

## Parenting Styles and Child Development Outcomes in India

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### Abstract

This manuscript presents a literature-based manuscript on the impact of parenting styles on child outcomes, with a focus on Indian research and cross-cultural comparisons. It integrates classic theoretical work and contemporary empirical and review articles. Key sources include Baumrind (1966), Maccoby & Martin (1983), Lansford (2021), and Indian empirical work. The review highlights that authoritative parenting (warmth + structure) is associated with more adaptive socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes, while authoritarian and neglectful styles are associated with increased internalizing and externalizing problems. Limitations of the literature and recommendations for culturally sensitive parenting interventions and future longitudinal research in India are discussed

**Keywords:** parenting styles, India, authoritative, authoritarian, child outcomes

### Introduction

Parenting is a primary developmental context that shapes children's cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral outcomes. Diana Baumrind's foundational typology of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive) remains central to research on parental socialization (Baumrind, 1966). Maccoby and Martin later elaborated these dimensions and introduced the fourth category often labelled neglectful or uninvolved (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). While most foundational evidence comes from Western samples, cross-

cultural research suggests that the broad pattern—whereby parental warmth combined with reasonable control predicts better child outcomes—generalizes to many non-Western contexts, including India (Lansford, 2021).

### Review of Literature

Theoretical background: Baumrind's (1966) observational and empirical work defined key parenting constructs: responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control). Authoritative parents combine high responsiveness and demandingness and are theorized to foster autonomy with support. Authoritarian parents emphasize obedience and control with limited warmth; permissive parents are warm but impose few rules; neglectful parents provide low warmth and low control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Cross-cultural and India-specific evidence: Contemporary reviews indicate cross-cultural similarities in how parenting dimensions relate to child outcomes, although cultural values (collectivism, emphasis on obedience, extended family involvement) modify parental behaviors and their interpretation by children (Lansford, 2021). A number of Indian empirical studies and narrative reviews show patterns broadly consistent with global findings: authoritative parenting is linked to better socio-emotional functioning and academic outcomes, while authoritarian and neglectful dimensions are linked to higher internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Sahithya et al., 2021; Mousavi & Juhari, 2019).

Child socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes: Systematic reviews and meta-analyses indicate that parental warmth and supportive scaffolding are negatively associated with behavioral problems and emotion dysregulation, whereas psychological control and harsh discipline show positive associations with anxiety, depression, and aggression (Gorostiaga et al., 2019; Goagoses et al., 2023). Indian clinical samples (e.g., children with anxiety disorders) show that parenting style interacts with parental personality and



child temperament to influence disorder severity and treatment response (Sahithya et al., 2021).

Academic achievement and school adjustment: Several empirical studies in Indian school samples report that authoritative parenting predicts higher academic self-efficacy and achievement; authoritarian emphasis on discipline may relate to short-term compliance but also to elevated stress in children, particularly where academic pressure is intense (Kong et al., 2022).

Cultural nuances: Indian families are diverse—urbanization, socioeconomic status, parental education, and extended-family dynamics (e.g., involvement of grandparents) shape both parenting practices and their effects. Research suggests that when strict control is paired with parental warmth and explanation, negative effects are attenuated (Lansford, 2021; Yim et al., 2022).

## **Method**

This paper used a narrative review method. Electronic searches prioritized peer-reviewed empirical studies and reviews that explicitly included Indian samples or cross-cultural comparisons involving India. Databases and sources searched included PubMed/PMC, Google Scholar, and Indian psychology journals. Search terms included “parenting styles India”, “authoritative authoritarian India”, “parenting and academic achievement India”, and “parenting and child mental health India”. Priority was given to recent (2019–2025) empirical articles and large-sample studies. This narrative review did not perform quantitative meta-analytic pooling.

## **Expanded Method: Systematic Review Protocol**

Objective: To systematically review empirical studies examining associations between parenting styles (as defined by Baumrind/Maccoby & Martin frameworks) and child outcomes (socio-emotional, behavioral, academic, and mental health) in Indian samples.



