations of humankind, that helped generations after generation to imagine an ideal type of society. The discourse in the socio-cultural context of India means dealing with the traditional and modern outlook, mythological and historical viewpoint, and collective and individual aspect.

**Keywords:** Cradle, Childhood and Adolescence, Teachings and Motivation.

## Introduction

It is believed that growing a person into a leader is a journey that spans one's entire life. As such, different elements at different periods of a person's life contribute towards the individual becoming the leader they aspire to be or the leader that suits their dreams and goals in life. From those who have stood up to the empire, to those who built empires of the mind, those who were in the vanguard of the freedom struggle, to those who manage the freedom, a list of men and women who have made this world a place of perpetual astonishment, this is a journey that begins from a very young age. It is believed that childhood and adolescence are the most crucial part of a person's life and this very stage plays a formative role in making and shaping him or her as a better individual. Key attributes like leadership, values, and character are inculcated by choosing the correct role models in the initial years of life.

Everybody has potential, but the potential of the child is easy to express. If the child is allowed to develop spiritually while receiving his education, he will do so much better than us grownups. This is because the child has no conditioning. His mind has not been brainwashed and is like a fresh flower. His soul and personality can be mended if spiritual opportunities are provided during the days of nursing and according to the Hindu faith from the womb itself. At this age, the psyche of the child is very sensitive and their response to words and transmission of knowledge is much better than an adult. Their capacity to absorb, assimilate and imbibe is like a sponge. They are possessed with a natural and inherent quality of intuitive consciousness of wrong and right.

The Hindu view of human development reiterates the need for pervasive influence on parental theories of child-rearing as evinced in empirical evidence, related beliefs regarding the value of children, and

cultural rules governing childhood. Culture can be seen as providing the context for development and a platform for refining one's predispositions.

Kakar (1981) (1) comments on this pervasive influence, saying, 'the world image of traditional Hindu Culture provides its members with a sanctioned pattern, a Template which can be superimposed on the outer world thus helping individuals to make sense of their own lives.' West acknowledged this aspect of child psychology much later. The treatment of children was very distinctive as compared to now and they were not treated as human beings in western Europe until a few centuries ago. A pioneer in these studies was G. Stanley Hall, a former President of Clark University and founder of APA. He was interested in investigating "the contents of children's minds." He was convinced that the study of development was crucial to the problem of understanding man. (2)

The story of a nation is the biography of its people. India is a Confluence of a billion of such life stories. Even on the digital planet, Indian is an adjective to be reckoned with. We are here because our national back story is populated by people who created miracles in their own fields. Canonized by history, exaggerated by memory they are not nearly protagonists of yesterday but also idols of great tomorrow. If we peep into our great history political as well as religious and other spheres, we will realize that the very seed of greatness, grandeur, and glory was germinated in their childhood itself and nurtured well by their parents, gurus, mentors to be cultivated into a great tree of their charismatic ability.

Passages are dealing with the Children in the ancient law books of the Hindus and on the care and upbringing of infants and children in texts of traditional Indian medicine, Ayurveda. There are also references to children and childhood in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata- the repositories of Indian culture. A child grows by itself as well as by inputs from various social constituents like the family, the cultural influences, and medical interventions, among others.

It is indeed, in a manner of cultural refinement, and oriented to the vaunted values about higher aspirations of humankind, that helped generations after generation to imagine an ideal type of society.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore 'Where freedom reigns, fear is the last thing;' pursuit of self-realization is ubiquity in everyday life, and so on so forth: alludes to the cultural agenda not only in the poetic imagination but also that of the social. In this background, it is imperative to critically unearth the undercurrents of Indian culture and fathom the intricate epistemological implications of it, to relate with.