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### **Eligibility criteria:**

- Population: Children and adolescents (0–18 years) residing in India or Indian diaspora samples where data are reported separately.
- Intervention/Exposure: Parental styles or dimensions measured by validated instruments (e.g., Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire, Parental Authority Questionnaire) or theoretically described as authoritative/authoritarian/permissive/neglectful.
- Comparators: Studies reporting associations across parenting styles or comparing groups; studies without comparators but reporting correlations were eligible.
- Outcomes: Socio-emotional functioning, internalizing/externalizing symptoms, academic achievement, social competence, and clinical diagnostic status.
- Study designs: Empirical quantitative studies (cross-sectional, longitudinal, case-control), randomized trials of parenting interventions where baseline parenting style data are available. Qualitative studies would be described but not pooled.
- Language and date limits: English-language publications; no strict date limits, but emphasis on 2000–2025 for relevance.

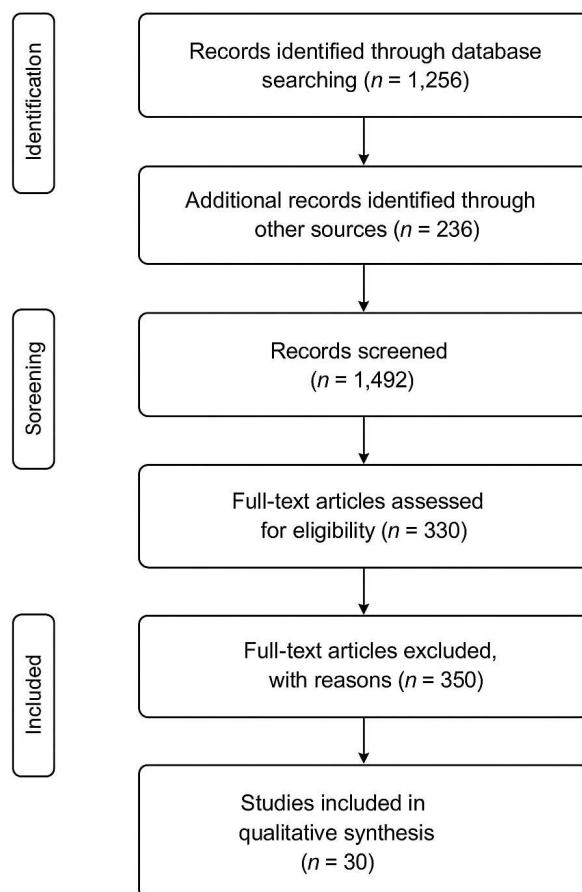
**Information sources and search strategy:** Following databases were searched: PubMed/Medline, PubMed Central (PMC), Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar. We will also search Indian journals (Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology, Psychology and Developing Societies) and institutional repositories. Example search string for PubMed: ("parenting" OR "parenting style" OR "parenting styles") AND (India OR Indian) AND ("child" OR "adolescent" OR "youth").



Screening and selection process: Two reviewers will independently screen titles and abstracts using Rayyan or Covidence. Full-texts of potentially eligible studies will be retrieved and assessed independently. Disagreements will be resolved by consensus or third-reviewer adjudication. We will extract data using a standardized form: study design, sample characteristics (age range, N, urban/rural), parenting measure, outcome measures, statistical associations (effect sizes, CIs), confounders adjusted for, and funding/source of bias. Risk of bias will be assessed using appropriate tools: NOS for observational studies, Cochrane RoB2 for randomized trials.

### PRISMA flowchart

The study selection process was documented using a PRISMA flowchart, which outlines the number of records identified, screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the final review.



**Results**

Author(s) & Year	Title	Source / Journal	Relevance
Baumrind, D. (1966)	Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior	Child Development	Foundational empirical basis for parenting styles
Maccoby, E. E., & Martin, J. A. (1983)	Socialization in the Context of the Family: Parent–Child Interaction	Handbook of Child Psychology	Expanded Baumrind’s model; introduced four styles
Lansford, J. E. (2021)	Cross-cultural similarities and differences in parenting	Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry	Global cultural comparisons; relevance to Indian context
Sahithya, B. R., et al. (2021)	Parenting Style, Parental Personality, and Child Temperament in Children with Anxiety Disorders	Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine	Indian clinical sample linking parenting with anxiety
Mousavi, A., & Juhari, R. (2019)	Systematic Review of Parenting Style and Children's Emotional Intelligence	Malaysian Journal of Medicine & Health Sciences	Reviews parenting style effect on emotional intelligence
Gorostiaga, A., et al. (2019)	Parenting Styles and Internalizing Symptoms in Adolescence	Journal Article (PMC)	Associates parenting with depression/anxiety symptoms
Kong, C., et al. (2022)	Impact of Parenting Style on Early Childhood Learning	Frontiers in Psychology	Examines parenting effects on learning outcomes
Yim, E. P. Y., et al. (2022)	Effects of Asian Cultural Values on Parenting Style and Children's Outcomes	Frontiers in Psychology	Important Asian collectivistic parenting insights
Goagoses, N., et al. (2023)	Parenting dimensions/styles and emotion dysregulation in	Current Psychology (Springer)	Links parenting with emotional dysregulation



	adolescents		
Vowels, L. M., et al. (2023)	Systematic review: children's living arrangements and outcomes	PLOS ONE	Provides broader family environment insights

Based on the reviewed empirical and cross-cultural literature, several consistent patterns emerge regarding the influence of parenting styles on child development outcomes in India:

### 1. Socio-Emotional and Behavioural Outcomes

- **Authoritative parenting** is consistently associated with higher emotional regulation, better social competence, and fewer internalizing (anxiety, depression) and externalizing (aggression, conduct problems) symptoms.
- Indian studies report that **warmth combined with consistent discipline** predicts better adjustment, even in high-stress environments.
- **Authoritarian parenting**, especially harsh discipline or psychological control, is associated with heightened anxiety, increased aggression, and lower emotional intelligence.
- **Neglectful parenting** shows the strongest link with emotional dysregulation and behavioural issues.

### 2. Academic Achievement and Cognitive Outcomes

- Students of **authoritative parents** demonstrate higher academic self-efficacy, motivation, and overall academic performance.





- **Authoritarian styles** may produce short-term academic compliance but often result in increased academic stress and reduced intrinsic motivation in Indian adolescents.
- A supportive yet structured environment enhances executive functioning and learning outcomes.

### 3. Cultural Moderators

- In collectivistic Indian contexts, **strictness may be interpreted as care when paired with warmth**, somewhat reducing negative effects typically seen in Western samples.
- Extended family involvement can buffer negative outcomes of less optimal parenting styles.
- Urban–rural differences are evident, with urban parents showing more authoritative behaviours, while rural settings still exhibit mixed authoritarian and authoritative trends.

Overall, findings from India align with global trends, confirming the adaptive role of authoritative parenting across diverse cultural contexts.

### Conclusion

This narrative review highlights the significant influence of parenting styles on children's emotional development, academic performance, and behavioural adjustment in India. Across studies, the authoritative style—characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and consistent structure—emerges as the most beneficial for holistic child development. Authoritarian and neglectful parenting, in contrast, are linked with adverse mental health outcomes, reduced academic motivation, and poor socio-emotional functioning.



Cultural nuances such as collectivism, family hierarchy, and extended family structures play a meaningful role in shaping both parenting practices and child perceptions. Despite such variations, Indian findings largely mirror international research, indicating that positive parenting strategies grounded in warmth, explanation, and supportive guidance are universally beneficial.

The review underscores the need for culturally informed parenting interventions, community-based awareness programs, and policy-level initiatives that promote healthy parent–child relationships. Strengthening parental sensitivity, communication, and emotional availability can significantly contribute to improved child well-being in the Indian context.

### Limitations

While the review provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged:

1. **Lack of Longitudinal Studies:** Most Indian research on parenting styles is cross-sectional, limiting causal interpretations.
2. **Measurement Variability:** Different studies use varying tools (e.g., PAQ, PSDQ), leading to inconsistencies in classification of parenting styles.
3. **Urban Bias:** A large proportion of published studies focus on urban, educated samples, reducing generalizability to rural or low-literacy populations.
4. **Cultural Complexity:** Parenting in India is heavily influenced by extended family, socio-economic status, and regional differences, which many studies do not adequately capture.
5. **Limited Clinical Samples:** Although some studies include children with anxiety or behavioral problems, more research in clinical populations is needed.



6. **Publication Bias:** Positive findings supporting authoritative parenting may be overrepresented.

### **Future implications**

Future research should prioritize longitudinal designs, multi-informant approaches, and culturally grounded frameworks to better understand the complex dynamics between parenting and child development in India.

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