The ancient specialists in embryology knew only too well that the mother is instrumental in creating many types of indelible sanskaras in the fetus. There are numerous examples in Indian literature of the effect of the samskaras acquired during pregnancy in later life. One such example appears in Uttara Ramacharita of Bhavabhuti. (4)

Lakshmana got a mural painted in the bedroom of Lord Rama. Once when Rama and Sita were resting in that room, Lakshmana drew their attention to that mural. On seeing a scene therein Sita became curious and asked Lakshmana as to who were the two praying to Aryaputra (Rama). To this Lakshmana meekly replied, "Devi, these are mantra-blessed Jimbhaka weapons. Krishashva had given these to sage Vishvamitra and the latter had given to Aryaputra (Rama) at the time of the slaying of Taraka. Sita was pregnant at that time. It is believed in various literary sources Luv and Kush had a deep impact and ineffaceable samskaras of this mural while they were in the womb, that they were born with the knowledge of using these weapons. This important knowledge of the usage of the fierce weapon was later used when they captured Lord Rama's Ashvamedha horse and the massive army Lord Rama got unconscious with this weapon used by Luv during the battle.

The seeds of devotion were sown in Prahlada in his mother's womb. It is described in the Shrimad Bhagavata that Narad had sung praises of the Lord to Prahlada's mother during her pregnancy and that the fetus had imbibed the same meticulously.

The story of Abhimanyu is only too well known. According to a popular legend of Mahabharata, the impact of the sanskara child inculcates even when in the mother's womb, is reiterated in the Arjun - Subhadra story, where Arjun narrated the strategical planning of complicated Chakravyuha Rashtra to his pregnant wife Subhadra but she slept when the exit from this Chakravyuha was being narrated by Arjun. As a result, their son Abhimanyu succeeded in entering the Chakravyuha in the great war of Mahabharata but could not exit as he was not able to learn the exit part from his father when he was telling this to his mother.

All this is due to the fact that when a pregnant woman listens to carefully enters the fetus directly. So, it is essential that during pregnancy both the manas and body of the mother and child are protected carefully.

In fact, the environmental and cultural background of parents and immediate society and place of living have an everlasting impact on child development. Mother plays the most important role in the rearing of a child. 'Motherhood' has been eulogized in the statement of the Mahabharat. There in that, the mother should be honored like the father, Agni, guru, and atman, which can lead a man to conquer the earth and heavens. Manu smriti has given the highest position to the mother on this account. (5) A child gets inspiration, motivation, and love from the mother since birth so society must acknowledge the role of the mother as an institution and honor the womenfolk.

The most sticking examples in this regard are of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Mahatma Gandhi. Shivaji started his career as an independent young prince of a small kingdom on a mission. His mother made an indelible impression on him with her teachings, with her love for the homeland and its people. The young Shivaji lost his father and three brothers to a conspiring plot by the then ruler Nizam

Shah, the mother Jijabai instilled a sense of firm determination, the love for the motherland and the need to free it from foreign rulers, the courage to oppose Mughal political dominion into young Shivaji which eventually made him one of the greatest rulers of his time.

Jijabai's virtues and inclination towards the Hindu view of life and culture and recounting of tales of great Indian historical and mythological stories and epics framed Shivaji's character and shaped his fearless and great persona. Jijabai played a crucial role in molding the young Shivaji as considerate, tolerant, and respectful towards women and people from other religions.

Shahaji's vision, Jijabai's and Dadoji Konddeo's teachings and motivation, and the able training by military commanders such as Gomaji Naik Pansambal and Bajipasalkar were the main influences that groomed Shivaji into a brave and fearless military leader as well as a responsible administrator. (6)

Gandhi Ji was also deeply influenced by his mother. She had dedicated all her life to the happiness of her family. She had a great impact on the nature and personality of Gandhi Ji. It is said that she is an extremely pious lady, "Who would not take her meals before her daily prayers. She would take the hardest vows and keep them without flinching. (7)

Literary sources also confirm many stories and insistence of great mothers guiding their wards and framing their success through their motivations and supervision.

Queen Kunti in Mahabharata is one such example who after the early death of her husband King Pandu, raised her children as a single mother against all odds and conspiracy of their envious kith's and kin's and stood like a rock of courage and determination, who guided and directed her sons at crucial junctures of their life.

Similarly, the Rajput history is full of anecdotes of mothers who had exhorted their sons at critical times to tread the path of duty. (8)

The Parampara (tradition) of Guru and Shishya (teacher and pupil) also played an important role in nurturing great kings, leaders, saints, etc. from their childhood. The kings and chieftains of earlier days followed the practice of having their heirs grow to maturity and wisdom under the tutelage of learned sages. The scriptures of ancient India document several such relationships and practices. (9)

Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Maurya Empire, was one of the most important rulers in the history of India. He is credited for unifying small independent states to form a large single kingdom for the first time under one administration. Being a brave and determined leader since childhood, he was very well guided by Chanakya, a great Brahmin scholar of economics and political science at Takshashila University, who later became his mentor. Chandra Gupta Maurya was raised in a village by his adopted father and one day while playing with his village friends a mock royal court Chanakya chanced upon the boy and decided that this boy will build a powerful empire and overthrow then-existing rulers Nanda

dynasty. Chanakya or Kautilya as he was known, took Chandragupta Maurya along with him. Kautilya then brought the young Chandragupta to the city of Taxila (modern-day Rawalpindi, Punjab province, Pakistan) and provided him with a thorough education of humanities, arts, crafts, and military science with the solemn aim to guide him properly for the future royal office. (10)

The Panchatantra is the best guide to enroot moral values in children since each tale has a moral lesson in its end. The Panchatantra is a great book where plants and animals can speak and converse with human beings too. The purpose behind the composition was to implant moral values and governing skills in the young sons of the king. The ancient Sanskrit text boasts of various animal stories in verse and prose. (11)

The author of the Ramayana, Sage Valmiki acquires an important role in history not only for writing a great epic but also for imparting wisdom to the young princes of Ayodhya to enable them in becoming successful kings of the great Ayodhya empire.

Samrat Bimbisar entrusts the training of his only son AjatShatru to his ablest minister Vasakar. Vasakar, to make a fine monarch, and a good scholar of AjatShatru, engages many learned men from Taxila to train him in music, painting, and literature and yogis of high repute to look after his physical development. Bimbisar often sends AjatShatru with Vasakar to different States under the Magadh Raj with the pomp and glory befitting a Yuvraj and the people pay homage to him. In this manner, AjatShatru learns the art of kingship. (12)

Rabindra Nath Tagore is another noted Indian personality known for his scholastic excellence. According to him, learning through activities was the sure-shot means to develop the physical and mental faculties of a child. Shanti Niketan hence emphasized the inclusion of physical activities like drama, climbing of trees, narration-cum-discussions along with debates. These practices strengthened the holistic personality and skills of his students. Bestowing his students with freedom, Rabindra Nath Tagore, through his way of life encouraged them to identify their hidden potential. (13)

It is very important to receive the right kind of mentorship at the right time. Sports persons who go on to become greats in their field always remember their coaches and trainers with fondness. The great Sachin Tendulkar and Olympic medalist PV Sindhu on various occasions have attributed their glory and success to their gurus Ramakant Achrekar and Gopichand Phulera respectively.

With the present education system looking for objective truth, it is tough for parents to explain their children these fundamental assumptions and also inculcate the required samskaras. In India, there is a nexus of traditional ideas on the nature of children and childhood that inform the adult caretakers and influence their interaction with the new human being-the child- in their midst. To identify this cultural awareness of the children, views about them

expressed and reflected in various aspects of the Indian tradition would be looked into.

It is therefore necessary to deal with these factors while understanding how the child grows. These sources are imperceptible, and yet both unavoidable and effective. The discourse in the socio-cultural context of India means dealing with the traditional and modern outlook, mythological and historical viewpoint, and collective and individual aspects.

Tagore's (1913) words have a strong bearing on what childhood and child psychology stands for in India. "Every child comes with the message, that God is not yet discouraged of man"

#### **Aim of the Study**

Hence, my article explores the various periods in Indian history and the great and exemplary personalities from each of the respected ages and tries to find that one common thing that made all of them legends in our modern historical views. In my article, I explore what impact was caused on the child's psychology and how their parents especially their mothers play a significant part in shaping the child's entire personality.

#### **Conclusion**

Growing a person into a leader is a journey that spans one's entire life. As such, different elements at different periods of a person's life contribute towards the individual becoming the leader they aspire to be or the leader that suits their dreams and goals in life. It is therefore necessary to deal with these factors while understanding how the child grows. These sources are imperceptible, and yet both unavoidable and effective

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